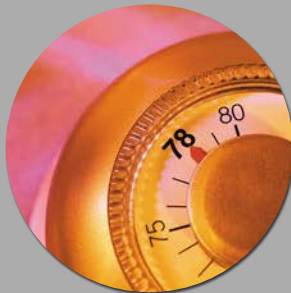


# 7 LIFE SKILLS STUDENTS NEED TO SUCCEED

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by **Dr. Tim Elmore**

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# 7 Life Skills Students Need to Succeed

*Written by Dr. Tim Elmore*

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#1



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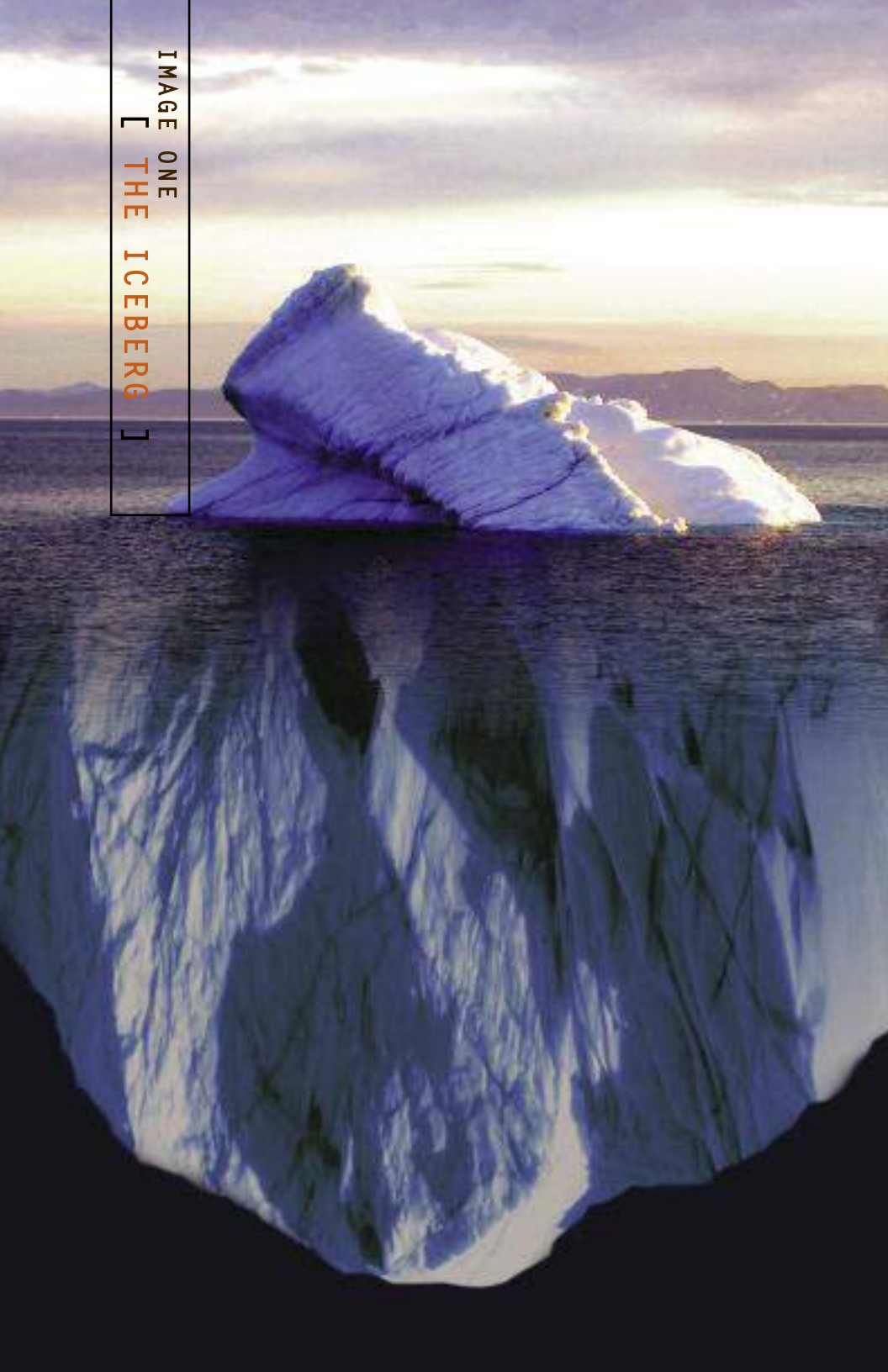
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THE ART OF SELF-LEADERSHIP

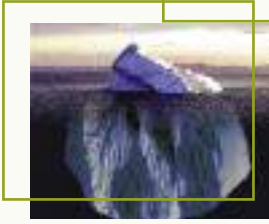
[ A VALUES BASED RESOURCE ]

IMAGE ONE  
[ THE ICEBERG ]





## IMAGE ONE [ THE ICEBERG ]



### *The Iceberg*

THE ICEBERG REPRESENTS YOUR LEADERSHIP. THE 10% ABOVE THE WATER IS YOUR SKILL. THE 90% BELOW THE WATER IS YOUR CHARACTER. IT'S WHAT'S BELOW THE SURFACE THAT SINKS THE SHIP.

