



Children's Hospital
New Orleans
LCMC Health

THE TWELVE CORE ACTION VALUES

These Are **YOUR** **VALUES**

*From Authenticity to Leadership, these are the values
we all want to live and the values we want our children to learn*

JOE TYE

CEO and Head Coach, Values Coach Inc.

Special Edition for Children's Hospital New Orleans



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Values Coach Inc.
www.ValuesCoach.com
319-624-3889
Joe@ValuesCoach.com

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The goals you achieve...

The contribution you make...

The person you become...

Will be shaped by the values that guide your life.

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FOREWORD BY JOHN NICKENS

WHO DAT?! WE DAT!

It's a common refrain here in New Orleans – especially during football season. Just about anywhere you go – the grocery store, the dry cleaners, a sno-ball stand, your kids' soccer game - if you call out “Who Dat”, you're almost certain to get a “We Dat!” in response. Here at Children's Hospital, the idea of “We Dat” means something more. When we say “We Dat”, we mean that we are the ones willing to stand in the gap for families, willing to go the extra mile to *treat every child as our own*.

In order to live this promise, we've set out on a journey toward a Culture of Ownership. And this journey starts with YOU. Research tells us that a strong sense of individual, personal values is even more critical to an organization's success than strong organizational values. For that reason, we are investing in YOU and bringing you this course on The Twelve Core Action Values.

From Core Action Value #1, Authenticity through to Core Action Value #12, Leadership, we'll explore twelve values that we all aspire to practice – not just during our time at work, but throughout our entire lives.

The ideas, strategies, and tools that you will find in this course will help you to be a better parent and partner, a better time and money manager, a better citizen and a better person. The skills you will learn will help you to get ahead in your career and achieve your most important personal goals. And they will help you inspire hope, courage, and a determination to serve the children and families we serve with a **#CHNOLAProud, WHO DAT? WE DAT!** attitude.

At Children's Hospital, we *aspire* to greatness in ourselves and we *inspire* greatness in others. Our shared commitment to The Twelve Core Action Values reflects that commitment.

Onward and Upward!

John R. Nickens IV
President and CEO

Our core values

As a founding member of LCMC Health, Children's Hospital is committed to the system values of **Compassion, Respect, Integrity, Teamwork**.

As the region's leading provider of healthcare for children, we are committed to our **CHNOLA** core values.



Caring

We care for every child as our own and we care for our community as our family.



Honor

We respect the dignity of every person and we act with integrity in all that we do.



Nice

We believe in the healing power of kindness and are committed to being nice to each other and to the people we serve.



Ownership

We take ownership for our work, for our professions, for the safety of our patients and team members, and for our hospital by doing what needs to be done and getting help when we can't do it alone.



Leadership

We are committed to being leaders in our organization and in our community and to setting a high standard of excellence for the care of children.



Advocacy

We are all advocates for the health and safety of every child and family, in our hospital and in our community.



Children's Hospital
New Orleans
LCMC Health

We are CHNOLA Proud! We Dat!

CHNOLA STATEMENT OF CULTURAL PHILOSOPHY

Our Cultural Philosophy

The CHNOLA core values are the foundation of our culture. These operating principles establish the expectations we have for every member of our team and define our commitments to each other and to the people and the community that we serve.

We care for every child as our own

We treat the children we are privileged to care for as if they were our own. When they are frightened we encourage them, when they are in pain we comfort them, when they are lonely we sit with them. No matter their race, religion, financial status, orientation, or other characteristics, we will care for them with the same compassion and commitment to excellence that we have for our own children.

We are committed to assuring a safe environment

We take the maxim “first do no harm” to be a sacred trust and are committed to a culture of safety where we make safety a top priority and where no one ever fears retribution for expressing a concern about potential safety problems.

We help every child achieve their fullest potential

We treat our children as the kids they are, and not as small adults. We are not just caring for a sick child, we are inspiring that young person to never allow health limitations to limit the size of their dreams. We give them the care that they need to get well, and also seek to infuse them with the hope, courage and determination to achieve their full potential as human beings. They are our superheroes and we are privileged to be their sidekicks.

We help every team member achieve their fullest potential

We encourage our colleagues to invest in their personal education, professional expertise and personal health, and strive to help them live their values and achieve their most authentic goals. As an organization, we have incorporated The Twelve Core Action Values into our cultural fabric as part of our commitment to the personal and professional development of every CHNOLA team member.

Our hospital is a community

Children’s Hospital New Orleans is more than just an organization, it is a community, and our coworkers are also friends and neighbors. We treat each other with respect, we encourage each other to aspire and grow, and we support and encourage those who are struggling with adversity. We practice teamwork when caring for the children and families that are entrusted to our care.

Our hospital is committed to excellence

We strive to be partners in making Children's Hospital New Orleans a center for excellence in healthcare for our patients and a great place to work for our colleagues. We value our role as a resource to our educational and community partners and contribute to a healthy community through shared knowledge, public health advocacy, and significant investments in our programs, services, and facilities. We embrace meaningful change to achieve our goal of being the region's leading children's hospital and being an outstanding place to work.

We play so our children can play

We believe in the healing power of laughter, play and fun. We create an environment that encourages curiosity, playfulness, and joy to inspire hope, courage and optimism for our patients and their families. We make a point of smiling at people in corridors, we do our work with joy and enthusiasm, and we set an example of positive optimism for the children and the families we serve.

We do the right thing

We earn trust by acting with integrity. We tell the truth, we keep our promises, and we honor our commitments. We hold each other to the highest standards even when it requires difficult conversations. We are committed to a just culture where every team member feels safe to raise a concern without fear of repercussion. We do not tolerate toxic negative attitudes and behaviors that poison our workplace environment.

INTRODUCTION

BY JOE TYE

I know something about you: You have good solid values. You would not have devoted yourself to the care of children if you did not have great values. I also know that you have not clearly defined what those values are. You don't make the time to reflect upon how those values are reflected in the decisions you make, the way you spend your time and money, and in how you build your relationships. You have not thought about how you would make a decision if you were forced to choose one value over another in a situation where there was a conflict in values. I know that is true for you because it is true for all of us.

This course on Twelve Core Action Values will help you more effectively live your values, and as a result help you be a better parent, a better citizen, and a better person. And a better caregiver (and we are all caregivers). I know that because *these are your values*. Regardless of your religious belief or non-belief, your political opinions, your ethnic background, job title, or generational cohort, these are the values you want to live and for other people to see reflected in your attitudes and behaviors. From Core Action Value #1, Authenticity, through Core Action Value #12, Leadership, this is who you want to be.

The course is structured around the twelve universal values. The first six values help you build a foundation of personal character strength: Authenticity, Integrity, Awareness, Courage, Perseverance, and Faith. The second six values build upon that foundation by catalyzing action to achieve goals and make a contribution: Purpose, Vision, Focus, Enthusiasm, Service, and Leadership.

Each of the twelve values are reinforced by four cornerstones that put action into the value. For example, the first cornerstone of Core Action Value #1, Authenticity, is Self-Awareness. Socrates said that the greatest wisdom of all is to know yourself – which is, of course, much easier said than done. For each cornerstone there are many specific action steps one can take. To enhance self-awareness, for example, one can write in a journal and periodically go back and reflect upon the entries that have been made.

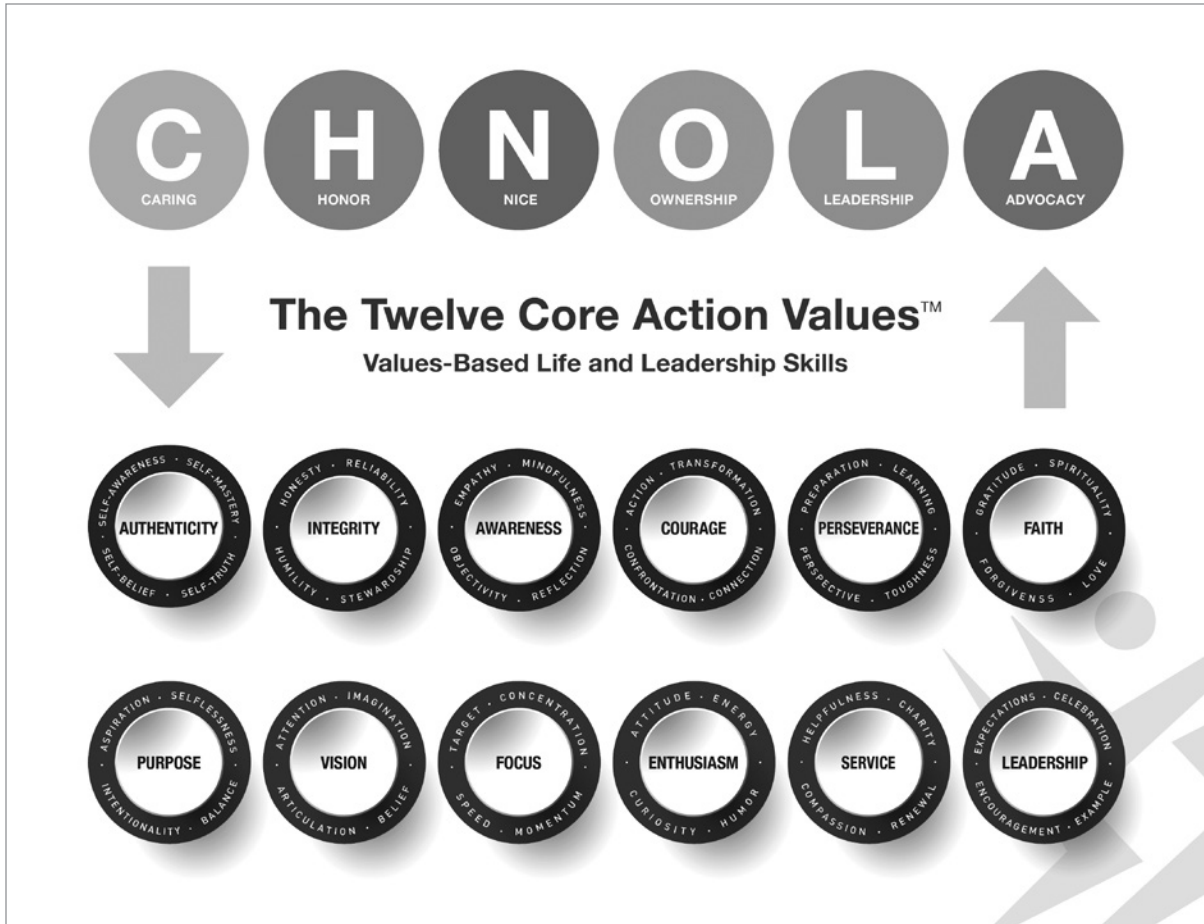
The Twelve Core Action Values is not a simple magic pill, silver bullet, one minute to success self-help course. To make the most of the course requires time, effort, and thought. And commitment. But this is my promise: anyone who makes that commitment will find that this is one of the best investments that can be made in both personal and organizational success. This is how Bob Dent, COO/CNO of Midland Memorial Hospital in Midland, Texas and 2018

President of the American Organization of Nurse Executives (and my coauthor on three other books) described the impact of this course on the people in his organization:

The principles and strategies included in The Twelve Core Action Values have helped our people overcome some pretty significant inner enemies in their lives. We have seen people take charge of their health and lose weight, start work on long-postponed dreams including writing a book or starting a business, improve their relationships at work and at home, and most important be happier and more productive human beings. The Twelve Core Action Values have truly transformed the lives of our people. This has translated into enhanced employee ownership, a better patient experience of care, and demonstrably better quality outcomes.

Following is a brief overview of the course on The Twelve Core Action Values. Let's work together to assure that we see the same sorts of outcomes for Children's Hospital of New Orleans, and for the children and families you serve! Thank you for your devotion and commitment. And remember – these are *your* values. **You Dat!**

Joe Tye, CEO and Head Coach
Values Coach Inc.



The Twelve Core Action Values reinforce the CHNOLA Core Values



CHNOLA's team of Certified Values Coach Trainers

The Twelve Core Action Values
and the Cornerstones that Put Action into those Values

Laying a Solid Foundation

The first 6 Core Action Values help you develop inner strength of character.

1. Authenticity

Self Awareness
Self Mastery
Self Belief
Self Truth

2. Integrity

Honesty
Reliability
Humility
Stewardship

3. Awareness

Mindfulness
Objectivity
Empathy
Reflection

4. Courage

Confrontation
Transformation
Action
Connection

5. Perseverance

Preparation
Perspective
Toughness
Learning

6. Faith

Gratitude
Forgiveness
Love
Spirituality

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The Twelve Core Action Values
and the Cornerstones that Put Action into those Values

Taking Effective Action

The second 6 Core Action Values catalyze action and inspire contribution.

7. Purpose

Aspiration
Intentionality
Selflessness
Balance

8. Vision

Attention
Imagination
Articulation
Belief

9. Focus

Target
Concentration
Speed
Momentum

10. Enthusiasm

Attitude
Energy
Curiosity
Humor

11. Service

Helpfulness
Charity
Compassion
Renewal

12. Leadership

Expectations
Example
Encouragement
Celebration

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OVERVIEW OF THE TWELVE CORE ACTION VALUES

Core Action Values 1-6: Laying a Solid Foundation

Core Action Value #1, Authenticity

You will gain a greater sense of who you are, and of who you are meant to be; you will learn practical strategies to overcome the inner barriers that are holding you back, and to build the solid self-believe that is required for you to become that meant-to-be person. The cornerstones of Authenticity are Self-Awareness, Self-Mastery, Self-Belief, and Self-Truth.

Core Action Value #2, Integrity

To be considered a person of integrity is the highest honor. I'll share specific actions you can take so that you never become your own worst enemy, but rather earn the sense of pride (and the reputation) that come from knowing that you always do the right thing. The cornerstones of Integrity are Honesty, Reliability, Humility, and Stewardship.

Core Action Value #3, Awareness

This is a foundation of personal happiness, emotional intelligence, and spiritual peace; you will learn disciplines that will help you enhance your ability to more accurately and objectively observe what's going on within you and around you and be more empathetic in your relations with others. The cornerstones of Awareness are Mindfulness, Objectivity, Empathy, and Reflection.

Core Action Value #4, Courage

You will learn to identify the fears that are holding you back, how to make those fears work for you and not against you, how to confront the dragon of fear with the sword of determination, and how to tap into the power of caring and connection to build your courage. The cornerstones of Courage are Confrontation, Transformation, Action, and Connection.

Core Action Value #5, Perseverance

You'll learn practical strategies to prepare for and learn from adversity, and for confronting the inevitable obstacles and setbacks with mental toughness and a positive perspective. The cornerstones of Perseverance are Preparation, Perspective, Toughness, and Learning.

Core Action Value #6, Faith

Throughout history, faith has been the most powerful form of human motivation. I'll show you how, whatever your religious beliefs happen to be, you can reinforce the power of faith in yourself, in your future, in other people, and in a power that is beyond human sight. The cornerstones of Faith are Gratitude, Forgiveness, Love, and Spirituality.

Core Action Values 7-12: Taking Effective Action

Core Action Value #7, Purpose

You will discover a greater sense of purpose and meaning in the work you do, learn practical skills for being a more positive contributor and team-builder in your family, your organization, and your community; and the power of a statement of purpose that covers every dimension of your life and work. The cornerstones of Purpose are Aspiration, Intentionality, Selflessness, and Balance.

Core Action Value #8, Vision

I'll share techniques for getting out of your box and re-sparking the incredible imagination you were born with; you'll learn the 10-A Formula for transforming your dreams into Memories of the Future. The cornerstones of Vision are Attention, Imagination, Articulation, and Belief.

Core Action Value #9, Focus

These tools and techniques will help you conquer procrastination, fuel a powerful sense of urgency, and become more productive than you've ever been before. The cornerstones of Focus are Target, Concentration, Speed, and Momentum.

Core Action Value #10, Enthusiasm

I'll show you how to tap into energy that you never suspected you had, and with this energy become more positive, more optimistic, and happier in virtually every dimension of your life. The cornerstones of Enthusiasm are Attitude, Energy, Curiosity, and Humor.

Core Action Value #11, Service

It is an ancient paradox that those who are most committed to serving others end up being more successful themselves; I'll show you how this spirit of serving will help you achieve your personal and professional goals as you help others do the same. The cornerstones of Service are Helpfulness, Charity, Compassion, and Renewal.

Core Action Value #12, Leadership

To be a leader is not a job description, it is a way of looking at the world and an ongoing personal commitment to taking initiative to solve problems and create opportunities. In this final section, we'll cover actions you can take to be a more effective leader – in your family and in your community as well as at work. The cornerstones of Leadership are Expectations, Example, Encouragement, and Celebration.

CORE ACTION VALUES 1 - 6

LAYING A SOLID FOUNDATION
OF CHARACTER STRENGTH

MODULE 1: CORE ACTION VALUE #1 IS AUTHENTICITY

.....
Michelangelo said that he did not create statues, but rather that he would find a big piece of marble and liberate the beautiful form that was always there on the inside. That is a great metaphor for the process of liberating your meant-to-be authentic best self from all the pressures and expectations to be someone else.
.....

Authenticity is a universal value. No one ever brags about being a fake, a fraud, or a phony.

The greatest triumph of the human spirit is to become the person you were meant to be and pursue the goals that you were put on this earth to achieve. The greatest tragedy is to spend your life pretending to be someone other than your meant-to-be best self because you think you'll impress people and make more money.

You become authentic by working to develop your greatest natural strengths more than you do by trying to fix your many weaknesses. We are all blessed with a limited number of innate strengths and an infinite number of weaknesses.

Don't waste your time and energy comparing yourself against other people – the only comparison that really matters is comparing the person you are now against the person you want to be. And ignore the people who try to pressure you into being someone other than your best self.

These are the two paradoxes of authenticity: 1) You are more likely to achieve career and financial success by striving to be authentic than you are by striving to be successful; and 2) to be successful requires that you stretch and grow, learn and practice new skills, in ways that push yourself out of your comfort zone, which will feel inauthentic – but is also the only way you will grow.

To be authentic does not necessarily mean to “do your own thing.” It often requires that you work as part of a bigger team and put your own ego and desires on the back burner in the service of a bigger goal.

A life-changing question: What would you do if every job paid the same and had the same social status? How can you build a bridge from where you are to who you are?

It's easy to be one of a million – just do what everyone else does. It is much harder to be one in a million, but it is also much more rewarding.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“We come into this world with a specific, personal destiny. We have a job to do, a calling to enact, a self to become. We are who we are from the cradle, and we’re stuck with it. Our job in this lifetime is not to shape ourselves into some ideal we imagine we ought to be, but to find out who we already are and become it.”

Steven Pressfield: *The War of Art*

MODULE 2: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF AUTHENTICITY IS SELF-AWARENESS

.....

The greatest wisdom of all is to know yourself. Socrates said that - and he was a very wise man. But that is a lot easier said than done, isn't it? For one thing, you are a different person than you were five years ago (or maybe even than you were yesterday); you will be a different person in five years (or maybe even tomorrow).

.....

What if, instead of asking you the typical icebreaker question “What do you do?” someone were to ask “Who are you?” You really cannot answer that question without falling back on where you come from, the work you do, and the roles you play. What you *can* do is ask yourself question like these: Who am I when I am being my best self? How does my best self act as a parent, a caregiver, a leader, a citizen? How does my best self set priorities and manage financial resources? The way you answer those questions will guide you to make decisions and take actions in such a way as to help you become the person you want to be.

The first step to knowing who you really are is knowing who you are not but might think you are.

You are not your job description – don’t confuse your business card for an identity card. Being a nurse, a teacher, a lawyer, or a plumber might profoundly influence your self-image and the assumptions that other people make about you, but they are not YOU. The authentic YOU – your authentic inner core, your soul – cannot be touched by such externalities as getting a promotion, losing a job, or changing careers.

You are not your moods and emotions. As Dr. David Burns describes in *The Feeling Good Handbook*, bad moods and negative emotions lie to you by creating the impression that things are far worse than they really are. Moods and emotions can change like the weather – but unlike the weather, by recognizing that they are not the authentic you, you can alter them when they are painful.

You are not the voice between your ears. Negative self-talk never arises from your authentic self- it is always a malignant echo of hurtful things that were said to you by others, often long ago.

You are not the labels that the voice of negative self-talk hangs on you. You are not what the people think of you (you will worry a lot less about what other people think of you if you appreciate how *infrequently* other people think of you).

You are not the car you drive, the house you live in, the balance on your bank statement, or other material superficialities.

Write in a journal. This is a Quadrant 2 – Important but not Urgent – activity as described in Stephen Covey’s book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Download the *360 Days to Change Your Life Personal Journal* at the Values Trainer website and devote time every day to reflecting upon who you are, what you do, and how you do what you do.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Without self-awareness, it is easy to get caught up in chasing external symbols of success rather than becoming the person you want to be. It is difficult to regulate your emotions, control your fears, and avoid impulsive outbursts when you feel threatened or rejected. Without being aware of your vulnerabilities, fears, and longings, it is hard to empathize with others who are experiencing similar feelings.”

Bill George (with Peter Sims): *True North*

MODULE 3: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF AUTHENTICITY IS SELF-MASTERY

.....
*Aristotle said that the greatest victory was not victory over external
enemies, but rather the victory over one's own lesser self.*
.....

Do you remember the scene from *Star Wars* where Luke Skywalker confronts his worst enemy in a dark tunnel but, upon striking it with his light saber, discovers that he's been looking in a mirror? Luke's story is our story. You become your own worst enemy (YOWE) when you give in to emotional impulses without having thought through the potential consequences; when you waste time and money on trivial stuff while avoiding work on and investment in more important priorities; when you give in to peer pressure and do things you know are not right – in short, when you are not clear about and acting upon your deepest personal values.