An iceberg is an interesting picture of the first rule of leadership. There's more to it than meets the eye. Most of an iceberg is below the surface of the water. You probably remember the awesome story of the *Titanic*. (Maybe you saw the movie!) The huge and unsinkable ship received five iceberg warnings that fateful night of April 14, 1912, just before it went down. When the sixth message came in during the wee hours of the next morning: "Look out for icebergs," the operator wired back, "Shut up! I'm busy." These were his last words over the wire before it all happened. Exactly thirty minutes later, the great vessel—the one whose captain said even God couldn't sink—was sinking. Hundreds of passengers and crew were drowned.

What was the problem? They forgot the truth about icebergs. What they saw above the water couldn't have sunk the great ship. Unfortunately they forgot that most of an iceberg is below the water line. They underestimated the power of the iceberg, and overestimated their own strength. What an accurate description of so many leaders today.

The iceberg is a great picture of leadership because so much of our influence comes from qualities we can't see on the outside. It's stuff below the surface. I estimate 90% of our leadership is made up from our character. And, our character is the sum total of our:

- Self-discipline (The ability to do what's right even if you don't feel like it)
- Core values (Principles you live by that enable you to take a moral stand)
- Sense of identity (A realistic self-image based on your gifts and personality)
- Emotional security (The capacity to be emotionally stable and consistent)

Many people make it into the limelight, and neglect their character. Your skill may get you to the top—but it's your character that will keep you there. If you don't have strong character, you will eventually sabotage your leadership. You can only fake it so long. We learned this in the 1980s when so many religious televangelists fell morally. We learned it again in the 1990s when many politicians fell morally, including our president. We learned it again during the first decade of the new century when corporations such as Enron, WorldCom and Tyco committed moral crimes and pro athletes were taken to court due to lack of character. You'd think we would have learned our lesson...but we didn't. As we entered the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we heard stories of Tiger Woods cheating on his wife multiple times and Lance Armstrong cheating on his sport by taking performance-enhancing drugs. What's worse is, many of these people then lied about it all. My explanation? The iceberg. Weak character may begin when we are young, with lying and cheating on tests. It eventually takes the form of fraud, sex crimes, robbery and scandals. The Wall Street meltdown that came to light in 2008 is still affecting business in America today. The financial crisis we experienced was not due to a skill problem. It's a character problem. The scandals all happened in spite of the new legislation to combat corporate crimes. In other words, we didn't learn our lesson from Enron, back in 2002. We've had no moral compass.

It didn't start with our generation, though. About a hundred years ago, a boy grew up in Europe. His father's given name was Alois Schicklgruber. As a teen, he never learned about character. His parents never taught him right from wrong, so he began to come up with his own ideas and values. His father put him down when he talked about becoming a priest, and laughed at him when he spoke of being an artist. He was never valued, nor taught values. One night, he heard his mom and dad argue about moving away. Believing they hated him, he suspected they'd leave him behind. In anger, he put up an emotional wall and never let anyone get close. He later ran away. This boy grew up to be a man. The man became a leader. You know him as Adolf Hitler.

History proves that Adolf Hitler was a great leader, but he wasn't a good one. He failed to use his influence well. His skill and charisma were huge. His character was horribly flawed. He sabotaged himself—but not until he had slaughtered more than six million innocent people along the way. Leadership skills are important, but it does no good to develop your skills at the expense of your character and integrity. For instance, it would be easy to think that the mortgage banking industry is merely about finance, interest rates and accounting. While those elements are important, they are only the tip of the iceberg. The vast majority of that industry—or any industry for that matter—is about trusting people. It's stuff below the surface. The lesson? We must lead ourselves well before we try leading others.

Those who live among icebergs remind us there is such a thing as an iceberg with very little below the surface, like a floating ice cube. Most of its mass is up top, as though it is upside down. It's called a "whistler." You can always tell "whistlers" from other icebergs. They constantly drift, and they make a lot of noise. Sound familiar?

The bad news about icebergs is that it's what's below the surface that sinks a ship. When we have weak character, it will eventually damage our ability to lead. The good news is that it's what's below the surface that supports the tip. In the same way, strong character will hold you up long enough to use your skills.

## REFLECT AND RESPOND

It is easy for us to sprint right to a list of competencies when we define leadership development. As Americans, we tend to want to immediately work on competencies or techniques. But those are all externals. True leadership is built from the inside out. Whatever happens on the outside of our life stems from what's happening on the inside. When we see a house that has stood for decades, we know it has a strong foundation. The visible is only a reflection of the invisible.

Why is focusing on the "inside" so difficult for us today?

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Why do we put so much emphasis on the "outside" of our lives?

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Leaders who last place "being" before "doing." They realize that leadership is about our person before it is about our practice. One psychologist, however, said we often become "human doings" before we are "human beings." What does this phrase mean to you?