Self-mastery is more important than education, technical qualifications, financial resources, or who you know when it comes to long-term career success. It underlies the ability to manage impulsiveness and to channel energy into productive undertakings, to build lasting relationships with other people, and to lay the foundation for a productive and rewarding career and a satisfying and fulfilling life.

To be your best self, you must talk back to negative self-talk, challenge beliefs that diminish and disempower you, and program inner dialog with confidence-building positive affirmations. Begin by cleaning up your act: eradicate profanity from your vocabulary, eliminate complaining from your conversations, stand up straighter and walk faster, and tell the toxic voice of negative self-talk to shut up.

It is almost impossible to achieve self-mastery if you are hanging around with negative people. Stay away from those who waste their time and steal your energy with constant complaining, finger-pointing, and gossiping, and strive to always be an energy faucet and never to be an energy drain.

To be mature is to accept complete and total responsibility for your circumstances and your outcomes. It is easy to blame parents, teachers, peers, even God for your problems and limitations. It is also profoundly unhelpful. You begin to make progress in life when you accept that you are where you are today because of choices that you have made in the past, and that where you are in the future will be determined by the choices that you make from this point forward.

There is a trade-off between having fun and being happy. A happy lifetime requires doing things that are not necessarily fun: studying alone in the library, exercising in the gym, volunteering for a good cause when you'd rather be out partying with friends. The payoff to denying yourself fun times now will be a happier life later.

Master yourself by doing the harder thing – going to the gym instead of eating a donut, going to the library instead of indulging in shopping therapy, keeping your mouth shut when you want to make a rude or hurtful comment – and you will become a stronger person who achieves bigger goals.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“To the degree that our emotions get in the way of or enhance our ability to think and plan, to pursue training for a different goal, to solve problems and the like, they define the limits of our capacity to use our innate mental abilities, and so determine how we do in life. And to the degree to which we are motivated by feelings of enthusiasm and pleasure in what we do – even by an optimal degree of anxiety – they propel us to accomplishment.”

Daniel Goleman: *Emotional Intelligence*

MODULE 4: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF AUTHENTICITY IS SELF-BELIEF

.....
In the diary she kept while hiding from the Nazis Anne Frank wrote this: "Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!"
.....

Self-belief does not mean arrogance. Quite to the contrary, arrogance is often a way of covering up an underlying sense of inferiority and insecurity. Even worse, arrogance leads to hubris – the pride that comes before the fall. Arrogant people are not particularly objective about what's really going on around them, open to legitimate criticism, or willing to make needed changes in their approach to life and to other people.

If you don't believe in yourself, it will be hard for you to believe in other people. If you don't believe in yourself, it will be hard for other people to believe in you. If you don't believe in your dreams, you will never inspire other people to believe in those dreams.

Build upon each of the four levels of *The Pyramid of Self-Belief*:

- » Self-concept: What do you see when you look around and up?
- » Self-image: What do you see when you look in the mirror?
- » Self-esteem: Do you like what you see when you look in the mirror?
- » Self-Confidence: Do you feel like you have what you need to achieve your goals and be your best self?

The paradox of self-belief: It is easy to believe in yourself and in your dreams when everything is going great; it is also substantially irrelevant at those times because things are already going great. It is hard to believe in yourself and in your dreams when it feels like the world is crashing down around you, but that is precisely the time self-belief has the greatest power.

The one person in your life who most needs tough love is the person you see looking back at you from the mirror each morning. Be tough *with* yourself by holding yourself to high standards and expectations, but do not be tough *on* yourself by beating yourself up when you do not meet those standards and expectations. Just pick yourself up and try again with a positive attitude and expectation of success.

Replace wishful thinking with positive thinking. Wishful thinking is hoping for something and waiting for someone else to make it happen. Positive thinking is *expecting* something and doing the work to make it happen. As we will see when we reach Core Action Value #8, Vision, positive thinking is the fuel that powers Memories of the Future.

The biggest challenge to building solid self-belief is overruling the voice of judgment, that nasty negative little inner critic that most of us carry around in the backs of our heads. Most of us put up with verbal abuse from our inner critic that we would never tolerate from anyone else – not from a boss, a relative – not from anyone. Stand up to that inner voice of negativity and pessimism and do the things it tells you that you cannot do.

MODULE 5: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF AUTHENTICITY IS SELF-TRUTH

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*In the play Hamlet, Shakespeare had Polonius say, “Be true to yourself
and you will never be false to anyone else.” That is also true in reverse – if you are not
being true to yourself you will eventually and inevitably be untrue to others.*
.....

Self-truth begins with being clear about what your personal core values are, and the attitudes and behaviors that spring from those values when you are acting as your authentic best self. And it builds upon the first three cornerstones: knowing who you are when you are being your best self; mastering ego and managing the emotional storms of your lesser self; and building upon the four levels of the Pyramid of Self-Belief. It means loving yourself – warts and all – and then working to remove the warts.

Neither success nor failure will change you – they will make you more of who you already are. That is why so many people who “win” the lottery wind up broke and unhappy – they had not invested in building the character strength required to manage a sudden shift of fortune.

It takes courage to take the basket off your candle, stop pretending to be less than who you really are, and living into your full human potential. It takes courage to look in the mirror and become the person you would be if you did not allow fear to hold you back, if you stopped listening to negative self-talk, and if you really lived your values.

The truth is more important than the facts, and this applies especially to the stories that you tell yourself about yourself: whether or not you consider them to be factual, in many cases they simply are not true. Every historian knows that the past is what you choose to remember and how you choose to remember that past. Reframe harmful memories so that instead of feeling victimized by what might have happened to you in the past, you appreciate how you are stronger and wiser as a result of what has happened.

Low self-esteem and poor self-image are insidiously dishonest because they are your lesser self telling lies to your better self in an effort to prevent you from taking risks and removing the basket from your inner candle. They can be excuses for cowardice and laziness. And when you hear that toxic inner voice of negative self-talk start a sentence with the words “I can’t,” it is almost always a lie. The truth usually is that you can but you don’t want to, it would be hard or inconvenient, there are other things that you would rather do.

One way to turn that untruthful statement “I can’t” into something positive and truthful is to add the word “yet.” When you say “I can’t yet” you are shifting your focus from the past – all the things that you think are holding you back – to the future and the things that you must do in order to turn can’t into can – and more important, to turn can into will.

A powerful tool for self-mastery, self-belief, and self-truth is a commitment to the seven promises of The Self Empowerment Pledge that was included earlier in the book

One of the surest ways of being true to yourself is to be true to a cause or a goal that is bigger than you. This will help you keep ego, self-interest, and the other manifestations of your lesser self under control.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“Are [highly accomplished people] also special and gifted and divine? No more than you are, no more than I am. The only difference, the very only one, is that they have begun to understand what they really are and have begun to practice it.”

Richard Bach: *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*

MODULE 6: CORE ACTION VALUE #2 IS INTEGRITY

.....
Hendrick Kraemer was a lay missionary living in Holland when Germany invaded during the Second World War and began rounding up Jews to be sent to concentration camps. When his neighbors asked him what they should do, he replied "If you know who you are, then you will know what to do."
.....

The vignette above is from Ronald J. Greer's book *If You Know Who You Are Then You Will Know What To Do*. This is the bridge between Core Action Value #1, Authenticity – knowing who you are – and Core Action Value #2, Integrity – knowing what to do. In his book Greer writes, "A major element of my completeness as a person is following the set of values in which I believe and by which I strive to live." That is integrity in action.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said that character is destiny. Without integrity short-term winners become long-term losers, the way that Enron crashed and burned, and that Lance Armstrong almost overnight went from being an American hero to being one of the most despised people on the planet. Violating integrity can be a short step to a very hard fall.

The root of the word integrity is "integer" and that word implies a united and undivided whole. To be a person of integrity means to be whole – to be guided by the same values at work and at home; to be a loving parent who bullies coworkers on the job is to lack integrity. At a higher level, this means that, as Mother Teresa often said, we are all children of the same God. To have integrity is to look beyond race and ethnicity, job title, and other external factors and see the human being on the inside.

Trust is essential in families, in organizations, and in communities. As Stephen M.R. Covey wrote in his book *The Speed of Trust*, "When trust is high, the dividend you receive is like a performance multiplier, elevating an improving every dimension of your organization and your life." But it is critical to understand that trust is not a value – trust is an *outcome*. You *earn* trust by being a person of integrity – a person who can be trusted to be honest and reliable, the first two Cornerstones of Core Action Value #2.

Avoid people of questionable integrity, people who are not trustworthy, and people who seem to get their greatest joy by putting other people down. Not only do you risk seeming guilty by association, over time it is virtually inevitable that you will absorb the negative attitudes and behaviors of these people.

Do not participate in gossip, not even as a passive listener. Passing rumors and talking about people behind their backs is always dishonest, because even if factually correct the story becomes twisted as it is passed along. This violates your integrity and the dignity of the person about whom these rumors are being spread.

Two things that often get people into trouble on the integrity front are being behind in their obligations and being in over their heads in debt. A commitment to being more focused in your time and money management will help you avoid missed commitments and broken promises.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Integrity means being whole, unbroken, undivided. It describes a person who has united the different parts of his or her personality, so there is no longer a split in the soul... For the person of integrity, life may not be easy but it is simple: Figure out what is right and do it. All other considerations come in second.”

Harold Kushner: *Living a Life That Matters*

MODULE 7: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF INTEGRITY IS HONESTY

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Former British Prime Minister James Callahan said: “A lie can be halfway round the world before the truth has got its boots on.” And that was in the days before the internet could spread a lie around the world in the time it takes to hit the send button!
.....

When you gain something by telling a lie, you lose something far more important. When you lose something by telling the truth, you gain something far more valuable.

Genuine honesty is more than just not telling lies – it is living the truth. Genuine honesty is not a noun or an adjective – it is a verb. It is being honest with yourself and with others in your attitudes, your behaviors, your habits, and your relationships.

Honesty with others begins with self-honesty. Self-deception can take on many guises: rationalization, procrastination, finger-pointing, and arrogance are different ways that we justify attitudes and behaviors of lesser self that our best self would not tolerate.

Low self-esteem and a poor self-image are different forms of self-deception; pretending to be less than you really are can be an excuse for laziness and cowardice – for staying home and watching television when your best self would be at the library, at the gym, or volunteering at the soup kitchen.

Anytime you hear yourself saying “I can’t...” admit that it’s probably not true (as The Beatles put it in the song All You Need is Love, there’s nothing you can do that can’t be done). Whatever it is “I can’t” do, you probably can do, especially if it’s really important to your being true to your authentic best self. More likely, what you really mean is that it would be difficult, it would be inconvenient, or some other excuse. When you admit to yourself that the achievement is, in fact, within your power, you have taken the first step toward its fulfillment: the step of being honest with yourself. As author Richard Bach wrote in his book *Illusions*, “You are never given a wish without also being given the power to make it true,” though he goes on to point out that making it true will probably require hard work.

Fear can motivate unethical and dishonest behavior. People are more likely to be dishonest when they feel threatened. Organizations that have a culture of fear tend to be characterized by secrets, rumor-mongering, blame-passing, and other forms of dishonesty (which is the main reason that TQM guru W. Edwards Deming made “drive fear out of the workplace” one of his 14 points for total quality management). Real leaders don’t drive people with fear – they inspire, encourage, guide, and celebrate, but they do not manipulate or intimidate.

In his book *People of the Lie* Dr. M. Scott Peck said that his best definition of evil was militant ignorance. A real-world example is tobacco companies having spent billions of dollars trying to convince people that smoking is not harmful. At the personal level, to not listen to criticisms or to acknowledge your own shortcomings can become militant ignorance. Some truths are indeed hard to hear, but to deny them is to violate integrity.

There are times when tact and diplomacy are more truthful than brutal honesty. Think twice before you blurt out “a truth” that might cause pain without any corresponding benefit.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“When our deceitful nature is balanced by integrity, we have the confidence to open the doors to our homes, our businesses, our bank accounts and our credit reports and feel proud that we are responsible, contributing members of our communities. It keeps us on the straight road to success – the path that ensures that we will uphold our values, remember what is important, and make conscious choices.”

Debbie Ford: *Why Good People Do Bad Things*

MODULE 8: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF INTEGRITY IS RELIABILITY

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The old proverb has it that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. But if there is there is such a road, it is not paved with good intentions, it's paved with broken promises. It is fine to have lots of good intentions, just be careful about turning those intentions into promises, then be sure that you keep the ones you do make.

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A great definition of being reliable: Doing what you say you're going to do, when you say you're going to do it, and doing it to the very best of your ability.

In *The 5 Second Rule* Mel Robbins describes how any time you have an impulse to act on a goal, you must physically move within 5 seconds or your brain will kill the idea. She advises that as soon as you have an impulsive to do something worthwhile (e.g. go to the gym or the library) you do a 5-4-3-2-1 countdown and as soon as you reach 1, you get up and move.

"Under promise and over deliver" is often held out as a formula for excellent customer service, and it is a good one. One of the best ways to become more reliable is to make fewer promises, but to complete the ones you have made on (or ahead of) schedule and in a way that far exceeds the expectations of the person to whom you have made that promise. Learn how to say no more often so that you can finish on time with the things you're already said yes to; saying "I'll think about it" when someone asks you to do something is a way of buying time so that you can decide if you really have the time to keep the commitment.

Procrastination is the ultimate enemy of reliability. Procrastination is putting off the work of today into the mists of tomorrow with the consequence that you are perpetually living under the shadow of what should have been done yesterday. Here is a 9-word secret to overcoming procrastination: *just say no* (to tempting diversions and distractions); *just do it* (stop overthinking and take the first step); and *do it now* (as Mark Twain said, if eat your live toad first thing in the morning the rest of your day will assuredly go better).

Integrity often faces its most severe test when you are at your weakest and most vulnerable because that is when you are most likely to give in to fear and not do the things you must do in order to keep your commitments and your promises.

Being reliable begins with "turning pro" (the central advice of Steven Pressfield's book *The War of Art*): Pros show up every day and do their best work until quitting time; pros are committed for the long haul and take short-term setbacks in stride; pros are self-validating – they don't need external approval to do their work; pros focus on getting their work done, not on whether others will approve of it; and pros know you cannot conquer fear, that you must do the work in spite of the fear.

Here's a great idea: Create your own personal reliability slogan the way that FedEx is the one to use when it "absolutely positively has to be there overnight" and the Sears battery is the "die hard." Commit yourself to being "the one to go to when the stakes are high and the chips are down" or "the one you can count on when it counts" – then work on acting the part.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“The rules are simple: Don’t make agreements you don’t want to make. Keep all the agreements you make. Tell the rock-bottom truth if you find you are not going to keep an agreement. Cop to it immediately if you fail to keep an agreement.”

Gay Hendricks and Kate Ludeman: *The Corporate Mystic*

MODULE 9: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF INTEGRITY IS HUMILITY

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The I Ching, an ancient book of Chinese wisdom, admonished that “The mind should be kept humble and free, so that it may remain receptive to good advice. People soon give up counseling a man who thinks he knows everything better than anyone else.”
(from the translation by Richard Wilhelm and Carey F. Baynes)
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Leadership authority Jim Collins defines level five leadership as being a paradoxical blend of an incredibly strong commitment to achieve important goals coupled with a very genuine sense of personal humility. The leaders we all most admire (think of Abraham Lincoln) embody these qualities, and it is an essential ingredient of servant leadership.

Honesty often requires a good-sized dollop of humility; just because you believe something doesn't make it true. True honesty (as opposed to true believing) mandates that you acknowledge the possibility that you are wrong. This requires being objective (being willing and able to see the world from a different, even opposing, perspective) and it requires being humble (getting your ego, emotions and personal ambitions out of the way of seeing that bigger picture with clearer eyes).

Distinguish between opinions and facts and remain humble and open to the possibility that no matter how fervently you happen to believe something, it does not mean that people who believe differently are necessarily wrong, or even that you might be wrong yourself. Just because you believe something does not make it true, and just because you do not want to believe something does not make it false.

Give credit when things go right and accept blame when things go wrong. But when things go wrong, accept responsibility without giving in to debilitating guilt.

We do not trust people who are arrogant and narcissistic. They tend to listen only to radio station WIIFM (What's In It For Me?) and their decisions are guided primarily by their own self-interest. They do not seek, and will not accept, genuine feedback or constructive criticism. Their hubris – the pride that comes before the fall – often sets the stage for eventual failure, or catastrophe.

Because there is no humility gene, this is something that we must conscientiously work to nurture. The nurse leader with heart learns to give credit when things go well and to accept responsibility when they do not go well; to accept and listen to others without prejudging or making assumptions; to look past superficial appearances and stereotypes; and to laugh loudest when the joke is on her. After all, the words humor and humility share the same root.

Virtually every failure of integrity begins with arrogance on the part of those responsible; humility is an essential ingredient of effective leadership.

Humility shares the same root as the word humor. Humble people laugh about their problems and predicaments rather than whining about them, and they laugh loudest when the joke is on them.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Humility is essential in being perceived as trustworthy. Do you trust a person who is arrogant, boastful, or narcissistic? When we sense self-grandeur in another person, we often feel an uneasiness in the pit of the stomach – an intuitive warning. Humility is inherent in someone who realizes their strengths and talents are gifts bestowed on them by God. They know these are gifts to be grateful for, not arrogant with... Humble leaders view themselves as blessed and thus revere others and their gifts.”

Ellen Castro: *Spirited Leadership*

MODULE 10: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF INTEGRITY IS STEWARDSHIP

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Chief Seattle said, "We don't own the earth, we are borrowing it from our grandchildren." This quote captures the essence of the stewardship obligation. It is a matter of integrity that we honor our obligation to future generations.
.....

Integrity means honesty and reliability. But it also means wholeness and soundness. Real integrity is more than just a standard of personal behavior. It also requires a broader concern for our resources, our organizations, our earth, and for the generations that will inhabit it in the future.

Effective management of resources is not simply a matter of productivity, it is also a matter of integrity. Any resources that are wasted today will somehow diminish the potential for abundance tomorrow. Stewardship takes place at multiple levels – personal, organizational, national, and environmental. Frugality is a debt we owe to our children. Productivity is a debt we owe to our customers. Fiscal responsibility is an obligation that politicians and policy-makers owe to us. Environmental conservation is a debt that we all owe to our grandchildren.

Personal stewardship means managing your personal resources so that, should adversity happen, you won't become a burden to your family or our society. Develop and implement a financial plan that helps you achieve financial independence as quickly as possible; this will probably mean making short-term sacrifices.

Organizational stewardship requires us to work as efficiently and as productively as possible so that resources can be invested in people (employees and customers). Take to heart the Biblical advice of Ecclesiastes: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do with it all your might." Go to work with a positive attitude and a willingness to extend yourself for coworkers.

Environmental stewardship mandates us to make whatever sacrifices are necessary today so future generations can appreciate the divine world with which we have been blessed, and will have the natural resources with which to build upon the accomplishments of previous generations. Do your part to assure future generations do not suffer through the widely-predicted global environmental crisis by reducing, reusing, and recycling.

In his book *A Short History of Nearly Everything* Bill Bryson wrote about how global climate change is causing glaciers to melt, coral reefs to die, deserts to expand, and human suffering to increase, then said: "It's an unnerving thought that we may be the living universe's supreme achievement and its worst nightmare simultaneously."

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Values matter because having principles you live by brings you joy, peace, and yes, even wealth... How you handle or mishandle your money tells us who you are and, more important, it tells you who you are. Your priorities, passions, goals, and fears are shown clearly in the flow of your money. Your value system, or lack of one causes money to flow around you, past you, or to you. When money is in your possession, what you do with it screams loudly who you are.”

Dave Ramsey: *More Than Enough*

MODULE 11: CORE ACTION VALUE #3 IS AWARENESS

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McZen said, "If you're not enjoying the journey, the destination will be a disappointment." He also said, "Live your dreams before they come true, just in case you never wake up." The challenge of awareness is to wake up to life so that you can live your dreams and not just dream about them.

.....

Awareness is essential to both personal and professional success. Your level of awareness will determine extent to which you appreciate the beauty of the world around you, perceive the opportunities for service and achievement that are always open to someone who is paying attention, and the quality of your interactions and relationships with other people. Awareness is the key to a successful and rewarding experience in virtually every dimension of life – as a parent, as a caregiver, as a professional, as a leader, as a citizen, and as a human being.

At its most fundamental level, awareness simply means paying attention, and it has both an inner and an outer dimension. Inwardly, it means being acutely aware of your thoughts, attitudes, and emotions, and not allowing ego, inappropriate emotional reactions, or inauthentic and self-centered ambitions to distort your perception of reality. Outwardly, it means appreciating the beauty of the world around you and looking past superficialities to really understand what is going on in the events and with the people in your lives.

In the book excerpt below, Jon Kabat-Zinn says wherever you go there you are. But for many of us a truer statement would be wherever you go you are somewhere else, mentally in another time zone and zip code. Unfortunately, in today's world the environment is constantly seeking to pull our attention in different directions (Oh look, there goes another squirrel!). The "news" is filled with tragi-tainment and the media tries to sell us stuff we don't need. In his book *The Shallows*, Nicholas Carr describes how our addiction to our gadgets and to the internet is actually rewiring our brains, making it harder for us to concentrate. One study showed that just having a cell phone within sight, even if you are not using it, reduces your IQ by ten percent.

Manage your temporal attention. Attention wanders from one time zone to another, often several times a minute. The more consciously and deliberately you manage the allocation of your attention between those three time zones of past, present, and future – and the more selective you are in choosing what you will pay attention to within each of those time zones – the happier and more successful you are likely to be.