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## SELF ASSESSMENT

Take a minute and think about your own character. Do you have strong character? On a scale of one to ten (ten being the strongest), rate yourself in the following areas:

1. Self-Discipline (The ability to do what is right even if you don't feel like it)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

2. Core Values (Principles you live by that enable you to take a moral stand)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10



3. Sense of Identity (A realistic self-image based on your gifts and personality)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

4. Emotional Security (The capacity to be emotionally stable and consistent)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Why did you give yourself the scores you did?

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## EXERCISE

Identify several things you really don't like doing. There may be a function around the house, in school or at work. It could be a chore like sweeping the garage or some small task you've procrastinated doing on the job. It may be listening to or interacting with someone who is difficult to connect with. It might be physical exercise or the discipline of waiting. It could be as simple as staying on a diet.

Choose two of these "undesirables" and make them disciplines. Deliberately do what you don't like doing.

Practice them daily for one week. Put them on the calendar and ask someone to hold you accountable to do them. (If you do them daily for two weeks, chances are they will become a habit!)

Afterwards, discuss the results. Did you feel a sense of accomplishment? Did you waver in your commitment? Discuss with someone how daily disciplines pave the way for conquering laziness and indifference. How have you gained personal victory by practicing these disciplines? How does this strengthen your character?

Legend has it that the following words were written on the tomb of an Anglican bishop (AD 1100) in the crypts of Westminster Abbey:

*When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world. As I grew older and wiser, I discovered the world would not change, so I shortened my sights and decided to change only my country.*

*But it, too, seemed immovable. As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I settled for changing only my family, those closest to me, but alas, they would have none of it.*

*And now as I lie on my deathbed, I suddenly realize: If I had only changed my self first, then by example I would have changed my family. From their inspiration and encouragement, I would then have been able to better my country and, who knows, I may have even changed my world.*

#2



# H A B I T U D E S<sup>®</sup>

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BY

DR TIM  
ELMORE

THE ART OF CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

[ A VALUES BASED RESOURCE ]

IMAGE THREE  
[ Chess and Checkers ]



## IMAGE THREE

### [ Chess and Checkers ]



## *Chess and Checkers*

IN CHECKERS, ALL THE GAME PIECES MOVE IN THE SAME WAY. IN CHESS, YOU MOVE EACH PIECE DIFFERENTLY BASED ON ITS ABILITY. WISE LEADERS PLAY CHESS, NOT CHECKERS, AS THEY MANAGE RELATIONSHIPS. THEY CONNECT WITH INDIVIDUALS BASED ON THEIR UNIQUE PERSONALITIES AND STRENGTHS.

Growing up, I loved to play checkers. I had three versions of the game at my house and would play my grandpa, my friends, my sisters, or my parents any time they were willing. I got pretty good at it. By fifth grade, I was introduced to the game of chess. Wow. I had no idea that two games played on the same board could be so different. All of a sudden I entered a whole new world of strategy. Think about it. What is the biggest difference between checkers and chess? It's the pieces. Anyone who wants to win in chess has to first learn how each piece moves—from the pawn, to the rook, to the knight, to the queen and king. Once I understood the ability of each chess piece, I could plan a strategy to win the game. Bobby Fischer, the great chess champion, once said, “Winning in this game is all a matter of understanding how to capitalize on the strengths of each piece and timing their moves just right.”

This is a picture of good leadership. Great managers understand that you can't get the best out of people by playing “checkers” with them—treating them all alike, expecting the same things out of each of them, handling them like some generic product on a shelf. Just like in chess, great managers discover what is unique about each person and capitalize on it. Marcus Buckingham inspired this *Habitudes*.<sup>1</sup> He notes how employees will differ in how they think, how they build relationships, how they learn, how prepared they need to feel, what drives them, and so on. (Most of these differences don't change.) The best way to connect with people is to identify how each one is different and how you can best incorporate those differences into your plan of action. Great managing is not about control, but about connection and release. It's not about your power but your empowerment of others. And folks are best empowered when it is done according to their strengths. Mediocre managers play checkers with their people. Excellent managers play chess. They connect with people at the point of their strengths.



Michael Abrashoff once served as the executive officer aboard the Navy ship, *U.S.S. Shiloh*. It was a dreaded job because, in addition to being second in command, he was in charge of the entire bureaucracy of paperwork for 440 sailors. His administrative assistant was a man who got promoted only because he'd been around longer than anyone else. He could not type, proofread, or use the spellchecker; and what he did do—he did extremely slowly.

At first, Mike assumed he had to endure this inevitable situation. One day, however, his assistant went on vacation, leaving him adrift in a sea of paper. Since his job was so unpleasant, Mike grabbed a junior seaman named David, who'd been transferred because he didn't fit in anywhere and who'd been charged with insubordination. Needless to say, Mike didn't expect much from him. Soon after David arrived, however, the piles of paper were finding homes. Stacks were disappearing, words were being spelled correctly, and sentences actually had subjects and verbs for the first time!

One day, Mike asked David why he'd been kicked out of his last post. Mike replied, "I felt as though the chief petty officer hated me." He then explained that a month after arriving there he began suggesting ways to improve their efficiency and the chief didn't like it. He hit a brick wall over and over again. Eventually, David gave up. In reality, David was simply demonstrating his strengths, and that officer didn't know how to handle it. He only knew the world that promotes people based on tenure, not talent; based on rank and not strength. He only knew how to play checkers—not chess. Needless to say, David flourished under Mike's leadership because he allowed David to think freely and create ways to improve what they did. He invited David to draft letters and decide the best way to solve problems in his strength area. Mike turned out to be quite a chess player.<sup>2</sup>

If you followed professional football in the 1990s, you know the name Bo Jackson. Bo was an all-pro running back in the NFL for years. But did you know we may have never heard of Bo Jackson had it not been for his coach at Auburn University? You see, Bo Jackson began as a defensive player for Auburn. As fate would have it, the two starting players in the backfield at Auburn both got hurt at about the same time. His coach approached Bo and asked him to play tailback. Bo hesitated—but said yes. And the rest is history. He may be the best tailback Auburn has ever graduated. He went on to win the Heisman Trophy.

So what am I saying? Bo was good at his defensive position, but he was great at his offensive position. He simply needed to be placed well. He needed a coach who could spot potential talent outside of the box he'd been placed inside. Bo needed a leader who played chess, not checkers.

## HOW TO PLAY CHESS AS A LEADER

In order to play chess, you must recognize the unique role each player on the team can fill. This means we must identify at least four qualities in others:



1. **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES** – Leaders must connect with people at the point of their strengths. We must identify both the weaknesses that de-energize them and waste time as well as strong points where they get energized, have natural intuition and flourish.
2. **TRIGGERS** – Leaders must figure out what motivates their team members. Is it verbal praise? Is it time with the leader? Is it monetary gifts? Everybody has a trigger that gets them motivated and ready to give themselves to the cause.
3. **PERSONALITY** – It’s key for leaders to know the personality differences of their people. Are they the fun-loving sanguine? Or the driven choleric? Or the laid-back phlegmatic? Or the analytical melancholy? Identifying personalities can make or break your leadership.
4. **LEARNING STYLE** – Finally, leaders must discover their people’s learning styles. Is he an “analyzer” who craves information? Is she the “doer” who has to actually jump in and do it? Or are they “watchers” who want to see it modeled in order to learn something?

Capitalizing on each person’s strengths accomplishes so many things for a leader. First, it saves you time. You don’t waste time anymore trying to change people. Second, it makes others accountable. Each person is encouraged to do his or her very best in an area. Third, it builds a stronger sense of team, since the best teams are built around interdependency. You acknowledge you need others because they do things you can’t do. You can celebrate differences. Others’ value is in their differences. (A baseball team doesn’t need four shortstops!) Think about it: a mediocre leader believes value must be taught. An excellent leader believes that the best is already inside of people—they just need to find it. So, while a mediocre leader’s goal is to overcome weaknesses; the excellent leader’s goal is to identify strength and focus on it.

## REFLECT AND RESPOND

The best way for a leader to build an effective team is to identify how each one is different and how to successfully incorporate those differences into the overall plan of action. The strength that each person possesses meets a certain need on the team. Great managing is not about control, but about connection and release.

1. Explain what this phrase means: “Great managers understand you can’t get the best out of people by playing ‘checkers’ with them.”

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2. Why is it we naturally expect others to be like us? Why are we more comfortable with people who are similar to us?

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3. What are the four qualities that leaders must identify in each team member in order to play “chess” instead of “checkers?”

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4. Describe the benefits of learning how to capitalize on each person’s strengths.

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**SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Evaluate how well you connect with people based on their unique strengths. Besides giving them personality tests and learning style assessments, try observing your group and asking yourself:

- 1. Do I understand the personality of each member? Do I see how they work best together?
- 2. Do I know what motivates each one of them?
- 3. Do I recognize the primary strength the individual brings to the group or team?
- 4. Do I realize how they best learn something new?

## EXERCISE

Meet with your group and ask them these questions. Tell them it will help you play “chess” better...

1. **FOR STRENGTHS:**

What was the best day at your job this past year? Or, describe your perfect job. What is it you'd really like to do and feel you would do well?

2. **FOR TRIGGERS:**

What was the best relationship you ever had with a manager or teacher? What made that person so motivating? What was the best praise you ever received?

3. **FOR PERSONALITY:**

When you work on a project with a team, what do you like best: Getting results? Just being together? Doing the project with excellence? Having fun?

4. **FOR STYLE OF LEARNING:**

In your past jobs, when did you feel you were learning the most? Why did you learn so much? What's the best way for you to learn?

#3



# H A B I T U D E S<sup>®</sup>

**I M A G E S  
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L E A D E R S H I P  
H A B I T S &  
A T T I T U D E S**

**B Y**

**D R T I M  
E L M O R E**

**THE ART OF LEADING OTHERS**

[ A VALUES BASED RESOURCE ]

IMAGE TWO

[ RIVERS AND FLOODS ]





IMAGE TWO  
[ RIVERS AND FLOODS ]



## *Rivers and Floods*

FLOODS AND RIVERS ARE BOTH BODIES OF WATER. FLOODS DAMAGE. RIVERS ARE USEFUL IN MANY WAYS. THE DIFFERENCE? FOCUS. LEADERS MUST CHANNEL PEOPLE, TIME AND MONEY TOWARD ONE FOCUSED VISION.