Manage your spatial awareness. One of the best things you can do to wake yourself up is to be simply be more vigilant in observing your surroundings. Instead of burying your nose in the gossip section of the newspaper when you're sitting at the airport, watch the people around you – chances are that they're far more entertaining than the people you'll read about in entertainment magazines.

Be Today, See Tomorrow – keep your attention in the present and keep your vision in the future. Learn from the past, plan for the future, but live in the present.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“We resonate with one another’s sorrows because we are interconnected. Being whole and simultaneously part of a larger whole, we can change the world simply by changing ourselves. If I become a center of love and kindness in this moment, then in a perhaps small but hardly insignificant way, the world now has a nucleus of love and kindness it lacked the moment before. This benefits me and it benefits others.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn: *Wherever You Go There You Are*

MODULE 12: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF AWARENESS IS MINDFULNESS

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Slow down on the inside so you can speed up on the outside.
Mindfulness is essential for being effectively productive.
.....

Learn from the past, plan for the future, but live in the present. Past and future are bookends; it is in the present that the real story is being written. It's a good thing to dream and plan, but you are most likely to succeed if those dreams and plans are based on an accurate and objective assessment of the current reality.

Your attention is your most precious resource because it is so finite and limited. We ask people to “pay” attention, not to “lend” attention, precisely because we are asking them to give up this most non-renewable of resources. Mindfulness is also about being present in meetings, conversations with the people we work with and with family and friends at home. It often means setting aside preoccupations and fixing our awareness on the present that is right in front of us. Remember: the word “present” is a synonym for the word “gift.”

All emotional pain is caused by mental time travel and virtual out-of-body experiences. These are often caused by YOWE – Your Own Worst Enemy – directing your attention away from the present and toward time zones and zip codes that cause emotional distress and anguish.

- » Regret, guilt, anger, hatred, depression, and shame are caused by dragging around the dead weight of the past – and as every historian knows, the past is what you choose to remember and how you choose to remember it. YOWE loves to wallow around in the drama of past grievances and grudges and will, often without warning, nudge your conscious awareness into the past.
- » Fear, anxiety, dread, worry, doubt, and uncertainty are caused by projecting your consciousness forward into the future (a future you do not want to come about). Unfortunately, if you believe in the power of visualization (which you should, as we will see in Core Action Value #8, Vision), ruminating on bad things that might happen in the future might well increase the likelihood that they will happen.

Do not allow yourself to be crushed between the anvil of yesterday's regrets and the hammer of tomorrow's fears. What Buddhists call “the miracle of mindfulness” and Christians call “the peace of God that passes all understanding” can only be achieved by living in the present.

Learn from the past, plan for the future, but live in the present. Ironically, the more you practice the present living discipline of mindfulness, the more clearly and objectively you will be able to understand the lessons of past experiences, and the more courageously you will be able to plan for the future.

In her book *Chapters* Candice Carpenter writes: “What you have to remember is that you're doing hard work even when you seem to be doing nothing. You're shedding an old skin, the shell you've lived inside, the old way of knowing yourself and letting others know you.”

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“[Automatic] thoughts and images in endless procession steal our time because they steal our attention... What we experience as thought when our minds are on automatic is worlds apart from the intelligence that resides in Self... We are called to free our mind, our attention, from its absorption in its own automatic functioning.”

Jacob Needleman: *Time and the Soul*

MODULE 13: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF AWARENESS IS OBJECTIVITY

.....
*To be objective is to see things as they really are – not as they used to be, as they should be,
as you wish they were, or as you fear they might become – but as they really are.*
.....

It is always the best of times and the worst of times, depending upon what you choose to see and how you choose to interpret what you see. And the truth is that things are never as good, and never as bad, as they seem – and they are continuously changing.

In *Leadership Is an Art*, Max DePree said that the leader's first duty is to "define reality." This turns out to be easier said than done since we unavoidably view the world around us through the lens of our own ego, emotions, and ambitions. An important part of awareness is acknowledging the influence of these factors, and then striving to rise above them. Or as M. Scott Peck wrote in *The Road Less Traveled*: "Mental health is an ongoing process of dedication to reality at all costs."

Research on emotional intelligence shows that emotions profoundly influence "rational" decision-making. Moods and emotions (good and bad) can interfere with objective thinking. When you are in a state of high anxiety, depression, or other negative emotional state you tend to see the world as you are, not as it really is. On the other hand, if you are in a manic state of mind you are more likely to disregard real risks and threats.

When you find yourself in an argument or vehemently disagreeing with someone, try to look at the situation from the 180-degree opposite position. What is the other person seeing that you are not seeing? What have they read that you have not read? Remember, just because you believe something doesn't make it true, and just because you do not want to believe something doesn't make it false. People look for facts to justify their opinions, they don't look at the facts and then make up their minds. Be aware of how your biases influence your opinions. It takes courage (Core Action Value #4) to say, "I could be wrong" and "You could be right."

Be aware of the difference between intuition (which will usually guide you toward your authentic true north) and gut feel (which usually says more about you than what you're reacting to and will often steer you wrong.) Avoid labels, stereotypes, and first impressions the instant they pop into your mind and challenge the assumptions you make about other people. These almost always cloud objective assessment and are almost at least partially wrong.

In his *Letters to a Young Poet* Rainer Maria Rilke advise the insecure young man to "train your doubt." That is pretty good advice for being more objective. Don't let your doubt stop you from taking risks. Rather, make it ask good questions and use it as a guide to steer you toward the best answers.

Here's a great way to boost your awareness and enhance your objectivity: pretend that you're a newspaper reporter. Carry around a pen and a steno pad and make notes – and remember, the hallmark of a good journalist is awareness: the ability to be observant and objective. Reporters need to be observant, and they need to be objective. And they need to ask great questions. You'll be amazed at how effectively this exercise can help you keep your eyes sharp, keep your mouth shut, and keep your eyes and ears open.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“It takes objective thinking to work through challenging situations. Even if there is only an iota of positiveness, you must search to find it. It takes only a match to light of a room. If you sink into the negativity of a situation and start thinking of all the bad things that appear to be happening, the obstacles to your progress will only seem greater. If you focus on only the seeds in a watermelon, you missed the sweetness of the meat.”

Wally Amos: Watermelon Magic

MODULE 14: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF AWARENESS IS EMPATHY

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The well-known Cleveland Clinic empathy videos challenge us to look beyond superficial appearance and see the human behind the name tag. We all have stories and having empathy for those stories in others is one of the finest of human qualities.
.....

It's an old proverb that we tend to judge ourselves mostly by our good intentions, but others will judge us based upon our actions. Meanwhile, others are judging themselves based upon their good intentions while we are judging them based upon their actions.

The late Mary Kay Ash would tell her beauty consultants (not salespeople – beauty consultants!) that they should imagine everyone they met was wearing a sign that said MMFI – Make Me Feel Important. That is a great formula for empathy. It is also a great formula for charisma, since the most charismatic leaders are the ones who make us feel important. The technical definition of empathy is the ability to feel someone else's emotions, but for the leader there is a higher standard. Empathy is not just being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes – it is making that other person feel special and creating a bond of mutual acceptance and compassion.

Alcoholics Anonymous adheres to the principle of mutuality, referring to the fact that the recovering drunk's sponsor needs the drunk every bit as much as the drunk needs his or her sponsor. The AA principle of mutuality states that the relationship between the sponsor and the one being sponsored is not hierarchical but rather reflects that they both need each other. Every doctor or nurse needs the patient – no matter what they look like, act like, or smell like – as much as that patient needs the caregiver. This is one reason why recovering addicts often make the best drug and alcohol treatment counselors – they can empathize with the experience of the living hell of addiction.

Distinguish between commiseration, sympathy, and empathy. Commiseration is two people having a pity party (co-miserate = be miserable together); sympathy is genuinely feeling sorry for someone struggling through a tough experience; empathy is actually being able to put yourself in the shoes of another person and feel what they are feeling. While there are certainly times when sympathy and commiseration are appropriate (for example, after some sort of personal tragedy), they are often exactly the opposite of what the person who is in a funk of self-pity really needs.

Really listening to others entails: watching body language and facial expressions, listening to the story behind the story, putting yourself in the other person's shoes, and not thinking about what you'll say in response. Empathy is enhanced by active listening, and active listening is a discipline that can be learned and cultivated with practice.

Here's a great idea: Be a Dionarap, which is the word paranoid spelled backwards (it's not in the dictionary yet because I made it up). Assume that other people are acting in good faith and try to understand why they do what they do by putting yourself in their shoes before you pass judgment, before you react (do this and you will avoid saying and doing things that you later regret).

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Empathy is our social radar... At the very least, empathy requires being able to read another’s emotions; at a higher level, it entails sensing and responding to a person’s unspoken concerns or feelings. At the highest levels, empathy is understanding the issues or concerns that lie behind another’s feelings.”

Daniel Goleman: *Working With Emotional Intelligence*

MODULE 15: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF AWARENESS IS REFLECTION

.....
*The unexamined life is not worth living, said Socrates, and by this he meant
that to really fulfill your potential as a human being you must take time to reflect upon
what you want, where you are going, and who you are becoming.*
.....

In a paradox as old as The Bible, you must lose yourself in order to find yourself. You will never *find* time for reflection, you must *make* time for it by taking the time away from something else (often meaning that you ignore the “urgent” so you can focus on the important). The best time for doing that is the golden hour of each day – the first and the last 30 minutes. In the morning, before you check email or read the headlines, take 30 minutes for reflection, introspection, prayer and for visualizing the day in front of you. Then at night, just before you go to bed, turn off the television and stow away the cell phone and devote your last 30 waking minutes to thinking about how your day went, and what you could have done to make it go better.

There is always a gap between what you say your values are and how those values are actually reflected in your calendar, your checkbook register, the decisions you make and the relationships you create. The challenge in life is to recognize that gap and continuously work to narrow it. Unfortunately, as executive coach Marshall Goldsmith describes in *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, we are almost always the last to be aware when there is a disconnect between what we say are our values and the attitudes and behaviors that others see in us.

Television, email, the internet, video games – these are among what are known as the “soft addictions” that can prevent people from really reflecting on things that really matter. No one on their deathbed ever said they wished they'd spent more time watching television, surfing the internet, shopping at Wal-Mart, or pumping coins into a casino slot machine. Reflection can help you focus your time and energy on the things that really matter.

Especially in times of loss or trauma, it's important to balance time in the company of others with time for solitude for reflection and introspection. True reflection can be painful because it will inevitably dredge up the bad and the ugly along with the good.

Appreciate the two great detachments and the freedoms that they bring: Detachment from material possessions grants you freedom of movement – geographically and professionally; detachment from the opinions of other people grants you freedom of conscience.

To fulfill your potential as a human being you must make time to reflect upon what you want, where you were going, and who you are becoming. Giving yourself time and the space for reflection is essential. There is a constant clash within each of us between Ego and Soul. Ego strives for recognition and desires things, whereas Soul strives for love and desires beauty.

Replace expectation with expectancy. If life does not give you the answers you want to hear, it just might be giving you the answers you need to hear. It also might be telling you that you need to start asking better questions.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“It is my belief that each personality does already have a quiet center within, which is never disturbed, and is unmoved, like the mathematical point in the very center of a wheel or axle which remains stationary. What we need to do is to find this quiet center within us and retreat into it periodically for rest, recuperation, and renewed vigor.”

Maxwell Maltz: *Psycho-Cybernetics*

MODULE 16: CORE ACTION VALUE #4 IS COURAGE

.....
*Fear is a reaction, courage is a decision. The absence of fear is not courage, it is mental illness.
Fear is a natural, hardwired human condition. Fear can be your greatest enemy by paralyzing you from
taking necessary action. Or it can be your greatest ally by catalyzing you to take that action.*
.....

Courage, said Winston Churchill, is the most important of all virtues because it is the one that makes all the other virtues possible. C.S. Lewis took that one step farther by saying that courage is the other virtues at the point where they are tested. It's easy to have integrity where there is no temptation, and it's easy to be brave when there is no danger. It takes courage to live one's values when they are being challenged.

Unfortunately, fear can also be a profoundly devastating learning disability. People who don't ask questions for fear of looking dumb never learn. People who don't try for fear of failure never grow. People who never ask for fear of rejection never gain. People who fear the uncertainty of change stagnate. You might have heard that the acronym FEAR stands for Fantasized Evidence Appearing Real. When it prevents you from taking necessary action, it is also a Fabulous Excuse for Avoiding Responsibility.

Distinguish between anxiety, fear, and worry. Anxiety is non-specific dread – the threatening cloud on the horizon. Fear is specific and current – the raging storm overhead right now. Worry is specific and future – the forecast of more raging storms tomorrow. When you're feeling emotionally distressed, ask yourself whether the predominant emotion is anxiety (non-specific dread about the uncertain future), fear (acute alarm about a current situation), or worry (anticipating problems in the future).

When you are in the thrall of anxiety you suffer cognitive distortion at three levels: past memories are distorted, current perceptions are distorted, and future vision is distorted. When suffering from high anxiety all your past failures seem like your fault and certain to be repeated; your current resources seem woefully inadequate to the trials you are facing; and it is impossible to visualize that "expect a miracle" outcome where everything works out far better than you ever could have imagined.

People are not afraid of rejection and failure, they are afraid of humiliation (rejection is the red badge of courage and failure is the medal of honor – cowards don't win many of either). But the mother of all fears is the fear of success and the granddaddy of all fears is the fear of running out of time.

Get the facts. Fear breeds in ignorance and dissipates when you shine the light of knowledge upon it. What do you not know that if you did know would make your fear more manageable, and how can you find it out? Talk back to your fear. When fear is trying to prevent you from taking risks that could in fact eliminate the source of the fear, you need to put on your bravest face, rebut your fears with your bravest affirmations, then fake it till you make it. As Mark Twain said – act brave, even if you're not, because nobody can tell the difference.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“That’s how fear works. First it sends along doubt to soften you up. You begin to doubt whether or not you’re doing things right. Then you doubt whether you’re doing the right thing. And finally, you doubt whether you’re even the right person. Once there is enough doubt, once you stop believing in yourself, then fear knows it can defeat you. Its very cowardice is what makes fear such a treacherous enemy.”

Joe Tye: *Never Fear, Never Quit: A Story of Courage and Perseverance*

MODULE 17: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF COURAGE IS CONFRONTATION

.....
Eleanor Roosevelt said, "You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face."
.....

You cannot make fear go away, you must confront it with courage.

Scratch any negative emotion or self-sabotaging behavior deeply enough and at the bottom you will find fear. Low self-esteem is often caused by fear of not measuring up and worry about what others might think of us. Procrastination is fueled by fear of undesirable outcomes (or on our laziest days, fear of hard work). Managerial abdication is fueled by fear of confrontation. As in medicine, when it comes to taking courageous action, diagnosis the first step to effective treatment. Defining your fears as clearly as possible will guide you toward the actions you must take to overcome those fears. You must, as Eleanor Roosevelt admonished, look fear in the face and do the things that you know must be done but which cause you apprehension.

Fear can be a prison more confining than any iron bars by preventing you from taking action. It can be a thief that can through your reaction to it can cause you to lose anything that can be taken from you in a robbery. And at the extreme fear can be a killer – many suicides are provoked by fears of one sort or another. But fear is also a bully and a coward that attacks you when you're weak. If you confront it with strength fear will, like all bullies do, back down.

Fear can be an ally when it tells you that you are not ready for something that might happen in the future; if fear of failing a test inspires you to study, then it is your ally. Fear can be an ally when it is a call to action; if fear of not making a sales quota catalyzes you to make more sales calls, then it is your ally. Fear can be an ally when it enlightens you to the fact that you are on the wrong path in life; if fear gives you permission to give up delusions of grandeur and become who you were meant to be, then it is your ally. And fear is your ally when it is a call to faith; the biggest fears in life – e.g. death or loss of a loved one – cannot be prevented but you can prepare for them by strengthening faith (Core Action Value #6).

Courage is not an emotion; people who do courageous things do not feel courage – they *feel* fear and do what they have to do in the face of that fear. The battle between fear and courage is a struggle between your frightened lesser self and your courageous better self.

If you give fear a name, it becomes just a problem, and it's easier to solve a problem than it is to conquer fear. If you are afraid of losing a job (not an unreasonable fear in today's world), then the problem is that you are not indispensable. Of course, no one is indispensable, but the more you do to make yourself invaluable (by learning new skills, coming up with new ideas, volunteering for additional projects, supporting your colleagues, and the like) the more you will be seen as being indispensable. And should you lose the job anyway, all that work will have made you more eligible for an even better job elsewhere.

Caring is the root of courage. The only reason you feel anxiety and fear is because you care about something – and the more you care, the more intense these emotions will be. If you did not care whether anyone ever read the novel you have worked so hard to write, fear of rejection would not stop you from seeking a publisher.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“He who has conquered doubt and fear has conquered failure. His every thought is allied with power, and all difficulties are bravely met and wisely overcome... Thought allied fearlessly to purpose becomes creative force.”

James Allen: *As A Man Thinketh*

MODULE 18: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF COURAGE IS TRANSFORMATION

.....
Fear is the parent of both cowardice and courage.
.....

Fear and courage are opposite sides of the same coin. There is no courage without fear. One of the greatest challenges in life is learning the skill of transforming fear into courage. Think about this: the physical symptoms of terror and exhilaration are identical: sweaty palms, racing pulse, wide eyes, shallow breathing. The only difference is the name you give to the symptoms. What you feel depends on your attitude: are you frightened or are you excited? Transform the negative energy of fear into the positive, catalytic energy for productive action.

The challenge of leadership is to help people transform the paralyzing power of fear into the catalyzing power of courage. Make sure that you and others are afraid of the right things (the competition and not the boss, losing the customer and not losing your job). Recognize that both fear and courage are contagious, and that the best way for you to gain courage is to share it with others, even if you think you don't have it.

Distinguish between fear and risk. Many of the things we fear (being eaten by a shark) are actually of infinitesimally low risk while we take for granted much higher risk activities (smoking, riding a motorcycle without a helmet). We fear rejection (nobody likes to be told no), but the risk is absolutely zero. When someone says no to your job application, your book proposal or your invitation to go to a movie, you are exactly where you were before you asked, except that now you know something you did not know before.

Distinguish between verbs, adjectives, and nouns. To have failed (verb) at keeping a job, or to have been part of a failing (adjective) business, does not make you a failure (noun). Pay attention to the words, images, and metaphors that you use to define yourself and your circumstances; many of our greatest fears and doubts are self-inflicted by inappropriate choices in how we talk to ourselves. And be careful not to use frightening and disempowering words and metaphors. Never tell someone that you are "hanging in there" because it implies that you are desperate – hanging on by the fingernails or at the end of your rope.

Be Today, See Tomorrow – keep your attention in the present and your vision in the future. When afraid of what's happening right now, keep your vision on the most miraculous possible outcome. When afraid for the future, keep your attention on the work that is in front of you right now.

People are not afraid of change, they are afraid of the uncertainty that goes along with change; since there are no guarantees, you must learn to cope with anxiety. It's been said that no boat ever reached a distant shore without first leaving sight of home. The uncertainty can be frightening – but it can also be exhilarating. As T.S. Eliot said, no one knows how far they can go without first running the risk of going too far.

Courage without energy is little more than a good intention; energy without courage is more likely to run away than it is to stand and fight.

MODULE 19: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF COURAGE IS ACTION

.....
Positive thinking is expecting something and working to make it happen; wishful thinking is hoping for something and waiting for someone else to make it happen. The difference between the two is having a bias for and commitment to taking action.
.....

Action is the hacksaw that cuts through the prison bars of fear. You cannot wish your way out, you cannot wait your way out. You can only work your way out. Every time you escape the prison of fear, you grow stronger and more confident. It will always be there, trying to wall you in, but you will eventually grow so strong that you can just step right over the walls. Action is the difference between wishful thinking and positive thinking. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, if you do the thing you fear the death of the fear is certain.

In *The Analects*, Confucius is quoted as saying, "To see what is right and not to do it is cowardice." Having the courage to act and do the things you are afraid to do is the difference between having unfulfilled good intentions and making a difference. And as John F. Kennedy wrote in *Profiles in Courage*, "To be courageous... requires no exceptional qualifications, no magic formula, no special combination of time, place and circumstance. It is an opportunity that sooner or later is presented to us all."

Do not wait for fear to go away before you take action toward an important goal. The fear does not go away. Fear is programmed into your DNA. Indeed, the longer you put off acting in the face of your fears, the more terrifying they are likely to become. While fear is an emotion, courage is making the decision to overcome that emotion. People who do brave things do not feel courageous. The person who runs in front of a speeding truck to push someone out of harm's way does not feel courage – they feel fear and still do what needs to be done. Being afraid is okay. Letting fear paralyze you is not okay.

The difference between crazy and courageous is often evident only in retrospect. The people who tell you that you are crazy to be taking a risk today will be the ones standing on the sidelines applauding when that risk pays off. Take the advice of Susan Jeffers from her book of this title: feel the fear and do it anyway.

Taking action means willingness to take risks. In their book *Whoever Makes the Most Mistakes Wins*, Richard Farson and Ralph Keyes argue that "the world belongs to those who don't let anxiety about screwing up keep them from moving forward. Those who are too afraid to make a mistake work for those who aren't." To act is to risk, and to risk is to eventually fail. Unfortunately, in our risk-averse world, failure has gotten a bad name. Because people are afraid to fail, they are afraid to act; because they fail to act, they fail to learn and grow, which is the ultimate failure.

The more afraid you are to do something the more certain you can be that it is the most important thing for you to do. Remember – the reason there is fear is because you care. Reminding yourself why you care will give you the courage to do what you must do.

Dare most when times are darkest. Courage has its greatest leverage when it appears that all is lost. This is a central message of The Hero's Journey described by mythologist Joseph Campbell.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“In the presence of danger [real or perceived] man often finds salvation in action. To dull emotion he must do something; to remain immobile, to stagnate in mind or body, is to surrender without terms. Whereas movement, work of any kind, helps to deliver him from those feelings which are traitors to his better nature.”

Lord Moran: *The Anatomy of Courage*

MODULE 20: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF COURAGE IS CONNECTION

.....
“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:
If one falls down, his friend can help him up.” - Ecclesiastes 3:9-10
.....

Fellowship is the most profound of human needs. If you saw the movie *Cast Away* you'll recall how Tom Hanks, lacking real human connection, found a soulmate in the form of a volleyball named Wilson. Fear breeds in isolation; courage is nurtured through connection.

One of every leader's responsibilities is to foster a culture where there is a spirit of mutual support and fellowship in the workplace. Can you imagine a support group environment where you work? A workplace where we had a commitment that, no matter how hard the work and how seemingly overwhelming the obstacles, everyone would go home somehow better for having been there, the way when a cancer support meeting ends people go home still having cancer but having been emotionally and spiritually uplifted by the fellowship of their group and with renewed courage to face the challenges of their disease. Wouldn't that be amazing?

Fear and courage are both contagious; follow the advice of Jonathan Swift and keep your fears to yourself but share your courage with others. If you don't have courage to share, then at least act like you do. As Mark Twain said, act brave even if you're not because no one else can tell the difference. Even better, if you fake courage long enough you will find that you have courage. Remember, courage is not the absence of fear – it is bravely confronting your fears. Setting an example of courage for others will help you inspire courage in yourself.

It is often when you're flat on your back that you meet the people who are most important in your life. Anyone who has ever participated in a support group has experienced this phenomenon. Paradoxically, it's often hardest to reach out when you are most in need of human connection. When you've lost a job, received bad news, or taken a hard fall the natural tendency is to want to crawl under the bed and pull the door in behind you – but that is the worst thing you can do. That is the most important time to reach out and make connection. Fear takes a back seat when you're helping others; it has a commanding presence when you're obsessed with your own worries.

The Course in Miracles says that the opposite of love is not hate, the opposite of love is fear. If that is true, it also stands to reason that love can also be the antidote to fear. In the words of a song by the contemporary musical group Morcheeba, “fear can stop your loving, love can stop your fear.” Fear and love are both four-letter words – it is our charge to have the courage to choose the right one.

In the biblical story that bears his name, Job suffered an inconceivable series of tragedies all on the same day. His friends tried to pin the blame on him, saying that he must have done terrible things in the past to deserve such punishment. Job complains to God – and God comes out of the whirlwind and terrifies the poor man. But then something beautiful happens. God tells Job to “pray for your friends,” the “miserable comforters” who'd blamed him for his trials. God was telling Job to stop feeling sorry for himself for a past that could not be undone and to reach out and connect again with those friends he'd pushed away.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Connectedness is the most powerful antidote we have to toxic worry at work.

Conversely, disconnectedness is the most common cause of toxic worry at work. Connectedness means simply a feeling of being a part of something larger than yourself. A family. A neighborhood.

A cause. Or, in the business world, a company or corporation. Connectedness seems to have broken down in America over the past fifty years.”

Edward M. Hallowell, M.D.: *Worry: Controlling It and Using It Wisely*

MODULE 21: CORE ACTION VALUE #5 IS PERSEVERANCE

.....
Every magnificent accomplishment was once the “impossible” dream of a dreamer who simply refused to quit when the going got tough. The bigger the dream, the greater the challenges.
.....

Perseverance follows naturally upon courage – it takes courage to start something, it takes perseverance to not quit when the inevitable obstacles and setbacks arise. Fear is a reaction, courage is a decision. Perseverance is making that decision day after day – it is courage that endures.

In *Frontiers of Management*, Harvard Business School professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter wrote that “everything can look like a failure in the middle.” Ain’t it the truth! We remember our greatest leaders not so much for their successes as for their perseverance through apparent failure in the middle: Moses in the desert, Joan of Arc at Orleans, Washington at Valley Forge, Churchill during the blitz, Helen Keller in the silent darkness, Nelson Mandela in prison. The leaders who truly inspire us are those who refuse to succumb to apparent failure in the middle.

Adversity is bitter medicine, but like much bitter medicine, it serves to make us better. As the Arab metaphor puts it, all sunshine makes a desert (and with the rain comes flowers and rainbows). Without adversity, there would be no need for perseverance – but with perseverance, adversity becomes an opportunity for personal growth. And here are its laws:

- » We learn and grow more from our setbacks than we do from our successes. Successfully overcoming the adversity of today prepares you for bigger challenges and accomplishments in the future.
- » Surviving adversity is a great way to build self-confidence, and to give you a more positive perspective on future adversity (“if we made it through *that* we can survive anything!”).
- » Adversity helps prevent hubris, arrogance, and complacency.
- » When things aren’t working, it forces you to look for more creative solutions.
- » What you’ve fought to gain you’ll fight to keep and visa versa — easy come, easy go. Past adversity translates into future tenacity.
- » There is opportunity hidden in every adversity if you have the strength and courage to search for it and to pursue it when you’ve found it.
- » Without the valleys, you won’t appreciate the mountains.
- » Adversity keeps teaching — it provides great stories for the grandchildren! Your setbacks can, if you’re committed to learning from them and teaching about them, be the source of great learning for others.

No adversity comes your way that does not also contain the seeds of future blessings – if you nurture them. In his beautiful book *The Last Lecture*, the late Randy Pausch wrote that brick walls are not there to stop you, they are there to make you prove how much you want something. The walls are not optional – letting them stop you is.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“The clear-cut assessment of many successful individuals anchors around setbacks and rejection. Make no mistake about it: Victories that come easy are cheap. Achievement owes its growth to the striving of the will, the encounter with fear, the ever-present danger of failure. He who has never failed has never succeeded.”

Dennis P. Kimbro: *What Makes the Great Great*

MODULE 22: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF PERSEVERANCE IS PREPARATION

.....
No sports team ever won a game because of the pregame pep rally – no matter how attractive the cheerleaders are, no matter how loudly they cheer. Teams win games because they are prepared – physically, intellectually, and emotionally.
.....

It is a sad truth that bad things do happen to good people. Money troubles, career crashes, health problems, family issues – sooner or later you're likely to experience them. Although you cannot know the specific nature and/or timing of each future adverse event, you can still prepare yourself to deal with them more effectively. Just as a fire department trains generically for the unknowable specific, you can prepare yourself at multiple levels to be ready for whatever might come along in your world. More than that, you can prepare yourself to not allow those bad things to make a victim out of you by the way in which you deal with them.

Obstacles are not optional. The bigger the dream, the greater the challenge. The more you want to accomplish in your life, the more barriers and obstacles you will have to overcome. It is easy to slip into a victim mindset when the world seems to be conspiring to prevent you from achieving your goals and realizing your dreams. One way to avoid falling into the trap of victim thinking is to routinely remind yourself that obstacles and setbacks are just an inevitable part of life, and that the bigger your dreams, the more likely it is you will be challenged along the way.

Think about the worst thing that could happen in the year to come. How can you prepare yourself for the eventuality – physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually? Now think about the best possible outcome if that adverse event did occur – the *expect a miracle* outcome? What can you do now to transform apparent adversity into a miraculous outcome? Since we often tend to get what we expect out of life, it is important to remember that even as you prepare for the worst, you should expect the best.

Here's a great idea: Have an imaginary conversation with the person you will be in twenty years. Ask that person what things you can do now to help the future you be more happy, healthy, secure and comfortable down the road. If you do this in good faith, you will hear a response. The future you will tell the current you to spend less and save more; to spend less time watching TV, we surfing, and social media chatting and more time having real experiences; to actually use the exercise equipment that is gathering dust in the corner; and to smile more and complain less. That conversation will help you prepare for your future and prevent experiencing the regrets that are predictable, and also preventable, in every life.

Napoleon Hill, author of the classic self-help book *Think and Grow Rich*, wrote that every successful person finds that their greatest accomplishments occur just after they have become convinced that their ideas will not work but kept at it anyway. Apparent failure is nothing more than a dress rehearsal for future success.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“Let me suggest that the bad things that happen to us in our lives do not have a meaning when they happen to us. They do not happen for any good reason which would cause us to accept them willingly. But we can give them a meaning. We can redeem these tragedies from senselessness by imposing meaning on them. The question we should be asking is not, ‘Why did this happen to me? What did I do to deserve this?’ That is really an unanswerable, pointless question. A better question would be ‘Now that this has happened to me, what am I going to do about it?’”

Harold Kushner: *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*

MODULE 23: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF PERSEVERANCE IS PERSPECTIVE

.....
One of the greatest opening lines of any novel ever written is from A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." What do we have today – the best of times or the worst of times? The answer is yes. It is the always the best of times and it is always the worst of times, depending upon the perspective that you choose to take.
.....

Distinguish between problems and predicaments. A problem can be solved; a predicament must be lived with. When Reinhold Niebuhr wrote the Serenity Prayer, he was really asking for the wisdom to distinguish between problems (the courage to change what can be changed) and predicaments (the serenity to accept what cannot be changed). One of the most frustrating experiences is dealing with a predicament as though it was a problem. Sometimes, the first step to maintaining a positive perspective is simply figuring out whether you've got a problem or predicament on your hands. Think about the most serious and/or frustrating challenges facing you right now. Are they problems or are they predicaments? If they're problems, what action can you take – starting right now – to deal with them? And if they're predicaments, remind yourself to accept them with equanimity, since there's nothing you can do about them anyway (at least not right away).

That you tend to get out of life what you expect isn't just a trite saying – it is a scientifically documented phenomenon. It is the underlying basis of the Placebo Effect, the Pygmalion Effect, and the Hawthorne Effect. What you choose to see today, and how you choose to interpret what you see, will have a profound influence on your expectations for the future. Whether or not to have a positive perspective is a choice that we all make every day. In fact, it is a choice we make many times a day. It is also a habit and a discipline – a commitment to conscientiously find the blessings and the constructive suggestions in every problem.

Thank God Ahead of Time is the title of a book by Father Michael Crosby. This is a powerful formula for reminding yourself to look for the silver linings in every storm cloud. But the time to internalize that commitment is before the storm hits. Imagine you have those words – Thank God Ahead of Time – tattooed on the inside of your forehead so that when bad things do happen (and remember, bad things do happen to good people) you will begin looking for the potential good in the situation instead of being victimized by the apparent bad.

Adversity often presents a fork in the road; taking the right turn can depend upon asking the right questions. After losing a job, for example, questions such as why me or how will I make ends meet tend to create a pessimistic victim mindset. On the other hand, questions like "Should I go back to school?" or "How could I raise the money to start my own business?" can lead to answers that position you to be in a very different place at some point down the road.

Joseph Campbell wrote in *The Power of Myth*: "One of the things that comes out in myths... is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light." That is the essence of what Campbell called "the hero's journey." It is at those darkest moments that we must not despair, must maintain our faith and determination, and sustain a positive perspective on our situation.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“A world of questions is a world of possibility. Questions open our minds, connect us which other, and shake outmoded paradigms... The best way to solve a problem is to first come up with better questions.”

Marilee Adams: *Change Your Questions Change Your Life*

MODULE 24: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF PERSEVERANCE IS TOUGHNESS

.....
Every great accomplishment was once the “impossible” dream of a dreamer who refused to quit when confronted with brick walls. The bigger the dream, the higher and thicker will be the walls. But remember this: the 23rd Psalm says that we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, not that we take up permanent residence down there in the shadows!
.....

You’ve gotta be strong! I will survive! Tough times don’t last; tough people do. These popular sayings recognize an important truth: it takes a certain amount of toughness to persevere through the obstacles and achieve your goals in life. This does not mean being unkind. Some of the kindest people in the history of the world – Jesus, Florence Nightingale, Mother Teresa – knew when to be tough, even in love. In many cases, the one person in your life who most needs tough love is you yourself.

It takes mental and emotional toughness to confront your fears, overcome adversity, and achieve your most authentic goals and dreams. The one person in your life who most needs tough love is the one you see in the mirror (specifically the spoiled inner brat). But positive enthusiasm and mental toughness are hardest to find at precisely those times where they are most important, which is why it’s essential to cultivate the underlying strength of character before it’s required.

When it feels like you’re deep in the valley of the shadow of death, you might not feel particularly courageous as you claw your way through, one day at a time. You might not feel the strength of character you’re gaining through your trials during those times of trial. It’s only later, after you’ve emerged from the valley and can look back down from the sunlit heights above, that you can appreciate the transformation that has occurred in you. You must walk through the valley on faith, one step at a time, so that you can climb out into the sunshine and the fresh air above.

Sometimes we quit before we even start by giving in to our doubts and fears, by procrastinating until the opportunity has passed, by not even trying. People usually quit *emotionally* before they quit physically. What you can do to prevent such an emotional collapse from derailing you in the march toward your dreams and goals?

Toughness does not mean going it on your own, Lone Ranger style. Sometimes it requires mental toughness to admit to yourself that you need help, including possible professional counseling (which in some cases may also include therapy and/or medication) to get you back on an even keel so you can pursue your goals. It is a sign.

In a letter to one of his generals who had suffered what turned out to be a temporary defeat Napoleon Bonaparte wrote, “Keep your spirits up, don’t allow yourself to be depressed, and never for one moment doubt but that matters will finish better and more quickly than you imagine.” That is pretty good advice for anyone going through a tough time.

MODULE 25: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF PERSEVERANCE IS LEARNING

.....
In his Letters to a Young Poet, Rainer Maria Rilke wrote: "If only it were possible for us to see farther than our knowledge reaches, and even a little beyond the outworks of our presentiment, perhaps we would bear our sadness with greater trust than we have in our joys."
.....

Nobody in their right mind consciously seeks out adversity, and very few of us welcome it when it arrives. It is a fact of life, however, that some amount of adversity is necessary for your growth and learning. Self-awareness is a continuous, life-long process of learning and introspection, and times of adversity tend to be where the best of that learning and introspection occurs. There are four ways that times of adversity can also be times of profound learning.

Times of difficulty are essential to build character: Adversity is like the physical therapist in a burn unit: in an already painful situation, it causes even more pain, but if you can endure that pain you will emerge stronger and more flexible. That which doesn't kill you will make you stronger, but only if you plumb the experience for its lessons.

We learn more from failure than we do from success: In their book *Built to Last*, Jim Collins and Jerry Porras found that many of the most successful corporations had to overcome many setbacks in their early years. The lessons they describe are as applicable to you personally and professionally as they are to the large corporations studied in that book, including this one: "Since you can't tell ahead of time which variations will prove to be favorable, you have to accept mistakes and failures as an integral part of the evolutionary process."

Adversity can open doors and identify opportunities: One door closes, another door opens, goes the old proverb. It is often in the face of seeming adversity that the greatest opportunities open before us. Many a fired or laid off worker has started a business they never otherwise would have begun and gone on to become highly successful. Some of the most effective and compassionate counselors and caregivers are those who through their own adversity opened the door to helping others.

Times of adversity are often when we meet the people who end up being most important in our lives: Anyone who has ever participated in a support group of any kind has seen this phenomenon: people come to their first meeting shattered, despondent, and convinced that they will never be whole again. A while later, they are filled with hope and courage, and have made many new friends. And in time, it is their turn to help others find a sense of meaning in what otherwise could be a meaningless tragedy.

That which doesn't kill you will make you stronger, but only if you plumb the experience for its lessons. Adversity is the valley that makes us appreciate the grandeur of the mountain tops. In his book *The Confidence Course* Walter Anderson wrote: "Every time we prevail – if even for a moment – over anxiety, fear of failure, feelings of vulnerability and inferiority, we are not left even. We are not as we were; we are ahead. With each obstacle we conquer, we grow larger."

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

.....

“Use your mistakes as a springboard into new areas of discovery; accidents can hold the key to innovation. When things fall apart, make art. Carry this spirit through to every area of your life.”

Philip Toshio Sudo: *Zen Guitar*

MODULE 26: CORE ACTION VALUE #6 IS FAITH

.....
My faith and my gratitude for all that I have been blessed with will shine through in my attitudes and in my actions. – Sunday's Promise of The Self Empowerment Pledge
.....

When we talk about faith as a value, we are not talking about religion. We're talking about the sort of faith that *everyone* needs, regardless of their religious belief or non-belief. In the context of personal values, the four pillars of faith are:

Have faith in yourself. Do not give in to the toxic inner voice of negative self-talk or to the life-diminishing barriers imposed by self-limiting beliefs and a poor self-image. Have the courage to take the basket off your candle and let your inner light shine. And take the advice of Max Lucado who wrote this in his book *He Still Moves Stones*: "Ignore the ones who say it's too late to start over. Disregard those who say you'll never amount to anything. Turn a deaf ear to those who say you aren't smart enough, fast enough, tall enough, or big enough – ignore them."

Have faith in other people. Be a Dionarap (the word paranoid spelled backwards) and assume that other people are acting in good faith unless and until they prove otherwise. Remember that while it is okay to be a skeptic it is not okay to be a cynic.

Have faith in the future. Believe in your dreams and in your ability to make those dreams come true – especially when to all outside appearances they seem impossible.

Have faith in a higher power. Believe in something bigger than the almighty dollar and winning by dying with the most toys – something beyond what can be seen with the eye but that can only be felt in the heart.

Faith is also the marriage of fidelity and trust. Fidelity is *being faithful to* a person, a cause, a profession, or an organization. Trust is *having faith in* other people, in organizations, and in the future.

Real faith is reflected in having acceptance of others, regardless of differences in belief. As Mother Teresa often said, we are all children of the same God.

Faith as a value is quite different from the fanatic attachment to dogma of the true believer as described by Eric Hoffer in his book of that title. True faith is strengthened and tempered in the cauldron of doubt. Be willing to struggle with the Big Questions – let them in, explore their meaning, and let them lead you to a deeper understanding of what you believe.

The times when faith is most important are often also the times when it is hardest to find. It is hardest to have faith in yourself after you have just lost your job. It is hardest to have faith in other people after you feel like you've been betrayed by someone you had trusted. It is hardest to have faith in the future when you've been given a challenging medical diagnosis. And it is hardest to have faith in a higher power when it feels like your most heartfelt prayers have not been answered. That is why it is so important to work on strengthening your four pillars of faith now, before you need to fall back on them.

Faith is a force that is just beginning at the point where certainty ends.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“People don’t want more information. They are up to their eyeballs in information. They want faith – faith in you, your goals, your success, in a story you tell. It is faith that moves mountains, not facts. Facts do not give birth to faith. Faith needs a story to sustain it – a meaningful story that inspires belief in you and renews hope that your ideas indeed offer what you promise.”

Annette Simmons: *The Story Factor*

MODULE 27: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF FAITH IS GRATITUDE

.....
*Gratitude is measured in minutes while resentment is measured in years;
an attitude of gratitude will elevate your altitude.*
.....

What does the Lord's Prayer say about tomorrow's bread? That's right – nothing. "Give us this day our daily bread." The message is to be thankful for the blessings of your life, and to not be resentful about blessings that you do not (yet) have in your life. As the great philosopher William James put it over one hundred years ago, the more concerned somebody is with material acquisition, the less free their lives will be. So, in that sense, gratitude is the key to freedom.

Gratitude is a central tenet of faith in most of the world's spiritual traditions. People make sacrifices, they fast, they meditate, and they pray in part to express their gratitude for the blessings (past, present, and future) of their lives. Especially those of us living in the developed world today have a great deal to be thankful for. We are blessed in so many ways: unprecedented life expectancy, medical technology that is nothing short of miraculous, and living standards beyond the wildest dreams of people who lived in our world as recently as the Great Depression.

A spirit of gratitude is good for your health at every level – physical, emotional and spiritual. As Robert A. Emmons and Michael E. McCullough report in *Research Project on Gratitude and Thankfulness*, "Grateful people report higher levels of positive emotions, life satisfaction, vitality, optimism and lower levels of depression and stress. The disposition toward gratitude appears to enhance pleasant feeling states more than it diminishes unpleasant emotions."

Gratitude for the blessings of today is the platform for optimism about the future. It is the platform from which hope arises. If you are grateful for what's right about your life, you are more likely to be hopeful for a brighter future than if you are bitter and resentful about what's wrong with your life. In this sense, an attitude of gratitude can actually help shape your future because hope can bring about miracles.

Complaining is the un-prayer: instead of expressing gratitude for the blessings of life, the whiner is expressing resentment for blessings not (at least not yet) realized. And if you live in the United States and not Haiti or Afghanistan you have everything to be grateful for and nothing of substance to complain about.

Gratitude is more than just saying thank you. It is *choosing* to see best of times, even in the worst of times. It is *choosing* to keep your mouth shut when it feels right and just to complain. It is *choosing* to walk away from the complaining and gossiping when it would be more fun to join in. It is *choosing* to share when the natural inclination is to hoard. In short, genuine gratitude is hard emotional work. And it is demanded of us, who have been given so much.

Complaining is the un-prayer. Instead of expressing your gratitude for the blessings of your life, you are expressing your resentment for what you don't (yet) have. You cannot simultaneously be grateful and resentful. And in a paradox that we've seen before, and will see again, gratitude is most important, but hardest to feel, when things are not going well.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”

Melody Beattie: *Codependent No More*

MODULE 28: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF FAITH IS FORGIVENESS

.....
The I Ching, an ancient book of Chinese wisdom, reminds us that hatred is a chain that binds us to the object of our hatred. Forgiveness is the key that unlocks that chain, that frees us from the prison of our own venomous emotions.
.....