I have a picture indelibly etched in my memory. When I was a kid, I remember a horrifying flood sweeping through a town not far from where we lived. I watched the TV intently as reporters showed the expanding body of murky water run through streets, over yards and into houses, restaurants and stores. The rushing water seemed to demolish everything in its path. In my mind, I can still see people standing on the tops of their cars weeping, as they watched their homes collapse and float away—piece by piece.

What started as a simple rainstorm ended up filling the nearby rivers and eventually flowing unmercifully into neighborhoods and strip malls. I remember thinking: How can such a simple thing as water do such damage? Some of my friends took a while to recover from the flood. One of them, in fact, wanted nothing to do with water for over a year. For him, a large body of water without some boundary was a frightening thing.

This is a picture of an important leadership principle. Many organizations begin very focused, like a river. The leaders possess an idea they want to implement. Soon, however, in their zeal to grow, they begin expanding far beyond the boundaries of their initial vision. If they are good at making widgets, they reason, why not make other products as well? Before long, in the name of meeting needs, generating revenue, or just plain growth—they become a flood instead of a river. They lose all focus and sprawl out in every direction. Like a flood, they end up damaging things. Floods can be shallow, unrestrained, muddy and harmful.

Far too many organizations become floods. Take IBM for instance. In the beginning, when IBM focused on mainframe computers, the company made a ton of money. By the 1980s, however, IBM expanded their product line and barely broke even. In 1991, they were making more products than ever, yet, the company wound up losing \$2.8 billion. That's almost \$8 million a day!

It's interesting. This rule of leadership is counter intuitive. It works the opposite of what we might think. It seems logical that enlarging product lines would always mean greater profit. It's actually the other way around. Staying focused on your central vision and strength is the key to growth. The airline industry is a good example. "People Express" launched as an airline that focused on no frills, low cost flights. At the first taste of success, they decided to expand beyond that vision. They began to provide first class seats, food, etc. Their profits dropped. In fact, they went out of business.

In contrast, Southwest Airlines entered the industry with a clear, focused vision, similar to People Express. Yet, they stuck to their strengths, and for years they've been a rare, profitable company in the airline business. Southwest Airlines refused to diversify; they remained a river. Rivers are much more narrow than floods. They move in one direction. They are a source for both electricity and transportation. Why? Vision and focus. Leaders must own a focused vision, or the organization will spill-out in too many directions. If the leader isn't focused, the team will chase after every new idea. They will fall prey to every vendor wanting to capitalize on the success. Clear and focused vision harnesses energy. Just watch your team for a while. People lose energy when their direction in life is fuzzy. But they get energized when they catch a clear vision.

Just over fifty years ago, Walt Disney gathered his inner-circle to share his idea of building "Disneyland." It would be known as the "happiest place on earth." Walt's vision was clear and focused. As his team began to get excited about the vision, however, one of the members asked, "Who are you gonna get to build it?" Confidently, Walt responded, "I know exactly who I want to build it. Find me the man who helped put the U.S. Navy back in the Pacific after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. I figure he can do it."

It didn't take long for Walt's team to identify this man. His name was Joe Fowler. Admiral Joe Fowler. Retired Admiral Joe Fowler. When Disney showed up at Fowler's door and challenged him to build a theme park, Joe laughed. "You don't understand. I'm retired. I'm through." Disney quickly realized this guy was going to require some work. Placing pictures on the wall, Walt began to storyboard. Describing in great detail the feel, look, smell, sound and even taste of the park—Joe bought in. He stepped out of retirement and oversaw Disneyland's construction.

Twenty years later, the idea of Disney World was proposed—and can you guess who was hired to supervise the project? Joe Fowler. This time he was 77 years old. When the Disney team approached him a second time, he sighed again, "You don't understand. I'm retired. I'm through." But as pictures were posted and the vision was cast for their biggest project yet, Joe couldn't help but buy in. He ditched retirement again and oversaw the building of Disney World.

The story goes on. Ten years later, EPCOT was built in Orlando. Disney once again looked to Joe Fowler to lead the construction. He was now 87 years old. Joe

repeated his objection: “You don’t understand. I’m retired. I’m through.” But Disney knew Joe was the man. His team communicated the clear, focused vision again. Joe lit up, stepped out of retirement and oversaw the project.

What a picture of the energy that accompanies clear vision. Joe’s favorite phrase, “I’m retired. I’m through,” was changed to, “You don’t have to die ‘til you want to.” Hmm. I often wonder how much energy remains bottled up in people because they never learn to focus, or they just plain fail to tap into a clear vision.

Here is the irony of this principle. My friend Mike Kendrick explained it with the following phrase: What you focus on expands. Read that sentence again. Now think about it. If I tell you to focus on finding Toyota Camrys on the road, you will notice these cars everywhere. Why? Because what you focus on expands. So, the goal of a leader is to focus, not expand. Growth is a product of focus. Clarify the vision. Focus your people, time, energy and resources. Remember this: just because you CAN do something doesn’t mean you SHOULD. Intensify. Don’t diversify.