It's ancient wisdom: Carrying a grudge is like drinking poison and expecting it to hurt someone else. Or as the *I Ching* put it, hatred is a chain that binds you to the object of your hatred (*I Ching*). Forgiveness is a central tenet of many spiritual traditions. In The Lord's Prayer, the requested forgiveness is bilateral: the petitioner says, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Forgiveness is often the first step toward healing – physically, emotionally, and spiritually. According to the Mayo Clinic forgiveness can lead to healthier relationships, greater spiritual and psychological well-being, and reduced anxiety, stress, hostility, and depression. Forgiveness can be essential for achieving mental clarity and objectivity.

Forgiveness is often the first step toward not seeing yourself as a victim. The past is what you choose to remember (any historian will tell you that) – selectively rewriting your memories is an important form of forgiveness. Stop telling and retelling "the story" of how you were hurt – including to yourself.

At the organizational level forgiveness is often a prerequisite for progress. Many organizations have what we think of as "institutional PTSD." People hang onto the old dramas, they tell and re-tell the old stories, in a way that prevents meaningful progress into the future. They hang onto dreadful stories of the previous leader rather than assuming good faith on the part of that person's replacement.

Prospective forgiveness is the antidote to cynicism. The cynic assumes that others are acting in bad faith. To practice prospective forgiveness is to assume that others are acting in good faith unless and until their actions prove otherwise.

Here's the ultimate paradox of forgiveness: the person being forgiven is not the person being helped; quite to the contrary, that person probably couldn't care less whether he or she is being forgiven – it's the person doing the forgiven who benefits. And in the same way, holding a grudge usually does nothing to harm the person against whom the grudge is being held, but that grudge can be emotional poison for the person who holds it. Forgiveness really is good for your soul – and for your health and happiness as well.

Forgiveness often begins with forgiving yourself. As tough as it can be to forgive others for their crimes and sins, it can be even more difficult for us to forgive ourselves. The failure of self-forgiveness is a major cause of low self-esteem, and of anemic dreams and goals for the future.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

.....

“Forgiveness is a skill, a way of preserving clarity, sanity and generosity in an individual life, a beautiful way of shaping the mind to a future we want for ourselves... To forgive is to put oneself in a larger gravitational field of experience than the one that first seemed to hurt us.”

David Whyte: *Consolations*

MODULE 29: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF FAITH IS LOVE

.....
The Beatles had it right when they sang that there's nothing you can do that can't be done, all you need is love. They also had it right when they sang that the love you take is equal to the love you make, and that it's within you and without you.
.....

We need more words for “love” – I love my wife and I love hot dogs, but they are two very different emotional states!

The only way to get a hug is to give a hug (hugging yourself is remarkably unrewarding except for the unrequited narcissist). You increase love by giving it away. In her book *A Simple Path*, Mother Teresa wrote that the greatest disease in the West was not some physical illness, but rather a lack of love. “We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair and hopelessness is love.” The absence of love, she said, is a spiritual poverty that is exacerbated by our obsession with material possessions, having fun, and egoistic thinking.

As Scott Peck pointed out in his book *The Road Less Traveled*, real love is not just a mushy emotion – it is hard work and sacrifice on behalf of the one you love. If the drunk at the bar crying in his whiskey about how much he loves his family really did love them, he’d sober up, get a job, and help his kids get through college. Real love is the willingness to put the needs of the person you love ahead of your own desires, being willing to make sacrifices for their success and wellbeing.

Norman Vincent Peete reminded his readers that the great commandment says to love your neighbor as yourself, and that we should not forget those last two words. It’s often said that you cannot pour out of an empty pitcher, and the caregiver needs to take care of his or herself so that they can take care of others. Or as singer Bonnie Raitt put it (in more earthy terms) in one of her songs, “a man could never love me who can’t even love himself.”

Work is love made visible in the memorable phrase of Kahlil Gibran in his lovely book *The Prophet*. As Mary Koloroutis and David Abelson write in their book *Advancing Relationship-Based Cultures*, “As we have been privileged to work with health care leaders through the years, we have discovered that, among those who enjoy the greatest success and job satisfaction, a thread of love permeates their leadership and their cultures.”

Love is a powerful antidote to fear. As the musical group Morcheeba sings it, fear can stop your loving, love can stop your fear.

We also need tough love to confront bullying, toxic emotional negativity, bad attitudes, and inappropriate behaviors in the workplace.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

.....

“Good management is largely a matter of love. Or if you’re uncomfortable with that word, call it caring, because proper management involves caring for people, not manipulating them... You as a manager must trust people to do their work. You must take them at face value and let them know you believe what they say and you believe that they will do what they say they’ll do.”

James A. Autry: *Love and Profit*

MODULE 30: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF FAITH IS SPIRITUALITY

.....

Spirituality is not the same as religious belief. It is the sense of awe one experiences when contemplating the vastness of the universe and the individual's place in that universe; when holding a newborn and wondering at the miracle of life; when experiencing what Buddhists call the miracle of mindfulness and what Christians call the peace of God that passes all understanding.

.....

People with a strong sense of spiritual faith tend to be more highly service oriented, to have more solid belief in themselves and in their dreams, to be more resilient in the face of adversity, and to be more committed to the success of others. They are more resilient in the face of adversity. In his classic 1902 book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James wrote: "How can it possibly fail to steady the nerves, to cool the fever, and appease the fret, if one be sensibly conscious that no matter what one's difficulties for the moment appear to be, one's life as a whole is in the keeping of a power whom one can absolutely trust?"

Spiritual strength is the best antidote to worldly anxiety and is often an important ingredient in physical health and healing. Extensive research has shown that spiritual faith plays a very important role in health and healing (for example, it can be a key ingredient in the placebo effect).

In what has been called "the age of anxiety" for many people prayer can be a compass and a rudder (for example, see Robert Gerzon's *Finding Serenity in the Age of Anxiety*). And the greatest antidote to this anxiety might well be the practice of praying. People can argue about whether you are actually talking with God, or simply carrying on an inner communion with your own conscience. Some of the people who have wrought important changes in our world not only believed that they were talking to God, they were quite certain that God was talking back (Joan of Arc and Florence Nightingale both come to mind). What cannot be argued is that for many people, prayer is an important source of strength in adversity and courage for achievement.

As philosopher Soren Kierkegaard put it, "The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays."

People in the healing professions have a special obligation to honor the spiritual faith of the people they care for, without in any way trying to impose their own beliefs on them.

Spirituality blossoms in, and requires occasional refuge in, places of peace, silence, beauty, and solitude. Make time to be alone in nature. Take a walk in the woods. Sit by a stream or a river. Hike up a mountain. Spend a night alone under the desert stars. Swim in the ocean. Spending time in nature nurtures equanimity and stimulates reflections, both of which are important for self-awareness. As Anthony Storr wrote in *Solitude: A Return to the Soul*, "The capacity to be alone is necessary if the brain is to function at its best and the individual to fulfill his highest potential."

Expect a miracle. Miracles are not magic tricks, not events; they are processes in which personal transformation is earned through painful introspection and hard work – as in addiction recovery. Expect a miracle but don't give the universe a deadline.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“A miracle is not a magic trick. It is the bringing about of a change that would previously have been thought impossible. A miracle is not an event. It is a process. A miracle is not a gift. It is something earned through hard work and painful introspection. A miracle is not free. It comes with strings attached, and if you’re not willing to share it, you will be unable to keep it. In truth the greatest miracle is this: the miracle of profound self-transformation. Many of the miracles recorded in history are simply metaphors for this simple truth, that we each have the power in our own hands to create the miracle of becoming the person we were meant to be.”

Joe Tye: *Never Fear, Never Quit: A Story of Courage and Perseverance*

CORE ACTION VALUES 7 - 12

CATALYZING THE POWER
FOR ACTION AND CONTRIBUTION

MODULE 31: CORE ACTION VALUE #7 IS PURPOSE

.....
The work that you choose to do, and the attitude with which you choose to do that work, are the most important decisions you will ever make – make sure that you make these choices on purpose.
.....

A great purpose statement covers work and personal – it helps you balance key priorities in your work and life while at the same time creating consonance between your time at work and your time at home.

The sweet spot of purpose is where these four qualities intersect: 1) you have a passion for what you do and enjoy the work (at least most of the time); 2) you are good at what you do and committed to consistently getting better at it; 3) you are making a contribution to the people you serve and the people you work with and making the world, or at least your corner of the world, somehow better; and 4) you are rewarded for your work in ways that matter to you, including financially.

The poet McZen wrote that “Someone with a job is never secure; someone with a purpose is never unemployed.” When you are guided by a sense of purpose you will always have work to do, though there is not a guarantee that you will always be paid as well as you would wish for doing that work.

How do you answer the question: “What do you do?” Instead of simply responding with your job description – “I’m a school nurse” – say something about your work and the impact you have, for example: “Every parent wants to make sure that their kids are safe and healthy and learn positive habits for health and life; I’m the person who teaches kids those skills. My name tag says ‘school nurse’ but I’m actually much more than that.”

Purposeful people are positive thinkers who expect the best from themselves and from others, and who are willing to make any contribution necessary to the successful achievement of their work. And because they are positive and optimistic, they become informal leaders; no one wants to follow a negative pessimist.

“Flow” is the greatest source of human motivation; key elements of flow include: 1) a mission that inspires and goals that are fulfilling; 2) determination, self-sacrifice, and long-term focus in a team effort; 3) protected time and total immersion in a concentrated effort; 4) not worrying about results, rewards, or what other people think of the work; and 5) focus on the work itself and not what you will gain from doing the work.

From very early school days, we’ve learned not to be an apple-polisher, a curve-wrecker, quota-buster or over-achiever. We want to fit in, so we put a basket over our inner light. The values challenge is to remove the basket, to look inside and see the magnificent light that you have been hiding within yourself. It’s a challenge to let that light shine through in your beliefs, your attitudes, and your behaviors.

To do something “on purpose” means to do it with commitment, pride and enthusiasm. It means to treat your work as “love made visible.” Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might (Ecclesiastes 9:10). That is working with purpose.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“Purpose is that deepest dimension within us — our central core or essence — where we have a profound sense of who we are, where we came from, and where we’re going. Purpose is the quality we choose to shape our lives around. Purpose is a source of energy and direction.”

Richard Leider: *The Power of Purpose*

MODULE 32: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF PURPOSE IS ASPIRATION

.....
Aspire to great achievement and work on becoming the person you need to be to achieve those great goals – then inspire the people you lead to do the same thing. Have a goal so big that you could not possibly achieve it without becoming a bigger person yourself and enlisting others to help you in the quest.
.....

Without aspiration (ambition) we would all still be hunting and gathering.

“Dream no small dreams for they have no power to move the hearts of men.” This phrase by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe might well be one of the most often-quoted of his many eloquent passages. When you have a big dream, when you aspire to be something, do something, create something that is magnificent, it moves your heart, and in moving your heart can move the hearts of others as well. From the dream of putting a man on the moon to the dreams of finding a cure for cancer or ending the scourge of war, people who aspire to change the world in a positive way tend to become more self-motivated and in motivating themselves, more effective at inspiring others.

How would you answer Winston Churchill’s question: “What would you do if you know you could not fail?” Your answer to that question is another guide to the authentic person you are meant to be.

Were it not for aspiration and the related attribute of ambition, you would not be reading this because I would not have written it. In fact, but for aspiration – the desire to create something beyond what exists in the present world – we would all be out in the fields and forests hunting and gathering as did our prehistoric ancestors. You’re the beneficiary of aspirations of previous generations, so make a point of adding to the legacy.

See your job description as a floor – not a ceiling. Eliminate the phrase “Not my job” from your vocabulary. More than anything, you differentiate yourself in the job market, and more important, develop yourself as a person by the projects and initiatives you take on that are above-and-beyond the basics of your job title. This might well mean that you need to learn how to be more efficient and productive so that you have time for these additional commitments. But don’t worry – we’ll share some great strategies for doing this when we get to Core Action Value #9, Focus.

Every blessing in your life is the result of someone else’s aspiration; to assume purpose as a value means that you recognize your debt to the people upon whose shoulders you are standing, and also that you aspire to contribute blessings to the lives of others.

Aspire to great things, but more important aspire to bring others along with you on the journey.

Appreciate the paradoxical trade-off between having fun and being happy. To lay the foundation for a happy life you might need to sacrifice having fun in the short term. Spending time at the library or the gym might not be as much fun as a night out dancing and carousing, but it is much more likely to help you be a happier person down the road.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

.....

“The most important distinguishing trait of visionary leaders is that they believe in a goal that benefits not only themselves, but others as well. It is such a vision that attracts the psychic energy of other people, and makes them willing to work beyond the call of duty for the organization.”

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: *Good Business*

MODULE 33: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF PURPOSE IS INTENTIONALITY

.....
Positive thinking is expecting something and working to make it happen; wishful thinking is hoping for something and waiting for someone else to make it happen.
.....

In their landmark book *In Search of Excellence*, Tom Peters and Bob Waterman listed “a bias for action” as one of eight characteristics of excellent companies. Today, Peters says that this one characteristic is the only one to have really stood the test of time. In surgery residencies, the motto is often “see one, do one, teach one.” That’s because there is so much to learn you need to learn fast – and the best way to learn is to be so good that not only can you do what you have learned, you can teach it to others.

Peter Drucker, the man who is credited with inventing modern management, said that wherever great things are being done, behind the scenes there is “a monomaniac with a mission.” Intentionality is the fuel that inspires a bias for action, which is consistently rated as one of the hallmark qualities of a successful organization. Intentionality is the difference between wishful thinking (hoping for something and waiting for someone else to make it happen) and positive thinking (expecting something and doing the work to make it happen).

Transform a dream into a Memory of the Future with a plan, a timeline, a budget, and a blueprint. We will see more about Memories of the Future when we get to Core Action Value #8, Vision, but for now appreciate that the motivational rocket fuel that powers a mere dream, wish or goal into being a Memory of the Future is Intentionality. As Yoda said, do or do not – there is no try.

Purposeful people are just as focused and interested in doing the boring drudge work as they are in the fun stuff. They know that the way you earn the right to do the things you love to do is by first doing the things that you don’t necessarily want to do but which need to be done.

In the fast-changing world of today, the most successful people are those who experiment, build prototypes, try things, and keep what works and fix what doesn’t. Prototypes minimize risk, maximize learning and quality, and keep you motivated. You can move toward even the biggest of goals one step at a time by thinking in terms of prototypes. Imagine you have a license plate that says TBSSNDQ: Think Big, Start Small, Start Now, Don’t Quit.

Don’t waste the power of your dissatisfaction by complaining about everything that bothers you. Be like the person who has just sat down on a thumbtack and can think of only one thing – getting up as fast as possible. Don’t fritter away the energy of your dissatisfaction on things that don’t really matter or things that you can’t really do anything about. Healthy (and focused) dissatisfaction energizes, whining enervates.

In his book *You Can’t Afford the Luxury of a Negative Thought*, Peter McWilliams says: “If you think you want something and you’re not actively involved in getting it, you’re probably just kidding yourself.” Any time you hear someone complaining about something rather than working to resolve whatever it is that they’re complaining about, chances are pretty good that they are engaged in this form of self-delusion.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Regardless of the circumstance of your life, you are the writer, director, and producer of your mental images. You will always act out those pictures. Your circumstances do not determine what your life will be; they reveal what kinds of images you have chosen up until now. From the quality of your physical appearance, to your level of nutritional health, to the state of your financial holdings, to the quality of your relationships and everything else that requires an action by you, you are acting on images. Your mind stores away all of the images that you elect, and you daily carry out the assignments of those thoughts.”

Wayne Dyer: *You'll See It When You Believe It*

MODULE 34: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF PURPOSE IS SELFLESSNESS

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*Whatever you most need in life, the best way for you to get it is to help
someone else get it who needs it more than you do.*
.....

The first sentence of Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Life* is "It's not about you." The more committed you are to a purpose that transcends your own personal interests, the happier and more successful you are likely to be over the course of a lifetime.

Chronic whining and complaining, passive-aggressive incivility, and other such forms of toxic emotional negativity never improve the situation, and gossiping, rumor-mongering, and bullying never help the person who is the subject of that abuse. These attitudes and behaviors are always self-centered and never selfless.

Alcoholics Anonymous has principle called mutuality. It means that the alcoholic and his or her sponsor are on the same level – the recovering alcoholic sponsor needs the recovering alcoholic drunk as much as the drunk needs him. That principle applies everywhere: the physician and the therapist need the patient as much as the patient needs them; the teacher and the student nurse need to students as much as the students need them. And this is the beautiful paradox of mutuality: one person can never be helped – it's always a duality.

Be part of a cause that is bigger than you. Here is a paradox that has been put forth in most spiritual traditions: to find yourself you must lose yourself, to save your life you must lose your life. In part what that means is that people who connect themselves to a bigger cause than their own success and welfare "lose themselves" to the mission, but in a larger sense "find themselves" through the work and the relationships involved with the mission. When you stop thinking about yourself and devote yourself to a bigger cause, a truly heroic self transformation can take place.

Selflessness is the essential ingredient of effective teamwork, so leave your ego at the door. And here's the ultimate paradox of selfless leadership: by demonstrating their commitment to a cause that transcends personal self-interest and to prioritizing the success of others ahead of their own, selfless leaders earn the respect, trust and loyalty of followers that ultimately leads to a level of success far greater than they could possibly have achieved on their own by pursuing success directly.

Contribution is the Antidote to Stress. Psychologists tell us that hard work and long hours are less stressful than the feeling that one's potential is not being achieved, or that they are not making a contribution. In his classic book *Man's Search For Meaning*, Viktor Frankl wrote that the survivors from Hitler's concentration camps tended to be those who could find a larger sense of meaning in the experience, and who had a commitment to surviving so they could make a contribution. No nurse has ever worked harder or under more stressful conditions than Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War or Clara Barton during the Civil War, yet both went on to make substantial contributions to healthcare and to the profession of nursing.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“Individuals committed to a vision beyond their self-interest find they have energy not available when pursuing narrower goals, as will organizations that tap this level of commitment.”

Peter Senge: *The Fifth Discipline*

MODULE 35: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF PURPOSE IS BALANCE

.....
Our lives are never, and never can be, in perfect balance. The challenge is making sure that the scales are always tipped toward the things that really matter at the times when they matter most. Be purposeful in everything important in your life – family, community, hobbies, and personal growth – not just career.
.....

People with a sense of mission seek more from their work than just a paycheck and benefits; they want to make a meaningful contribution – to their organization, their coworkers, and their community. And we see again the ancient paradox that the more one gives away, the more one makes a contribution without expectation of return, the greater the return will be.

You cannot manage time, you must manage priorities. When we reach Core Action Value #9, Focus, we'll cover the importance of being clear about your most important goals, and being willing to concentrate time and energy on the achievement of those goals. The more focused you are on your key priorities, the easier it will be for you to achieve a sense of balance in your work and your life. In his book *Life and Work*, James Autry suggested that rather than trying to *balance* your life and your work as if they were two separate weights at opposite ends of a scale, you seek to *integrate* your life and your work.

One of the qualities leadership authority Jim Collins finds in organizations that achieve and sustain greatness is a determination to replace “the tyranny of or” with “the genius of and.” Instead of giving in to the tyranny of low cost or high quality, they demand both. Instead of giving in to the tyranny of high morale or high productivity, they insist upon both. There is a lesson there for all of us. To achieve balance does not mean making sure that the scales are always evenly balanced between work and personal life. It means not letting the “tyranny of or” prevent you from caring for yourself and making time for your family by creatively seeking “genius of and” solutions.

Avoid what psychologists call double-bind situations, where no matter what you do you feel like you're doing the wrong thing. Parents experience this when they bring work home and feel guilty for not playing with the kids, so they set aside the work to go out and play but can't enjoy it because they feel guilty for not being inside doing the work they'd brought home.

It's easier to achieve balance when you have chosen to do work you love and chosen to do that work with love. Find ways to make work fun (one definition of creativity is that it's intelligence having fun).

Avoid the tyranny of the urgent: limit email and social media to just two or three specified times of the day and address most important priority first thing in the morning.

Be part of a cause that is bigger than you. Here is a paradox that has been put forth in most spiritual traditions: to find yourself you must lose yourself, to save your life you must lose your life. In part what that means is that people who connect themselves to a bigger cause than their own success and welfare “lose themselves” to the mission, but in a larger sense “find themselves” through the work and the relationships involved with the mission. As the great scholar of myth Joseph Campbell once wrote, when you stop thinking about yourself and devote yourself to a bigger cause, a truly heroic self transformation will take place.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Some people today suggest that this search for meaning and identity has resulted from having too many choices, rather than too few. Instead of becoming a gateway to freedom, our wealth of options tether us to a dilemma. And this conundrum echoes through our leisure and free time experiences.”

Martin Kimeldorf: *Serious Play*

MODULE 36: CORE ACTION VALUE #8 IS VISION

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*Humans are the only creatures who have been blessed with the gift of being able
to see things not just as they are but as they might be, and with the power to transform
those dreams of today into the realities of tomorrow.*
.....

Vision, said author Jonathan Swift, is the art of seeing the invisible. An architect can “see” the visible architecture of a building even before the foundation has been laid. He builds castles in the air, then puts foundations under them with renderings and blueprints. How important is vision? The Book of Proverbs tells us that “without vision the people perish.”

Build your castles in the air, wrote Thoreau in *Walden*, because that’s where they belong. Then build foundations under them. Have big dreams – your castles in the air – but then be willing to do the hard work necessary to put foundations under those dreams. Remember the difference between wishful thinking – hoping for something and waiting for someone else to make it happen, and positive thinking – expecting something and doing the work to make it happen.

Don’t just dream – create Memories of the Future. Download the *Memories of the Future Guidebook* from the Values Trainer website and apply the 10-A Formula to your most important goals and dreams. The 10-As of a Memory of the Future are Aspiration, Authenticity, Attention, Articulation, Affirmation, Asking, Action, Accountability, Adapting, and Adamant.

Vision is like any muscle – it atrophies when not used and strengthens when exercised. Devote some time every day to practice visioning. Create a bulletin board and post reminders of your dreams. Before you go to bed at night write your Youroscope for the next day (we’ll get to that in a few pages). Visualize yourself actually doing the things that are on your bucket list.

Every great accomplishment was once the “impossible dream” of a dreamer who refused to be deterred. Until the dream has become real in the mind of the dreamer, it’s unlikely to ever be manifested in the outer world. Once it has become a concrete mental image, a memory of the future, though, it’s only a matter of time and effort before it makes the transition from impossible dream to great accomplishment.

Distinguish between “vision” and “visualization.” Vision is a noun – a mental image of the desired outcome, an ideal future reality. Visualization is a verb – a mental rehearsal, a vivid mental motion picture in which you watch yourself going through the steps that will create that future state. Vision and visualization work together hand-in-glove. Here’s how it works: imagine a dream of some sort – the ideal job, the business you wish you could start, the perfect vacation, whatever. Then visualize yourself doing the things you would have to do in order to transform that dream of today into your reality of tomorrow. As you see yourself doing those things, the dream becomes more real, more tangible, and far more likely to make the transition from mere daydream to concrete goal.

Define your future by your dreams and not by your memories, by your hopes and not by your fears. Dream a big dream, make it a memory of the future, and expect a miracle.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings... If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.”

Henry David Thoreau: *Walden*

MODULE 37: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF VISION IS ATTENTION

.....
What you choose to pay attention to in the present will be the platform upon which you build your dreams of the future. You do not “lend” your attention – you PAY it! And once it’s been paid, that moment is gone forever. Attention is the ultimately non-renewable resource.
.....

When someone requests your attention, they do not ask you to *lend* attention – they ask you to *pay* attention. Your attention is the ultimately non-renewable resource. You can only pay attention to one thing at a time (no, you cannot multitask attention), and once your attention has been paid it cannot be deposited back into your account. Ralph Waldo Emerson famously said that “a man becomes what he thinks about all day long.” The things that you choose to pay attention to today will profoundly influence the goals you achieve, and the person you become, in the future. The most important choice you make in any given moment is what you choose to pay attention to – it is the platform upon which future vision is built.

Although most of us are rarely at a loss to find something to complain about, we only have so much genuine dissatisfaction to go around – that is, if we are only expressing dissatisfaction about those things we intend to change. The more powerfully you can focus your dissatisfaction on a few key gaps, and not fritter it away on every little thing that bothers you, the more powerfully motivating and energizing it will be. Think of dissatisfaction as a limited resource, just like time and money, and don’t fritter it away on things that don’t really matter, or that won’t really change.

Attention has both an exterior and an interior dimension. The exterior dimension means paying attention to the world around you, being alert to potential problems and opportunities. Someone paying attention at a grocery store checkout counter saw the potential of applying barcodes to pharmaceuticals, thus making healthcare safer; someone paying attention to line management at Disneyworld found creative ways to make emergency room wait times more bearable.

The interior dimension is just as important, and often more so. That is paying attention to how your own preconceived assumptions and self-talk color your perceptions of what you see in other people and in the world around you; recognizing how your own negative self-talk or fear of uncertainty can prevent you from pursuing positive change; and knowing the triggers that cause you to react in ways that you will later regret and pulling the plug before they detonate. It means paying attention to yourself, minute by minute.

Pay careful attention to your own self-talk and ask yourself whose voice it is – the authentic voice of your best self, or the malignant echo of negative self-talk. Pay attention to the channels that you allow to be played on the radio of your mind. Most people go through much of life on autopilot; unfortunately the human mind’s default state is to gravitate toward negative, frightening and depressing thoughts

Pay attention to educational and inspirational books and tapes, though, and you’ll become a more positive, self-empowered, and motivated individual.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“If you pay attention at every moment, you form a new relationship to time. Your own absorption slows you down internally. The slowing down feeds your sense of deep appreciation and at the same time produces more energy. In some magical way, by slowing down you become more efficient, productive, and energetic, focusing without distraction directly on the task in front of you. Not only do you become immersed in that moment; you become that moment.”

Michael Ray: *Creativity in Business*

MODULE 38: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF VISION IS IMAGINATION

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Mark Twain said, “You can’t depend on your judgment when your imagination is out of focus.”
Transform your goals and dreams into Memories of the Future – then do the work to make sure that these
future memories actually show up on your future calendar. If you can dream it you can do it,
said Walt Disney, but unfortunately, many of us have lost the capacity to dream.

.....

Through the power of imagination, you can remember the future more clearly and accurately than you can remember the past. To prove it to yourself, try to recall your second birthday. Now visualize a mental picture of where you will be and what you will be doing tomorrow. This is a great illustration of the way we are overconfident in the accuracy of our memories but sell short the power of vision. The secret of success is to remember a tomorrow that is somehow different, and somehow better, than yesterday was – and not just tomorrow but next week and next year.

Imagination is a mental muscle. Like every other muscle it grows stronger when it’s used, and it atrophies when it is not used. One of the most powerful ways to spark creative imagination is to start with a sentence beginning with the words “Imagine a world that is...” or “Imagine a workplace where people are...” and then see where the conversation leads.

Three power questions: What if? Why not? What next?

Curiosity and concentrated attention are the yin and yang of creativity. You don’t need an original idea to be creative: The great poet T.S. Eliot said that good poets borrow, great poets steal.

Imagination is the gift we use to see things that are not actually there – at least not yet. It is the catalyst for self-fulfilling prophecies. As children we exercise this gift in play and in conversations with imaginary friends. Unfortunately, as we grow up we tend to warp our imaginations with worry and fantasy. Worry is imagining bad things that you do not want to have happen, while fantasy (aka magical thinking) is imagining wonderful things happening without a concomitant commitment to doing the work to make those things happen.

Imagination is more important than knowledge, said Albert Einstein. We spend years in school trying to fill our heads with knowledge. How many of us ever took even a single class on imagination? When was the last time any of us read a book on how to be more creative, on how to use our imaginations more effectively?

Worry and fantasy are often abuse of your imagination. Worry is imagining a horrible future that we do not want to have happen. Fantasy is imagining a beautiful future that we have no intention of working to bring about. While worry and fantasy can both be beneficial in moderation, if that’s the only use you’re making of your imagination, you are wasting this precious God-given resource.

“Live your dreams before they come true, just in case you never wake up.” – McZen

MODULE 39: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF VISION IS ARTICULATION

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When someone criticized Ludwig von Beethoven for writing music that required such forceful playing that it would destroy the piano upon which it was being played, he replied that he was not writing for the puny instruments of his day.
.....

Before it can become reality, a vision must be articulated in such a way as to inspire passion and confidence in those who must bring it about. The first step is knowing what you want, and as specifically as possible. Can you articulate the dream? Instead of just “a big house” can you describe the ideal location (country or city); do you have a mental picture of the ideal floor plan; in your mind, can you feel the brass fixtures with your fingertips, smell the new carpet on the floor, and hear the wood crackling in the fireplace? The more vivid your mental image, and the more different senses and emotions involved, the higher the likelihood of achievement.

Before a dream can become real, that dream must be articulated in a way that informs and inspires the people whose commitment is necessary to make it happen. The dream of a new home must be articulated in a blueprint for the contractor and a set of financial documents for the mortgage banker. Martin Luther King articulated his dream of a world free from racial prejudice and hate in one of history’s most memorable speeches, but also in his 7,000-word Letter from the Birmingham Jail. Each articulation was crafted for its unique audience.

A picture might be worth a thousand words, but the ability to articulate a dream into words that paint a picture is far more valuable. When Martin Luther King created the vision of all our children living together in harmony, when John F. Kennedy crafted the vision of a man walking on the moon, when Millard and Linda Fuller built Habitat for Humanity upon the dream of a world in which there were no more shacks, they were each articulating a future in such a way that anyone could understand, and be inspired by, that dream.

The more vivid the mental image, and the more different senses it engages, the higher the likelihood of achievement.

The most powerful dreams are founded on one very simple “Big Why” – an underlying purpose that can be clearly articulated (e.g. Disney: Happiest Place on Earth).

Why every single book that’s ever been written about goal-setting makes this point: write down your goals (every day).

Write your own horoscope (why would you trust a total stranger – and probably a very strange stranger at that – with something as important as your daily horoscope?). I call it a Youroscope. This is not a to-do list, it’s a description of your ideal day. Stick with this for at least three months and you will find that you start having more ideal days.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupery: *Flight to Arras*

MODULE 40: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF VISION IS BELIEF

.....
*Have a dream so big that the only way you will ever be able to
achieve it is by becoming a better person yourself.*
.....

You'll see it when you believe it. Every great accomplishment was once the impossible dream of a dreamer whose belief overcame every obstacle and setback. A man walked on the moon in John F. Kennedy's mind long before Neil Armstrong actually took that giant leap for mankind. When Ronald Reagan stood at the Berlin Wall and demanded that it be torn down, he could already visualize the rubble at his feet. The computer on your desk existed in the mind of Steve Jobs at a time when even most computer professionals still thought Apple was just a piece of fruit.

Belief is a cosmic force every bit as real as gravity, magnetic attraction, and true love. Belief can open your mind to magnificent new vistas of the imagination. Belief can power you through the roadblocks, around the brick walls, and over the mountains that stand between you and the achievement of your dreams. Belief can transform individuals, build teams, and change the world. I would go so far as to say that nothing great can happen that has not first already happened in the mind of a great dreamer, and that once it has happened in that mind, it is only a matter of time before it happens in the world.

Walt Disney said, "If you can dream it you can do it." Napoleon Hill added the essential catalytic ingredient when he wrote, "What the mind of man can conceive *and believe* the body of man can achieve" (emphasis in original, as is the unenlightened gender-specific language). Belief is the fuel that powers you through obstacles and adversity. As Wayne Dyer put it in his book of this title: You'll see it when you believe it. Here's how Christopher Reeve put it in his book *Still Me*: "So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbably, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable."

Movements are started by "lone nuts" and "first followers."

The belief of the visionary is not the same as that of the "true believer" – it is tempered by doubt, testing, and adapting. And sometimes you only need sufficient belief to take the first step (switchbacks).

Reprogram negative self-talk and self-limiting images of who you are with affirmations and self-defining metaphors that are positive, nurturing, and affirming (and quite frankly, more likely to be true); after all, if you don't believe in yourself, how can you believe in your dreams; and if you don't believe in yourself, how can you expect others to believe in you? Don't listen to the inner voice of judgment and ignore the petty dream-stealers. The first step to belief is often suspending disbelief. And remember TBSSNDQ: Think big, start small, start now, don't quit.

In medicine, the power of belief has been thoroughly documented in studies on the Placebo Effect, which has been estimated to account for a third or more of positive therapeutic outcomes. Likewise, the power of belief underlies the Hawthorne Effect in business and the Pygmalion Effect in personal development.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“When we project our dreams into a positive future, we see that we can have what we want. A positive image of the future not only shows us how to get there, it draws us to it, attracting us toward our dreams like a magnet.”

Jon-Roger and Peter McWilliams: *Do It!*

MODULE 41: CORE ACTION VALUE #9 IS FOCUS

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Keeping a focus on what matters most is an essential skill for your career and professional development and ultimately for your personal success and happiness; keeping a team focused on what matters most is an essential skill for achieving important goals. Focus is an essential ingredient for effectiveness, whether in your career or hobbies, your financial situation, or your personal happiness.
.....

It's not enough to have a strong sense of purpose and a compelling vision – you must also be willing to focus your key resources including time, money, energy, and attention. Johan Wolfgang von Goethe said, "Things that matter most must never be at the mercy of things that matter least." As J.R.R. Tolkien had Gandalf tell the hobbits in *The Lord of the Rings*, "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

We live in an ADD world where there are endless demands for our attention, and where attention spans are becoming increasingly diminished. In his book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, Nicholas Carr documents how email, text messaging, web surfing, social media and other new technologies are causing physiological changes to the neural wiring of our brains, and making it increasingly challenging for us to stay focused.

In one of the first self-help books of the modern era (*Wake Up and Live*, written during the Great Depression), author Dorothea Brande wrote that many people *choose to fail* by becoming overcommitted to things that have nothing to do with achieving those goals. They fail at what really matters, she says, but they always have an excuse – they were too busy doing something else to work on their own big goals. If this was a problem in 1933, imagine how much more challenging it is today!

Focus is essential to productivity, and productivity is fundamental to both organizational effectiveness and a successful career and a fulfilling life. Some of the biggest problems people encounter are caused by a failure to focus time (procrastination and wrong priorities) and money (debt and frivolous spending).

One of the most important ways people earn trust is by being reliable. And one of the most effective ways to make sure you are always reliable is to be focused. Here are 9 little words that will help you be more reliable:

Just say no: The more you say "no" to trivia, distraction, temptation, and other diversions from that which is important, the more you will have the time, money, and other resources you need to reliably meet your commitments and achieve your goals.

Just do it: Do the things that you might not want to do, but which must be done in order for you to achieve your greater goals.

Do it now: There is always some action that you can take – right now – to get things moving and then to keep them moving.

Be as careful with your minutes as you are with your nickels!

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Every person and every organization is the product of a coalition and the forces within the coalition are always at war. The war is between the trivial many and the vital few. The trivial many comprise the prevalent inertia and ineffectiveness. The vital few are the breakthrough streaks of effectiveness, brilliance, and good fit. Most activity results in little value and little change. A few powerful interventions can have massive impact.”

Richard Koch: *The 80/20 Principle*

MODULE 42: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF FOCUS IS TARGET

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The One Big Yes requires lots of little no's; the fewer targets you try to hit at one time, the more of them you will hit over a lifetime. If you want to change your corner of the world, you don't have time to waste watching reality TV and chatting with strangers on social media, or money to waste on shopping therapy.

.....

Be clear about what it is that you really want. No one on their deathbed says they wish they'd watched more TV, but over the course of a lifetime, the average American will have spent 9 full years watching television (A.C. Nielsen). These are four biggest regrets people commonly experience toward the end of life: 1) they wish they'd spent more time with friends and family (relationships); 2) they wish they'd taken more risks and done the things they dreamed of (experiences); 3) they wish they'd taken better care of themselves (health); and 4) they wish they'd been more judicious with money (finances).

Here's a great way to define what's important: have an imagined conversation with the person you will be on the day that you retire. Ask yourself of the future what yourself of the present can do to make your future life more secure, comfortable and enjoyable. You'll hear the answers (hint: they will have a lot to do with relationships, experiences, health, and finances). Those answers can guide you to your authentic target goals.

The bigger your goals and dreams, the more important it is to keep them on your mental front burner. But many of us feel like the circus performer trying to keep fifty plates spinning precariously atop sticks, frantically running from one to the other to keep them from crashing to the ground. That is a formula for frustration and ultimate mediocrity.

The Pareto Principle (better known as the 80/20 rule) states that as a general principle, 20% of activity is responsible for 80% of results. In business, 20% of a company's customers will account for 80% of its revenue; in healthcare, 20% of patients account for 80% of healthcare costs. In your own work, it is likely that 20% of your effort is responsible for 80% of your substantive outcomes while the other 80% of your time is spent attending meetings and dealing with issues that do not directly contribute to achieving big goals.

If you can identify the 20% that's highly productive and do more of that, and do less of the other 80%, you will accomplish a great deal more. As Richard Koch wrote in his book *The 80/20 Principle*: "The trivial many comprise the prevalent inertia and ineffectiveness. The vital few are the breakthrough streaks of effectiveness, brilliance, and good fit. Most activity results in little value and little change. A few powerful interventions can have massive impact." The fewer targets you try to hit at one time the more you will be able to hit over time (and the myth of multi-tasking).

Direction Deflection Questions (DDQs) are a great tool for helping you stay focused on key targets.

The way that you spend your time and money is a much better indicator of what your personal values really are than what you say those values are. Just say no to trivial distractions, diversions and temptations so that you can say yes to your One Big Yes.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“I don’t think most people realize how stressful it can be to have multiple incomplete tasks hanging over your head... It has always intrigued me because often, it would be relatively easy and simple to bear down and complete something – not almost complete something, but really complete it 100 percent and get it out of the way... This is an easy habit to break. Take an honest look at your own tendencies. If you are someone who often almost finishes something, take note of the tendency and commit yourself to that last final completion. You can do it – and when you do, your life is going to seem so much easier.”

Richard Carlson: *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff at Work*

MODULE 43: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF FOCUS IS CONCENTRATION

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Once you have identified your key target goals, you must be willing to concentrate your time, energy and resources on the achievement of those goals. As the great American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson said, concentration is the key to success in virtually every dimension of work and life.

.....

Concentration begins with an inner determination to not give in to Resistance in all its manifestations, but rather to do the work that is of highest priority. Use little rituals to clear the decks – and to clear your mind – for the hard work of concentrating on your most important priority. Have a place to work that is sacred and free from distractions (including electronic distractions).

Everyone has the same 24 hours in a day. One of the most effective tools you can use to help you concentrate your vital resources on important goals is the DDQ (Direction Deflection Question – not Dairy Queen). Here are several examples:

Will the way I am about to spend my next hour help me achieve an important goal (and if not, what would I do if that goal really was important to me)?

Will what I am about to put in my mouth help me achieve my goal of attaining the ideal body weight (and if not, what would I be eating – or not eating)?

Will this thing that I am about to spend my hard-earned cash to buy help me achieve my goal of being financially independent (and if not, can I live without it and save the money)?

Concentration is essential to the experience of flow and to being creative. People whose talents and energy are spread across the waterfront tend not to be very creative, or to accomplish a great deal. On the other hand, as Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Les Hewitt state in their book *The Power of Focus*, “When you focus most of your time and energy doing the things you are truly brilliant at, you eventually reap big rewards.”

Keep two lists – one for major projects and priorities and one for your daily to-do items, then correlate the two. The more time you can squeeze out of to-do items not related to your major priorities, the more time you will have to invest in the things that really matter to you.

Without a healthy dissatisfaction, there is no motivation for change. What is the *one* (and only one) thing you would most like to change in your life? How can you restrict your dissatisfaction so that it is entirely focused on that one thing and nothing else, not complaining about anything else, until it becomes a fire of motivation that propels you into action?

Toxic emotional negativity in the workplace contributes to inertia, stagnation, and resistance to change. Chronic complaining, bullying, gossiping and rumor-mongering, disrespect and disengagement all divert your team’s focus from the work that is most important. That loss of focus will diminish the quality of patient care, and in the worst case threaten patient safety and even cause patient deaths, not to mention the deleterious impact on patient satisfaction.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Understand that you create your life from a series of choices you make, and you can never be doing anything unless you’ve chosen to do it. The quality of your life is the result of choices you make. Don’t let the three thieves of freedom of choice steal your ability to make choices. The three bandits to watch for are peer group influence, promise of reward, and fear of punishment. Understand that by controlling your choices, you control your future.”

Roger Dawson: *The 13 Secrets of Power Performance*

MODULE 44: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF FOCUS IS SPEED

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*In today's turbulent and fast-paced world, slow and steady does not always win the race.
The rabbit population keeps exploding while tortoises are almost extinct.*
.....

The faster you move, the more you get done (duh!). To spark a sense of urgency, act as if every day was the day before vacation. Moving fast can not only help you stay more focused on what really matters, but also can enhance both the quality and quantity of the results you achieve in your life.

Physical speed begins with emotional speed – leave behind your own emotional baggage and refuse to carry the emotional baggage of others (the water cooler). To achieve escape velocity, move fast enough to escape the gravitational pull of pessimism, negativity, second-guessing, and other emotional blocks.

The 5- Get It Formula: Get ready (make a list); Get moving (double time yourself); Get help (delegate); Get finished (don't dawdle); Get on to the next priority (keep moving).

Building a sense of urgency and moving quickly does a great deal to foster focus. When you are moving quickly, there is less chance of being diverted or distracted from your course, and a greater certainty that you will achieve your goal sooner. The faster you achieve your goals, of course, the more time you have for additional goals, and/or for relaxation and rejuvenation.

One of the common characteristics of high achievers is that they have an incredible sense of urgency coupled with the patience to labor and to wait, because great accomplishments take time. How do they do it? They overcome the need for perfection. They try a little something, see what works and what doesn't, then try it again. They are not afraid to build a prototype, not afraid to fail. Their sense of urgency is satisfied by constant movement in the direction of the goal, and their patience is rewarded by incremental progress.

Speed promotes focus. Building a sense of urgency and moving quickly does a great deal to foster focus. When you are moving quickly, there is less chance of being diverted or distracted from your course, and a greater certainty that you will achieve your goal sooner. The paradox of speed is that the faster you move to achieve your goals, the more time you will have for additional goals, and/or for relaxation and rejuvenation.

Procrastination is not only the source of missed opportunity and failure; it's also the cause of much emotional distress. Successful people have a sense of urgency to move quickly, before opportunities slip away, before problems get out of hand, before it's too late.

CAVEAT #1: If you are pursuing inauthentic goals, speed will only get you down the wrong road more quickly, which is why Authenticity is the first Core Action Value.

CAVEAT #2: Speed does not mean sloppiness. As with the urgent quest of the surgical resident for knowledge and skills, speed means moving quickly from one goal to the next, building upon that foundation.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“The most pernicious aspect of procrastination is that it can become a habit. We don’t just put off our lives today; we put them off till our deathbed. Never forget: This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny. This second, we can turn the tables on Resistance.

This second, we can sit down and do our work.”