In order to accomplish this focus, it’s important to zero in on a handful of words. In fact, maybe just one word (or concept) that becomes your own. It describes your identity and vision. Some of the best selling products on the market “own” such words. Crest toothpaste owns the word “cavities.” FedEx owns the word “overnight.” Volvo owns the words “automobile safety.” As they focus their energies on a single concept, these companies go deeper and expand in one area. They are like a river, moving in one direction. And being a river is about clear vision and a sharp focus.

## REFLECT AND RESPOND

Many organizations begin very focused, like a river, but as they expand they lose their initial vision and become a flood. Using the examples that were given in this chapter, what are some of the benefits of a clear, focused vision?

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Try to think of organizations—either historical or current—who lost their vision. List them below with a brief explanation of how you believe they lost their vision. What was the end result?

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## SELF-ASSESSMENT

The water in a river represents the people, time, energy and resources invested in your organization. So if you're going to be a river, you've got to channel your water well. Consider these questions.

How many activities are you trying to perform? How about your organization? How thin have you spread yourself? Are you more like a flood or a river?

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What should you cut out of your life or trim back, in order to be more productive?

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Here's the challenge. Ask yourself: What word do we own? Ask outsiders what word comes to mind when they think of your organization?

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## EXERCISE

Consider an organization you're involved with and discuss within your team the "word" that most clearly describes your vision. What's your focus? Do you think your customers would agree?

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Just for fun, clump your group together and tie a rope around them. Lead the group outside and see if they can stay together. Do they listen to you? Does each person try to go their own direction, or do they focus on working together?

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#4



# HABITUDES<sup>®</sup>

IMAGES  
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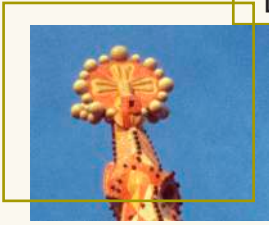
THE ART OF CHANGING CULTURE

[ A VALUES BASED RESOURCE ]



IMAGE ELEVEN  
[ Cathedral Building ]





## *Cathedral Building*

MOST BUILDERS SEE ONLY THE PAYCHECK, OR THE TASK IN FRONT OF THEM. GREAT BUILDERS SEE THE BIG PICTURE: THEY'RE BUILDING A CATHEDRAL. LEADERS MAINTAIN A PERSPECTIVE BEYOND THEIR OWN LIMITED VISION AND CHANGE THE CULTURE.

A man strolled along a downtown street one day. He enjoyed all the hustle and bustle of the city, filled with street vendors during the day and bright lights in the evening. He loved the sounds of the streets, the sights of the advertisements everywhere, the feel of people moving about, and the taste of the hot pretzels he munched on as he walked to his apartment. He even liked the smell of the downtown area where he worked. It carried the feeling of growth and change and progress.

This particular day, he decided to walk a different route home, and he noticed a new structure going up along the street. From the work done so far, he could tell it promised to be a large building, very ornate and probably quite important. He got curious, so he decided to inquire what kind of building was going up. He walked up to a construction worker and asked what he was doing. Without even looking up, the builder replied, "I'm laying bricks, what does it look like?"

Obviously, this wasn't the answer this man was looking for, so he located a second worker and approached him with the same question. The worker grunted, obviously in a bad mood. "Hmph. I'm drawing a paycheck."

This still wasn't the answer the man was seeking, so he thought he'd give it one more try. He tapped a third construction worker on the shoulder and asked the same question, "What are you doing?" This time, he got the answer he was looking for. The builder looked up toward the sky, and with a gleam in his eye, he responded: "I'm building a cathedral!"<sup>1</sup>

There's a lesson in this little story for leaders. Consider these three construction workers. None of them were lying when they responded to the question, "What are you doing?"

However, the first one only perceived his work from a logistical perspective. He only saw what he was doing personally. The second could only see his work from a tactical viewpoint. The outcome of his work was a paycheck—which was the only reason he showed up for work! The third worker, however, was able to see the big picture and how his personal effort was part of something bigger than he was.

These three perspectives are central to understanding culture. I use military terms to describe them. Let me define these terms so you can evaluate how folks are motivated on your team:

1. LOGISTICAL

This is the “here and now” perspective. I only see what’s in front of me today.

2. TACTICAL

This perspective is broader and futuristic but is still limited to my world.

3. STRATEGIC

This is the big-picture perspective that enables me to see how everything fits into the overall plan.

When leaders can move people beyond their own personal tasks to see the big picture, it not only helps to align everyone’s work, it accelerates the creation of a desired culture. Part of the key to building a culture stems from the leader’s ability to communicate clear vision for how every team member fits into the plan. It also diminishes a “prima donna” attitude and selfish, territorial behavior. It enables team members to help each other, because they think outside of their own “box.” All cultures require someone to maintain the big picture and to move others toward the big picture.

When leaders fail to provide perspective, people will likely act in their own interests. Just ask Earl Weaver. Earl was the manager of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team more than thirty years ago. One of his bright young stars was Reggie Jackson. Reggie reached first base one night and desperately wanted to steal second. He knew he could do it against the opposing pitcher, but Earl Weaver never gave him the signal to steal. Earl had set a rule that no one was to steal a base without his signal. Reggie was fuming because his manager obviously didn’t recognize how fast he was. Finally, he decided to steal without a signal. He got a good jump and sped toward second base, sliding in...safe! He got up and brushed the dirt off his uniform, feeling justified for making the decision on his own. Now everyone saw how fast he was.

When the inning was over, Earl motioned for Reggie to come over and talk. When they met, Earl said, “Reggie, I knew you were fast enough to steal off of that pitcher. I didn’t give you the signal for two reasons. First, if you stole second, you’d open up first base, allowing our opposition to intentionally walk Lee May, our best power hitter besides you.



When they did just that, it took the bat right out of his hands. Second, our next hitter wasn't doing well against their pitcher, forcing me to use a pinch hitter to move runners up. This ruined my plans for using him at a different spot later in the game." Earl paused, then finished. "Reggie—remember that you see the game from your own angle, but I see the big picture. Next time, wait for my signal."

In 2002, the Anaheim Angels surprised everyone and won the World Series. Manager Mike Soscia said later that it was all about creating a new culture on the team. He didn't have any big names on the team, but he knew if they could forget their personal stats for a season and play as a team, they could go all the way. Mike began casting vision for the big picture to his players in February. Next, he began to reward players who moved runners up on base and penalize hitters who failed to do it. Beginning in April, he posted team results on how well his guys were playing, rather than personal statistics. He only had to do this for one month. The culture began to change. That year, with no big superstars, the Angels won the World Series. Why? Because some free agents and average players got together and acted on the big picture. While talent is important, playing as a team is far more important to winning championships. Individuals win trophies, but teams win championships.

This is the job of leadership—moving people from logistical to tactical to strategic thinking. Providing every team member a perspective that empowers them to act unselfishly; to use their talent for something bigger than themselves; and to see how even a little job contributes toward a very important mission. Leaders who contagiously spread this vision change their organizational culture.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy did the unthinkable. In a speech, he cast vision for putting a man on the moon before the end of the decade. The story's been told over and over, but at the time he cast this vision, the U.S. didn't even have the technology to do it. However, his big-picture perspective was infectious. Immediately, the team at NASA focused their energies on this monumental mission. Staff members who for years "felt like a piece of furniture" began to display unusual performance—all because of this vision. It turned average workers into extraordinary workers. To this day, NASA has this revolutionary performance leap on record.

A year after President Kennedy cast the moon-landing vision, he visited NASA to check on their progress. As he walked the halls, he ventured into a small room accidentally. Everyone in his entourage followed him; after all, he was the president. When he entered the room, he saw a custodian with a broom. He reached out to shake his hand and asked what his job was. The custodian paused, then smiled and replied, "I'm putting a man on the moon, Mr. President."

I love it. The custodian got it. Sounds like a cathedral builder to me.

## Reflect and Respond

1. Most leaders begin well. They enter a project with good perspective. Over time, however, they lose it as they face obstacles. How does facing a challenge distract people from the big-picture goals they've set?

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2. During tough times, most people can only see the immediate crisis. They see only the immediate "felt need," not the big-picture need. Name a time this has happened to you.

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3. What enables a leader to see the big picture?

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4. Are you naturally a "big-picture" person or a "detail" person? How does this affect your actions?

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## Self-Assessment

Evaluate how well you embrace and pass on a big-picture perspective. How do you see your job?

1. LOGISTICAL

What's your immediate job in front of you now?

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2. TACTICAL

What's your departmental job this year?

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3. STRATEGIC

What's the ultimate job or mission, over the long haul?

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## Exercise

The next time you meet with your team, take a moment and ask them what their job is. Then, ask them what the mission is for your organization. Finally, ask them how their job fits into the big-picture mission of your organization. See if you get any surprises. Discuss what your team members said.

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**FOR THE JOURNEY**

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LEADERSHIP  
HABITS &  
ATTITUDES**

**BY**

**DR TIM  
ELMORE**

the ART of  
NAVIGATING TRANSITIONS

IMAGE ONE  
[ Windsields and  
Rearview Mirrors ]



## IMAGE ONE

# [ Windshields and Rearview Mirrors ]



## *Windshields and Rearview Mirrors*

EVERYONE FOCUSES ON SOMETHING—THE PAST OR THE FUTURE. WHERE DOES YOUR ENERGY COME FROM? WHEN OUR DREAMS ARE BIGGER THAN OUR MEMORIES, WE GAIN ENERGY FROM THE HOPE THAT LIES AHEAD. OFTEN, WE MUST LET GO OF THE COMFORT FROM OUR PAST TO MAKE PROGRESS.