Steven Pressfield: *The War of Art*

MODULE 45: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF FOCUS IS MOMENTUM

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The late Zig Ziglar wrote that the secret to high productivity is to move decisively from one task to the next so that you don't lose momentum in between. That's great advice for making friends with the leader's best friend – momentum.
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Anyone who has ever gotten on and off the exercise roller coaster knows that it's a lot easier to stay in shape than it is to get back into shape once you've lost it. It's easier and more productive to keep yourself moving in a desired direction than it is to keep starting, stopping, and redirecting. That's the power of momentum, and it applies in the organizational setting as well as the personal.

Momentum = Urgency + Patience. A sense of urgency is needed to overcome inertia and resistance, but it is patience which allows that urgency to be continuously nourished and channeled. Momentum is thus the marriage of urgency plus patience. With this union, you are unstoppable. You become a force of nature – with the urgency of a thunderstorm and the patience of the sea.

At the organizational level, sustaining momentum is antidote to “program of the month” syndrome. When programs come and go without achieving a lasting impact it is rarely because the program was defective and much more likely that leadership did not make a priority of sustaining momentum. Overcoming resistance and procrastination – keeping the project on track after the initial flush of enthusiasm has worn off – is a marker of leadership character

Anytime you find yourself bogging down, do something physical. Go for a quick walk, do isometrics at your desk, drop to the floor and do some pushups. The less you feel like doing it, the more important it is that you do it. Neuroscientists have shown the intricate relationship between body, mind, and emotions and it turns out that “fake it till you make it” is actually a physiological reality. Smile and walk with confidence and you will become a happier and more confident person, because your body is telling your mind what to believe and telling your emotions what to feel.

Entropy is one of the laws of thermodynamics; it states that unless energy is continuously applied to a system, things begin to fall apart. You have undoubtedly seen this happen in your organization, and in your own life. The solution is to keep moving forward, to keep that foot on the gas pedal. Sometimes the best way to maintain your overall momentum is to switch activities as soon as you sense yourself getting bogged down. As Winston Churchill put it, “a change is better than a rest.”

Procrastination is the cause of missed opportunities, emotional distress, and failure to live up to one's full potential. Procrastination is pushing the work of today off into tomorrow with the consequence that you are always living under the shadow of yesterday's unfulfilled priorities and perpetually robbed of seeing the possibilities of tomorrow. It is the source of much personal misery and organizational failure.

Emotional momentum is more important than – and often precedes – physical momentum. Slow down on the inside so you can speed up on the outside.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Momentum is really a leader’s best friend. Sometimes it’s the only difference between winning and losing... Momentum also makes a huge difference in organizations. When you have no momentum, even the simplest tasks can seem to be insurmountable problems. But when you have momentum on your side, the future looks bright, obstacles appear small, and trouble seems temporary.”

John C. Maxwell: *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*

MODULE 46: CORE ACTION VALUE #10 IS ENTHUSIASM

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Enthusiasm is the master value. When you are enthusiastic about your work and your life, it makes everything else easier. And when you are not enthusiastic, it makes everything else harder. Without enthusiasm, even play can seem a chore; with enthusiasm, even work can be fun.
.....

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm, and we could not agree more. Working and living with enthusiasm makes it easier to work and live with each of the other values. It's easier to be authentic, to be courageous and persevering, to have a vision and be focused on its achievement when you are enthusiastic. When you are not enthusiastic, it makes everything else all that much harder. Fortunately, whether you are enthusiastic is not determined by your genetic makeup – it is a choice that you make every hour of every day.

Enthusiasm is the catalyst for self-fulfilling prophecies and memories of the future.

Enthusiasm does not necessarily mean jumping up and down waving pom-poms (though there certainly are times for that). You can be quite serious and seriously enthusiastic. It means having a passion for your work, genuine affection for the people you work with and the people you serve, choosing to do your work with a smile and a can-do attitude, and inspiring that ethic in others.

Enthusiasm is the spark that creates personal happiness and professional success. Its presence or absence in organizations determines the difference between a negative, high-stress work environment and one that is positive, productive, and resilient. Enthusiasm is more contagious than measles in a daycare center, and it's spreading presence can bring to fruition even the grandest of dreams and most naïve of expectations.

Enthusiastic people are happier and more successful because they expect to be happier and more successful—they are positive, and they are optimistic. Their enthusiasm becomes the fuel of self empowerment. Enthusiasm is the active ingredient in positive thinking.

Enthusiasm helps propel you through brick walls and potholes. As Winston Churchill put it, "Success is the ability to move from one failure to the next without loss of enthusiasm."

These are the three essential steps to being enthusiastic: 1) confront and conquer toxic emotional negativity; 2) stoke positive emotions; 3) create a firm expectation of successful outcomes.

Enthusiasm is contagious and by itself can turn around a seemingly lost cause or failed project. We've all had the experience of having someone walk into a room and suck the energy right out of it with their negativity. We've also had experiences where somebody energized the whole room with the power of a smile. Be an energy faucet, and never be an energy drain.

The Pickle Challenge™ and the Pickle Pledge™ are life-changing tools that can help you hard-wire yourself with positive enthusiasm.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“The job of the leader is to get a group moving, to get them do something they are going to be happier doing, and to get them involved in the fun of doing something more worthwhile. In light of this, it is odd to find so many leaders who try to suppress their own enthusiasm in order to appear cool, unengaged, and ‘above’ optimism and eagerness... Leaders can show enthusiasm in many different ways, but what is important that it be authentic and not be hidden (and when there is no well-spring of natural enthusiasm to tap, that’s probably a sign that they are doing the wrong thing.).”

James O’Toole: *Leadership A to Z*

MODULE 47: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF ENTHUSIASM IS ATTITUDE

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Attitude really is everything. Having a great attitude in and of itself will not make you a great leader, but having a bad attitude will make you a bad leader. Your attitude will determine your altitude!
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Attitude really is everything. You have no doubt heard that – and it is a great universal truth. With a great attitude, it's much easier to be authentic and to act with courage and perseverance; it's easier to be clear about your purpose and your vision, and to focus your resources on the achievement of your goals. But with a lousy negative attitude, everything is more difficult – getting through a day is like swimming in Jell-O, and life offers you resistance at every turn.

Is ours the best of times or the worst of times? Is the world a place of scarcity and risk, or a place of abundance and opportunity? Can you influence your own destiny, or is your future out of your control, in the hands of others? Are you grateful for the blessings of your life, or are you resentful about what you don't have? How you answer these questions is substantially defined by your attitude. And because people tend to get what they expect out of life, a positive attitude is one of your most important assets for creating a future filled with blessings and abundance.

Your choice of attitude is the most important choice you make every day, and you make it many times each day: it defines whether you see friends or enemies, risks or opportunities, the past or the future, the best of times or the worst of times.

Nature and nurture are meaningless; choice is everything. There is nothing you can do to change your genetic makeup (nature) and there is nothing you can do to change the way you were treated by parents, teachers, or peers (nurture). The only thing over which you have complete control is the choices that you make from this day forward. And the choices you make will determine how authentic you will be.

Toxic emotional negativity is the emotional and spiritual equivalent of cigarette smoke pollution.

Be positive when it really counts. It's easy to have a positive attitude when the sun is shining, you've just gotten a pay raise, and you're about to go on vacation. It's much more difficult, but far more important, to maintain that positive attitude when things aren't going well. So how can you make sure that you maintain a positive attitude when you run into those inevitable obstacles and setbacks? The single-most important action you can take is to prepare yourself before trouble strikes by reading books and listening to audio programs that inspire you (even if they don't entertain you); cultivating relationships with positive people and avoiding the company of negative people; and making the commitment to yourself that when you run into those speed bumps, you will remain passionate, optimistic, and cheerful. This might mean that you have to take that famous advice from AA – fake it 'til you make it.

“No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new heaven to the horizon of the spirit.”

Helen Keller

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“What is it going to be for you: a positive attitude or a negative attitude? The choice seems fairly simple, doesn’t it? The problem is that we often forget that we have a choice...

You should choose your attitude thoughtfully because it determines how you respond to the many challenges you will encounter.”

Keith Harrell: *Attitude is Everything*

MODULE 48: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF ENTHUSIASM IS ENERGY

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*Energy is life. People with a lot of energy have a lot of life. If you are unhappy,
chances are that the only thing standing between you and greater happiness is an
expenditure of positive energy, both emotional and physical*
.....

Human energy is the ultimate self-renewing resource – expending energy creates energy. When you make the decision to have energy, and then to expend it, you expand it. When you come home after a long, hard day at work and do not give in to the temptation of lounging in front of the television set having your brains transformed into pudding but instead go for a walk, or when you determine yourself to pick up the phone and make the call that you have been putting off, you not only lose the energy it takes for that action, you will find that the energy you thought you had expended has actually come back to you stronger than before.

Are you an energy faucet or an energy drain? An energy faucet is the person who walks into a room and with a smile, a kind word, and a positive, enthusiastic attitude. An energy drain is the person who walks into a room and sucks the energy right out of the atmosphere with a frown, with critical, cynical, and pessimistic comments, and with a negative attitude. The energy faucet comes into the room bearing a beautiful gift. The energy drain is a thief who steals from people their most precious resource – their life energy. Make the commitment to be an energy faucet, and to never, ever be an energy drain.

Courage requires energy. Without energy, courage is just a good intention while without courage energy is more likely to run away than it is to stand and do what must be done. In health-care today, we need nurse leaders who are willing to stand out and do their pushups – at least metaphorically speaking.

Worry can be a serious energy drain. Like fear, worry is a natural human condition that can be managed, but really cannot be made to go away. In his book *Worry*, Dr. Edward Hallowell says that one of the keys to an effective and successful life is learning how to worry well. Two key steps, he says, are: 1) to focus on your goals rather than on your fears and 2) to attack problems quickly (before they attack you!). So anytime you find yourself overwhelmed with worry, ask this question: *What is the problem about which I am worrying?* Transforming the worry into a problem will direct you toward the actions you can take to ameliorate the worries by solving the problems.

The body talks to the mind as well as the reverse. Stand tall, walk fast, keep a smile on your face and you will find that you experience a dramatic increase in your energy level.

Just as you cannot push a nail into a board, your body and mind require periods of rest and relaxation – so master the fine art of strategic laziness. Get enough sleep and when possible employ the rejuvenating power of Neuro Attitudinal Positivity (take a nap!). Research shows an almost direct correlation between hours of television watched and likelihood of being depressed, so unhook yourself from the plug-in drug.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“If an unusual necessity forces us onward, a surprising thing occurs. The fatigue gets worse up to a certain point, then, gradually or suddenly, it passes away and we are fresher than before! We have evidently tapped a new level of energy. There may be layer of this experience, a third and a fourth wind. We find amounts of ease and power that we never dreamed ourselves to own, sources of strength habitually not taxed, because habitually we never push through the obstruction of fatigue.”

William James: *The Varieties of Religious Experience*

MODULE 49: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF ENTHUSIASM IS CURIOSITY

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Enthusiastic people are curious. Re-spark your childlike (not childish) curiosity. As the Zen Master says, in the expert's mind the possibilities are limited but in the beginner's mind they are endless. And as McZen says, "If you don't have a question, you don't have clue; if you're not searching you are truly lost."

.....

Is anyone more enthusiastic than a two-year old? The little tykes are always asking: "Why?" Like Kipling's Elephant's Child from the classic children's story, toddlers are blessed with insatiable curiosity. We humans are the curious species. We're the only creatures who ask questions, who wonder why birds fly, why the sky is blue and why the grass is green. One of the surest ways for you to re-spark your own spirit of enthusiasm is to start asking better questions. Replace "Why me?" with "Why is the sky blue?" You'll learn a lot more, you'll earn a lot more, and you'll be a lot happier to boot. Structure your curiosity so that you ask more questions, and more deeply probing question, about the things that are most important. Be willing to ask dumb questions and be open to unexpected answers.

In her book *Change Your Questions Change Your Life*, Marilee Adams wrote: "A world of questions is a world of possibility. Questions open our minds, connect us to each other, and shake out-moded paradigms." The way to get better answers is to ask better questions. That is the underlying principle of the 5-Whys total quality management technique. With each successive "Why?" the questions become more refined and the answers come closer to the truth of root cause.

As psychiatrist Edward Hallowell notes in his book *Worry*, the greatest learning disability is not a medical condition – it is simple garden variety fear. Fear of asking questions because you might look stupid prevents you from learning the answers that would make you smart. Fear of trying because you might fail prevents you from learning through experience. Fear of asking for something because you might be rejected prevents you from getting what you want, including the knowledge that comes with the answer. As Richard Farson and Ralph Keyes say in their book *Whoever Makes the Most Mistakes Wins*, "Nothing undermines innovation more effectively than fear. By the same token, nothing encourages innovation better than finding ways to cope with fear. Real innovation is most likely to take place among those who aren't hamstrung by anxiety."

Especially in times of adversity it is important to ask positive questions. Asking the right questions is the way you turn adversity into opportunity, find the silver lining in dark clouds, and find a sense of meaning in seemingly meaningless tragedy.

One of the best ways nurture your curiosity is to make a regular practice of going off on journeys – to the library, to professional meetings, to the distant reaches of your organization, to some of the world's special places (like the Grand Canyon). The journey itself is less important than your state of mind in making it. Take a journal, take a camera, and take your native inquisitiveness.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“Without a burning curiosity, a lively interest, we are unlikely to persevere long enough to make a significant new contribution. This kind of interest is rarely only intellectual in nature. It is usually rooted in deep feelings, in memorable experiences that need some sort of resolution – a resolution they can be achieved only by a new artistic expression or a new way of understanding. Someone who is motivated solely by the desire to become rich and famous might struggle hard to get ahead but will rarely have enough inducement to work beyond what is necessary, to venture beyond what is already known.”

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*

MODULE 50: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF ENTHUSIASM IS HUMOR

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In today's demanding and fast-changing healthcare environment, we need less Dr. Kildare and more Patch Adams. Humor can be the surest way to spark a spirit of enthusiasm in the face of stressful situations. The funny bone isn't a bone, it's a muscle, and like any other muscle it is strengthened with exercise.
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In a study of graduates from Harvard University, it was found that HQ (Humor Quotient) was a better predictor of future success than anything else, including class standing or participation in extracurricular activities. Having a sense of humor can not only help you be happier, it can also help you be more successful. Fortunately, you do not have to be a comedian to improve your sense of humor – you just need to practice laughing more.

Laughter really is the best medicine. Dr. Madan Kataria, founder of Laughter Yoga International, says “When you laugh; you change and when you change, the world changes around you.” Actually, though, the world might not change – what changes is your perception of the world. *Try this:* Google “laughter club videos” and watch people gathering in groups and laughing for no reason other than the sheer joy of laughter. See if it doesn’t inspire you to laugh yourself, and to approach the rest of your day with a bit more joy in your heart.

We usually equate stress and fatigue with being overworked, but in actuality, boredom and ennui can actually be more tiring and stressful. It’s unusual (to say the least!) to see someone get up and do a somersault in the middle of a budget meeting, but something like that could be precisely what is needed to make that meeting less stressful and more productive.

If you’re “dead serious” long enough, you’ll end up seriously dead – with what the late C.W. Metcalf called “terminal professionalism.” In his book *Lighten Up*, he described three important humor skills that we can all cultivate: 1) the ability to see the absurdity in difficult situations; 2) the ability to take yourself lightly while taking your work seriously; and 3) a disciplined sense of joy in being alive.

Appreciate the value of humor in so many different dimensions of life: health and happiness; sales, career, and leadership effectiveness; and emotional equanimity and spiritual peace. Having a good sense of humor, a strong funny bone, can help you be more successful in your work.

Laugh for no reason: laughter is often the best way to conquer procrastination and fear of rejection. It’s impossible to be frightened or depressed when you are laughing.

One caveat: Laughter is not really humor, and certainly not in the spirit of living values, if that laughter comes at someone’s expense. Leave the put-down humor to television sitcoms – it has no place in a healing environment.

Humor is most important when it is hardest to find – during times of greatest stress and adversity. It’s most important to laugh when all you want to do is cry – humor is the shock absorber for the jolts and jars of life.

Remember: Nobody ever *really* died laughing!

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“One of the best ways of dealing with worry, or any stress in life, is to use humor. Make friends with amusing people. Laugh as much as you can. Keep in mind that it’s OK to laugh, even when times are tough. Make jokes out of bad times. Not only is it OK, it’s an excellent idea. Toxic worry almost always entails a loss of perspective; humor almost always restores it.”

Edward M. Hallowell, M.D.: *Worry: Controlling it and Using It Wisely*

MODULE 51: CORE ACTION VALUE #11 IS SERVICE

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Service is not just what you do to help other people, it is also the attitude with which you do what you do. Help that is given with a surly, condescending, or judgmental spirit, or that is treated as a burdensome chore rather than as a professional privilege, is not really service.
.....

Service becomes *a value*, and not just a series of activities, when it is engrained as an underlying philosophy which informs attitudes and guides actions.

In a letter to his son J.R.R. Tolkien (author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*) wrote: “A man is both a seed and in some degree also a gardener, for good or ill. I am impressed by the degree in which the development of ‘character’ *can* be a product of conscious intention, the will to modify innate tendencies in desired directions; in some cases the change can be great and permanent.” A commitment to serving others is the difference between growing an oak tree and growing a dandelion.

We’ve all heard the word “service” a lot in recent years. We know that ours has become a service economy, and that a majority of us have become service workers. We know that excellent customer service is critical to the long-term success and survival of our organizations, and with it our own job security and opportunities for enhancement and advancement. And while it is an ancient concept, the idea of servant leadership – that those who would lead must first be committed to be servants for those who follow them – is an idea that has gained considerable currency in recent years.

Service begins with a sincere desire to help others, which is then followed up by action. It’s an ancient paradox that the person who gives a helping hand often benefits as much or more than the person being helped. The 3-W’s of Service are Work, Wisdom, and Wealth (also known as The Three T’s of Contribution – Time, Talent and Treasure). Whether it is in giving wealth (treasure), wisdom (talent) or work (time), there is always a way that each of us can be of service to others.

The Contribution Promise of *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* says: “I will earn the help I need in advance by helping other people now and repay the help I receive by serving others later.”

Service is an outward reflection of the prevailing of human brain over lizard brain, of best self over lesser self, of ego over soul.

The most important part of your legacy in this life is the service you perform for future generations. In his book *Illusions*, Richard Back wrote that there is a test to find out if your mission on Earth is finished: if you’re alive, it isn’t. Service is your contribution to the world – but it is also an obligation. In the words of boxing great Muhammad Ali, “Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.”

Service to others is one of the very best ways to help you escape worrying about your own problems. One of the surest ways to cope with anxiety and depression is to stop focusing on your own problems and devote time to helping others who have even bigger problems.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Each of us will define and measure success differently. Some will place more emphasis on the economic scorecard than others. No matter what your choice, if you are to succeed, you must understand that your rewards in life will be in direct proportion to the contribution you make.”

David McNally: *Even Eagles Need a Push*

MODULE 52: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF SERVICE IS HELPFULNESS

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Webster's Dictionary has two definitions for helpfulness: 1) the property of providing useful assistance; and 2) friendliness evidenced by a kindly and helpful disposition. Therefore, genuine service is not just helping others, it is also the attitude with which you help them.
.....

Turn your problem into someone else's solution, transform your grief into a gift to another. Some of the most powerful movements in of the 20th century were sparked by one or two courageous people turning a personal tragedy into a social movement, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the DAISY Foundation to recognize extraordinary nurses, and the Hope for Henry Foundation to support innovative care for very sick kids.

See your job description as a floor (platform) not as a ceiling (limitation).

Anytime you reach out to help someone else, two people are helped in the process. That is the fundamental underlying principle of the AA principle of mutuality – the best way for a drunk to stay sober is to help other drunks stay sober. It is the premise of every support group – we help ourselves best by helping each other.

In addition to having a budget category for charitable giving, block off time for service.

Leverage your own time by being a Tom Sawyer of Service: when you inspire other people to join you in service projects, the way Tom Sawyer influenced his friends to help him whitewash the fence by making it sound like more fun than fishing, you can greatly magnify the impact of your own contribution of time and money.

Don't do for others the things that they should do for themselves. Watch a child who is trying to do something when the parent comes around and starts to do it for them. What will the child say? "No! Let me do it!" There is an art to knowing when the greatest help you can give somebody is letting them do something for themselves. For anyone in a leadership role, this art lies at the heart of effective delegation. And there are times when you should not rescue people from the messes they've made in their own lives or work (often an especially tough lesson for parents to learn about their children).

The most effective leaders first and foremost see themselves as servants. In J.R.R. Tolkien's classic *The Lord of the Rings*, Sam Gamgee wanted nothing more than to serve Frodo. Time and again, he sacrificed his own comfort and security and endangered his very life on behalf of Frodo and their mutual Quest. No leader could ever hope for a more devoted servant. Sam was not motivated by the hope for personal gain or glory, but through a paradox at least as old as the Bible, his selfless devotion to service earned Sam a place of high honor within the Shire. By the end of the story it was Sam Gamgee, the humble gardener, who emerged as a real leader in the Quest.

Whatever you most need in life, the best way for you to get it is to help someone else get it who needs it even more than you do.

MODULE 53: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF SERVICE IS CHARITY

.....
True charity is not just giving of your money, it is also giving of your time and talents – giving what you can give and doing what you can do with a spirit of extravagant generosity.
.....

Charity is both the giving and the spirit with which the gift is given. Charity is the lovely marriage of gratitude, compassion and generosity; it is an attitude as well as an act, an opening of the heart as well as an opening of the wallet. True charity comes not just from a sense of obligation, but rather is given willingly, generously, and in a spirit of spontaneity.

We know from the stories of King Midas and Johnny Appleseed that a treasure hoarded is a treasure diminished while a treasure shared is a treasure multiplied. King Midas wanted everything that he touched to turn to gold. His wish was granted, and he starved to death. Johnny Appleseed shared the wealth of his apple seeds across the land and fed future generations apples by the millions. If you truly believe in the abundance philosophy that is expressed by some new age gurus, instead of trying to become a money magnet, strive to be a fountain of generosity.

Charity begins with an attitude, and a generous attitude begins with a smile. You can give as many of these little gifts away as you want to, and they don't cost you a cent. The more smiles you give away, the more of them you will have, and the more of them will be returned to you.

Practice being extravagantly generous in small ways. One way to practice this is to become an extravagant tipper. Not just a generous tipper - an *extravagantly generous* tipper. It will cost a bit of money, but nothing more than you can afford. You will find that, over time, this commitment to charity will come back to you in beautiful ways that you never could have anticipated.

Don't wait until you strike it rich to be generous – having more money will only make you more of who you already are: more miserly or more generous. Don't wait until your money troubles have all been resolved before you decide to support worthwhile charities; that's not likely to ever happen. Many successful people date the beginning of their success to the moment that they made a personal commitment to giving away.

As with helpfulness, when it comes to charity the person doing the giving often benefits more than the person who is receiving. As you give so shall you receive is often more than just a well-intentioned aphorism – it is a fact of life that has been experienced by many people who have committed themselves to service and charity.

Many successful people attribute the beginning of success to a commitment on their part to give away part of their money, including those who have made a commitment to tithing. But, as Kahlil Gibran wrote in *The Prophet*, you give but little when you give of your time, the greatest gifts are often of yourself. A spirit of charity is also reflected in your willingness to give of your time, to put yourself out in the service to others.

A treasure shared is a treasure multiplied, a treasure hoarded is a treasure diminished.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“Deeds of courage and self-sacrifice are never meaningless. Don’t feel that you are a failure when you lose one battle in the service of a cause that deserves to win. Even as a match has the power to light a candle and perpetuate its light before it is consumed by its own flame, even as a candle can chase the darkness from an entire room before it uses itself up in the process of shedding light and warmth, so your dedication will make a difference to people whose existence you may not even know about today.”

Harold S. Kushner: *Who Needs God?*

MODULE 54: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF SERVICE IS COMPASSION

.....

Compassion, according to Webster's Dictionary, means "a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering." Consider the fact that at some point or another, all of us are so stricken, and for many people it is almost a chronic condition (at least in their own minds). As such, everyone you meet needs, and is deserving of your compassion. But also remember that compassion without action is just a good intention.

.....

The paradox of compassion is as old as the world's formative scripture. The real beneficiary of your compassion is not the one to whom you exhibit compassion – were that the case, it would be mere condescension, not genuine compassion. The one who most benefits from the softening of your heart is the one in whose chest that heart is beating. It behooves us to remember, as Mother Teresa put it, that we are all children of the same god. Sibling rivalry might be natural, but it should be tempered with family compassion and love.

Having a charitable heart means being kind, loving and compassionate towards others. This could be another colleague, the patient and family being cared for, or even a stranger on the street. A true spirit of charity is the lovely blending of generosity with gratitude for the many blessings of your life and compassion for those who are less fortunate. It is being generous with your money – but also being generous with smiles, hugs, and simple acts of kindness. A generous spirit encourages without judging or diminishing others.

Catch yourself before you judge others on the basis of such superficial factors as physical appearance or what they happen to do for a living. To be compassionate is to honor the soul that lives underneath appearances.

Compassion means looking beneath superficialities to see the human being. Give to a beggar without being judgmental (it's harder than you might think). If, as is often the case, they reply with "God Bless" don't think of it a prayer of petition (that you will be blessed), but rather as a statement of fact – as a result of your act of compassion you have been blessed.

Gossip is always a violation of compassion, respect, and dignity. Talking about another person behind that person's back *never* helps that individual be a better person. Quite to the contrary, gossip and rumor-mongering always violates the integrity of the person engaged in spreading the rumors and damages the dignity and reputation of the person about whom those rumors are being spread.

To be compassionate does not necessarily mean that you are accepting or approving of inappropriate behavior. You can be compassionate of the alcoholic without tolerating the alcoholic's destructive behavior. This is the central message of any tough love approach – to love the sinner without approving of the sin.

Compassion without action is just a good intention. Take to heart Thursday's Promise of *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* to earn the help you need in advance by helping other people now, and to repay the help you receive by serving others later.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

.....

“The joy that compassion brings is one of the best-kept secrets of humanity. It is a secret known only to a very few people, a secret that has to be rediscovered over and over again.”

Henri J. M. Nouwen: *Here and Now*

MODULE 55: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF SERVICE IS RENEWAL

.....
You cannot pour from an empty pitcher. Take time to renew yourself so that you can continue to serve others with attentiveness, caring and compassion. And remember this – if you're not enjoying the journey, the destination is likely to be a disappointment.
.....

You cannot pour from an empty pitcher. People who do not take time for renewal, who do not take care of themselves, often end up cynical, burned out, and frankly not very caring. Be willing to do for yourself at least as much as you do for others.

Follow the Nedlog Rule – the Golden Rule in reverse. Nedlog is the word Golden spelled backwards; it is not in the dictionary – at least not yet – because I made it up. Be willing to ask others for any help that you would be willing to give them if they were to ask you for that help. Then be willing to receive that help when it's offered. In our Lone Ranger culture, it's difficult for many of us to ask for the help we need, especially if it implies some sort of weakness on our part. Nevertheless, renewal – the refilling of the pitcher – often requires that we do just that. It also requires that when others offer to help (including perhaps unwelcome suggestions) we accept their help, assuming they are offering it in good faith and with our best interest at heart.

Renewal is often most complete in natural spaces of beauty, peace, and solitude: a retreat to the desert or mountains is a typical point of the mythical hero's journey. It is a time for gathering courage and strength, and for recommitting to one's purpose. Whether it's a short walk in the woods or an excursion into one of our nation's glorious national parks, time in nature is a beautiful time for renewal.

You will never *find* time for renewal – you must *make* time for it. Set aside 15-30 first thing every morning and last thing every evening for personal reflection, meaningful reading, writing in a journal and other activities that foster introspection, learning, thinking, planning, and dreaming.

Times of adversity are, paradoxically, often when the most profound renewal can take place. If you're paying attention, challenging times are (often well-disguised) opportunities for renewal. One reason most people who have ever lost a job will look back and say it was the best thing that could have happened is that it can force the introspection and redirection that is central to the renewal process.

It's one of the enduring myths of the ages: the hero retreats into the desert, or falls into the abyss, and returns stronger and wiser. Like the hero of myth, we all must make the time for renewal. Whether it is making a journey into the desert of metaphor, or dealing with the abyss of our own adversity, a commitment to periodic reflection and renewal can help us become stronger and wiser (and perhaps even more heroic). A voyage of renewal is an adventure; you can never be sure of what you'll find or where you'll end up, but you can be sure that you will grow stronger and wiser through the journey.

If you're not enjoying the journey, the destination will be a disappointment (McZen).

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“The courage to face the trials and to bring a whole new body of possibilities into the field of interpreted experience for other people to experience – that is the hero’s deed. This is an absolute necessity for anybody today. You must have a room, or a certain hour or so a day, where you don’t know what was in the newspapers that morning, you don’t know who your friends are, you don’t know what you owe anybody, you don’t know what anybody owes you. This is a place of creative incubation. At first you may find that nothing happens there. But if you have a sacred place and use it, something eventually will happen.”

Joseph Campbell: *The Power of Myth*

MODULE 56: CORE ACTION VALUE #12 IS LEADERSHIP

.....
*People will quit a job, but they will never quit a mission; people will leave an organization,
but they will never leave a team; people will desert a boss, but they will never desert a leader.*
.....

Anyone who takes to heart and acts upon Core Action Values #1 through #11 will, through their example and the expectations they set for themselves and others, both influence and inspire the people around them. That is the best definition of what a leader does – influences and inspires others.

Leadership becomes a value when it is more than just what you do for a living but rather becomes a personal philosophy, a perspective on looking at challenges and opportunities, and a commitment to serving others through your example and the expectations that you set. In many respects, leadership closes the circle of The Twelve Core Action Values by bringing us back to Authenticity. The most effective leaders become leaders because of a need to pursue authentic goals that inspire others as well as themselves.

Management is a job description; leadership is a life decision. And in today's complex world, organizations need leadership in every corner, not just in the corner office. When leadership is an attitude and a way of life, not just something that's a part of your job description, it becomes a value in its own right.

Leadership authority Joel Barker says that a leader is someone who takes you to a place to which you did not know you wanted to go. This implies sharing the dream, inspiring people to make the journey, and encouraging them through the inevitable obstacles and setbacks along the way. I add this: a leader is someone who takes you to a place you didn't know you wanted to go by helping you become the person that you did not know you could be. That likewise entails helping the individual see their own potential and motivating themselves to pursue her authentic goals and grow into the people they are meant to be.

You can be a manager by holding people accountable for achieving results, but you can only be a leader by helping people take ownership for their results. It takes brains to be a manager – to be a leader you must also have heart.

A leader is someone who takes you to a place you didn't know you wanted to go by helping you become the person that you didn't know you could be.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“A king does not abide within his tent while his men bleed and die upon the field. A king does not dine while his men go hungry, nor sleep when they stand at watch upon the wall. A king does not command his men’s loyalty through fear nor purchase it with gold; he earns their love by the sweat of his own back and the pains he endures for their sake. That which comprises the harshest burden, a king lifts first and sets down last. A king does not require service of those he leads but provides it to them. He serves them, not they him... A king does not expend his substance to enslave men, but by his conduct and example makes them free.”

Steven Pressfield: *Gates of Fire*

MODULE 57: THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF LEADERSHIP IS EXPECTATIONS

.....
*Leaders create high expectations for themselves and for the
members of their teams, then seek to encourage and enforce those expectations
with cultural norms rather than through hierarchical accountability.*
.....

Values-based leaders expect a lot from people – beginning with themselves. The attitude and expectations of the leader can create self-fulfilling prophecies (and memories of the future). It is most important to maintain high expectations during those times when the obstacles appear to be overwhelming (Remember: everything can look like a failure in the middle).

In his book *Weird Ideas that Work*, Robert Sutton says that more than 500 studies have been conducted on the power of self-fulfilling prophecy. “These studies,” he says, “find that, independent of other factors, when leaders believe their subordinates will perform well, positive expectations lead to better performance. And the converse holds for [low expectations and] poor performance.” Sutton cites several examples of “impossible” projects that have succeeded, while acknowledging that expectation alone does not necessarily transform itself into reality.

There are three paradoxes to big audacious goals, which are often no more costly or risky than timid little milquetoast goals, and more likely to bring about great results: Paradox #1 is that big goals are often more likely to be achieved than timid goals, because they inspire you (and probably others as well). Paradox #2 is that big goals often require the same level of risk and effort as smaller goals; but once achieved they can generate substantially greater revenue. And paradox #3 is that big goals almost always become the platform for an even bigger and more audacious goal in the future.

A big goal gives you five tools that timid little dreams do not give you: 1) They are a compass that defines your true north; 2) They are a magnifying glass that leverages your efforts – when you are committed to a big dream, your efforts are magnified through everyone else who buys into that dream with you; 3) They are a magnet – a big dream is like a magnet that attracts the people, money, and other resources needed for its fulfillment; 4) They are a flywheel – like the heavy metal disk that gives momentum to a car’s engine in between firings of each piston, a big goal gives you momentum to power your way through the inevitable down days, obstacles, and setbacks; and they are a spark plug that galvanizes you to take the action necessary to achieve the goal.

If you want to achieve success beyond your wildest expectations, you must begin with wild expectations.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

[illegible]

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

“In my years of research on human achievement and accomplishment, one of the most striking things I’ve learned is that a high expectation of success is the single most valuable quality you can bring into any challenging situation. A high expectation of success is more important than natural ability or the lack thereof. It’s more important than practice or preparation.

This has been proven in any number of controlled experiments.”

Denis Waitley: *The New Dynamics of Winning*

MODULE 58: THE SECOND CORNERSTONE OF LEADERSHIP IS EXAMPLE

.....
Effective leaders are people who continuously raise expectations, of themselves and of others.

This is a powerfully important point, given the incredible evidence that in life, as in business, we tend to get what we expect. Then they set a positive example by working to fulfill those expectations.
.....

It's been said that there are only three types of leadership: example, example and example. People will watch what you do and the attitude with which you do it far more acutely than they will listen to what you say. And their performance will rarely if ever exceed the example that you set through your own performance. And in following your example they will, for better or worse, be setting an example for others.

Gandhi said be the change you want to see in the world. Show the people you lead and teach what you expect from them by the example that you set for them.

As a leader, as a teacher, and as a coach, recognize that you are always on stage – always setting an example, for better or for worse. Be serious about living your values wherever you are because you never know when someone you lead, someone you teach, or someone you mentor will be watching.

Anyone who presumes to be a leader must give up many freedoms. As a leader, you give up the freedom to join in on meetings of the alternative BMW Club (Bellyaching, Moaning, Whining and Complaining). You give up the freedom to participate in gossip and rumor-mongering, even as a passive participant, because such disrespectful behavior violates the dignity of the person being gossiped about and the integrity of the organization. You give up the freedom to in any way act in ways that are counter to the values of your organization because you are being paid to be an example of those values.

Think of the people you most admire as leaders. They could be historical or contemporary, world leaders or leaders in your community. Make a list of five key characteristics about these men and women for which you have included them in your pantheon of great leaders. Now write down five phrases that best describe you. Compare the two lists. What can you learn from the example of the leaders you admire that can help you make modifications to your own approach to leadership. In other words, how can these exemplary leaders help you set a better example yourself?

What is the example you are setting? Would you want to follow, learn from and be coached by someone else setting that sort of example? If not, when are you going to change and set a better example?

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

.....

“[M]oral character strengths represent the fundamental core of what it means to be a fully functional, healthy human being. And if that’s so, business leaders should do everything they can to teach them. Rather than being obsessed by financial outcomes, managers should focus on the path employees take to achieve those outcomes. Ethical leadership should be granted preeminent status by corporate boards and all C-suite executives.”

Jim Loehr: *The Only Way to Win*

MODULE 59: THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF LEADERSHIP IS ENCOURAGEMENT

.....

Transforming leadership is ultimately spiritual leadership. It is encouraging people to be their best selves and to do their best work, not because they fear being held accountable but because they want to live their values. It is connecting them to the higher purpose and greater meaning of their everyday work.

.....

Leaders encourage (en-courage: to instill courage) followers to live up to their full potential, and to help their teams and their organizations achieve great goals. Like great coaches, the best leaders encourage people to believe in themselves and in their dreams. The greatest accomplishments are usually the result of leaders encouraging people to believe in and commit to “impossible” goals. Good leaders create an environment where people work together with a spirit of pride, collegiality, and fellowship. The best leaders encourage us to tackle those challenges that once might have seemed to be impossible.

“We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” “We shall never surrender.” Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill were masters at encouraging their people to persevere during the darkest days of the Great Depression and World War II. When John F. Kennedy challenged us to put a man on the moon by the end of the sixties, he galvanized a nation and launched a technological revolution. With his famous (or infamous) “reality distortion field,” Steve Jobs has encouraged one small band after another of Silicon Valley rebels to revolutionize the computer, music, motion picture, and telecommunications industries.

James O’Toole’s book *Leadership A-to-Z* is structured as a dictionary, and under the letter C he asks why so many leaders fail to appreciate that an essential element of leading is Cheerleading. We wonder why, given the importance of storytelling for shaping culture, more leaders do not practice the skills to become better storytellers. Every great leader knows that words alone do little to inspire followers. The best form of encouragement truly is cheerleading – letting your passion shine through as you encourage others to do their work and live their lives with passion.

One of the most important ways leaders encourage people is through the stories they tell, so learning how to find, craft, and tell stories is an important leadership responsibility.

It is most important to encourage people precisely at those times when failure seems most likely – paradoxically, that is also when a bit of encouragement can have the greatest leverage and impact. It’s been said that a word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than a chapter of praise after success.

An important duty of leadership is to create an environment where people work together with a spirit of pride, collegiality, and friendship; you cannot effectively encourage people who are working in a toxic emotional environment.

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“I believe the most important thing you can sell people is a belief in themselves. The most significant investment you can make is one in your own potential for greatness, and your own capacity to make a difference in the lives of those around you.”

Les Brown: *Live Your Dreams*

MODULE 60: THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE OF LEADERSHIP IS CELEBRATION

.....
*The best leaders foster teamwork, creativity, community and a spirit of fellowship
by celebrating personal and group achievements. They also celebrate good faith failures,
turning those experiences into the platform for future success and achievement.*
.....

This is often the most overlooked and underutilized element of leadership. Leaders take the time to celebrate both successes and good faith failures. If people are afraid of being punished for failure, you will eventually lose your most creative and talented people. On the other hand, when you have a reputation for standing behind the people even if they have failed spectacularly (and yes, for celebrating those good faith failures), you will attract more creative and daring people, and keep the ones you have.

Leaders foster teamwork, community, and a spirit of fellowship by celebrating personal and group achievement. And sometimes they find an excuse to celebrate for no reason.

Reinforce the desired culture of your organization with celebratory rituals. Celebrating an accomplishment (or a good faith failure) helps to set the stage for the next undertaking.

Exchange the spotlight for a floodlight: don't just celebrate the superstars – celebrate everyone who makes their stardom possible.

According to the Gallup Organization, one of the most important determinants of whether employees are fully engaged in their work is if they have friends on the job. Effective leaders go out of their way to cultivate an empowering culture and a positive workplace environment. The best leaders take the time to recognize and celebrate both successes and good faith failures. They capitalize on every opportunity to congratulate a coworker, celebrate a success (or a good attempt), and to astonish a customer.

It is especially important to find ways to celebrate good faith failures. If people are afraid of being punished for failure, you will eventually lose your most creative and talented people. On the other hand, when you have a reputation for standing behind the people even if they have failed spectacularly (and yes, for celebrating those good faith failures), you will attract more creative and daring people, and keep the ones you have. This is an essential tenet of the just culture philosophy.

Rituals have always been an important way for humans to bring a sense of structure and purpose to their work, yet in today's workplace we're too busy for rituals (we've replaced them with meetings). What can you do to restore the spirit and practice of rituals in your organization?

What are the key points you want to take to heart for yourself and to share with others?

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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“There is a 100 percent chance that you can be a role model for leadership. There is a 100 percent chance that you can influence someone else’s performance. There is a 100 percent chance that you can affect what someone else things, says, and does. There is a 100 percent chance that you will make a difference in other people’s lives.”

James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner: *A Leader's Legacy*

THE PERSONAL BILL OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The first ten amendments to the United States Constitution are called The Bill of Rights. Having made a commitment to The Twelve Core Action Values, you can now add to that historic document your own Personal Bill of Responsibilities.

The Authenticity Commitment

I will be true to myself, manage my ego and emotions so as to be civil and respectful to others, and will not allow low self-esteem, self-limiting beliefs, or the negativity of others to prevent me from pursuing my authentic goals and dreams and from becoming the unique individuals I am meant to be.

The Integrity Commitment

Because integrity is the essential element of earned trust, I will tell the truth, keep my promises, live up to my commitments; will not violate my own integrity and the dignity of others by being arrogant, judgmental, or hypocritical; and will be a wise steward of the resources that have been entrusted to my care.

The Awareness Commitment

Awareness being the essential element for personal happiness and professional success, as well as peace and harmony, I will pay attention to what is happening in the world around me; be empathetic to the needs and feelings of others; monitor my own emotional reactions to avoid becoming my own worst enemy; and make time for personal reflection and introspection.

The Courage Commitment

Because fear is a reaction and courage is a decision, I will make the commitment to stand up for what's right, stand up to those who do wrong; do the things that need to be done despite my fears; and draw courage from my relationships with others while giving courage to those who are struggling with their own fears.

The Perseverance Commitment

Every great accomplishment having once been the seemingly "impossible" dream of a dreamer who refused to quit, I will accept the inevitability of obstacles and roadblocks with good cheer and equanimity, learn from my mistakes and failures, and never quit pursuing my authentic goals when the going gets tough.

The Faith Commitment

My faith in myself, in other people, and in the future will shine through in my attitudes and behaviors, and in open-hearted acceptance of those with beliefs that are different than mine; I will show gratitude for the blessings of my life and forgiveness for those who have hurt me; and be aware that the most important things in life cannot be seen with the eyes.

The Purpose Commitment

I will commit to a purpose bigger than “what’s in it for me” goals and define an overarching purpose that gives greater meaning to my work and life; aspire to contributing to others and making a difference in my part of the world; and seek to attain balance between important aspects of my work and my life.

The Vision Commitment

I will contribute to creating a common shared vision for a better world; commit to taking action that will help to transform the good intentions of today into the reality of tomorrow; exercise my imagination to stretch my vision of what is possible; and never allow my own negative self-talk or the doubts of others to dilute belief in my ability to achieve my dreams.

The Focus Commitment

I will pay attention to how I spend my time, energy, and financial resources and concentrate on achieving the goals and dreams that really matter; consciously fight against the natural tendency to engage in delay and procrastination; and sustain my physical and emotional momentum by continuing to think and to move toward the achievement of my goals.

The Enthusiasm Commitment

Because enthusiasm is a master value that makes it easier to commit to all of the other values, I will maintain a positive attitude in my work, relationships, and when confronted with challenges; seek to discern the best in every other person and situation; do my work with a spirit of mission; and spark my enthusiasm with curiosity, humor, and a smile.

The Service Commitment

I will help others in need; be generous in spirit and means; and take time to replenish my own spirit so that I can continue to serve others.

The Leadership Commitment

Because we all have the opportunity to be leaders, I will set high expectations for myself and others; seek to inspire and influence others to always to what is best for the common good; encourage others with my own example; and celebrate our successes and our good faith failures.

Signature

Date