When I was learning to drive, my dad noticed something strange about my newfound driving habits. After he taught me to check the rearview mirror before changing lanes—so I could see the cars around me—I got enamored with the whole process. I know it sounds strange, but as I drove, I kept looking in the rearview mirror. Over and over again. How cool was it to see what was right behind me (especially if it was a police car) without having to turn around! A simple peek could do it all. Well, I soon learned it was dangerous: I almost had a wreck. My dad had to shout, “Stop looking at all the cars behind you and focus on the road ahead of you!”

Note to self. That was good advice. I soon realized that rearview mirrors were good to glance at, but not to gaze at. Most of the time, it’s best to look straight ahead.

I know two students who graduated from college last year, Shane and Evan. They both made good grades in school and were very active in clubs and intramural sports. I soon saw one big difference between them, however. Shane moved right into a job and began building his career. He was excited to meet the people on his new team and learn the ropes of his company. Evan didn’t move forward quite as well. It wasn’t that he couldn’t find a job—he got one right away. It was that he never quite let go of his past. He continued going back to campus; he stayed focused on the events at his alma mater and was preoccupied with his classmates on Facebook. None of that is bad—but he never embraced his new role as an employee. His teammates at work could tell he wasn’t really engaged. No matter what they did, Evan just wanted to stay in school, mentally.

I think Evan had the same problem I did with the rearview mirror. He should have been glancing at what was behind him—but gazing at what was ahead of him. Instead, he spent most of his time looking backward, which prevented him from moving forward. In fact, you might say he almost had a wreck—his supervisor had to confront

him and ask if he planned to stay long. He told Evan he wouldn't make it unless he buckled down and got serious about his work. Ouch.

This Habitude is not simply about letting go of the past. It is important to sustain friendships we've made along the way. We should be grateful for fun memories and good times. Our past will always help shape our future. But sometimes, the past can hold us back. If our memories are more important than our dreams—we are in trouble. If we prefer to look in the rearview mirror instead of the windshield, we'll get stuck—and maybe wreck. Holding on to the comfort of our past can keep us from grabbing the adventure that lies in our future.

Here's a question for you: Where does your energy come from—the past or the future?

Seriously. How would you answer that question? Some people become fearful about the future because of a single factor: They love the familiar and the comfortable. They only get energy from grasping what's behind them. Sadly, this confines them and even enslaves them, preventing them from seeing or seizing opportunities, new friendships, or new freedoms they might otherwise enjoy.

Years ago, a television report revealed how poachers caught monkeys in certain African countries. It was quite simple. They hollowed out a coconut, then made a hole in the surface just big enough for a monkey's hand. Next, they filled the coconut with jelly beans. Then they attached one end of a chain to the coconut, and the other end to a stake driven into the ground. The coconut was literally a ball and chain. It was a trap. As the monkeys sniffed the jelly beans and curiously visited the coconut, they were so enraptured by the candy that they didn't notice the chain or stake. Finally, one of them would reach into the coconut and grab a handful of the candy. At this point, one of the poachers came forward to throw a net around the monkey. Surprisingly, the primate could have run away free—but it never did. Why? It couldn't let go of the jelly beans. Freedom was available—but not achievable, because it imprisoned itself, holding on to the candy. Sound familiar?

A university once conducted a study on “peace of mind.” Researchers sought the greatest factors that contributed to people's emotional and mental stability. The top five they discovered were:

1. Refusing to live in the past.
2. The absence of suspicion, resentment and regret.
3. Not wasting time and energy fighting conditions you cannot change.
4. Forcing yourself to get involved in the current world around you.
5. Refusing to indulge in self-pity.

Do you notice a pattern in their findings? All five of the factors above have to do with handling the rearview mirror and the windshield well. Letting go of what's already happened and embracing what's in front of you. On your journey, can you peer out in



front of you and become excited about the horizon? Can you gain more energy from the future than the past? Based on our qualitative research at Growing Leaders, the most common reasons students get “stuck in the past” are:

- They are victims of time. They can't seem to break free of old patterns.
- They are victims of relationships. They stay involved with people who hold them back.
- They are victims of comfort/nostalgia. They fear that their best days are in the past.

## TRY THIS REMEDY

In response, we recommend the following simple new habits and attitudes:

1. **REPLACE COMFORT WITH CURIOSITY.**  
Choose to leave the comfortable to pursue the compelling.  
Hunt for new horizons to conquer.
2. **REJECT BEING A VICTIM OF YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.**  
Don't let anyone control your emotions or your response to life.  
It is your life, after all.
3. **RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT TO EMBRACE OPPORTUNITIES.**  
Hang out with different people. Search for new challenges that will stretch you.
4. **RELINQUISH THE PAST AND CREATE NEW MEMORIES.**  
Perhaps it's time to let go of the old trophies and ribbons and go earn some new ones.

Almost every culture celebrates each new year. In ancient Rome, the god Janus was a key symbol. (Our month of January is named after him.) Interestingly, he had two heads—one to look forward and the other to look backward. You might say the Romans recognized the value of the rearview mirror and the windshield. Later, an Italian custom was born. At the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, people began tossing possessions into the streets—anything that held a negative memory or connotation. They simply got rid of it and started anew. In doing this, they declared “Out with the old; let's start fresh.” Not a bad custom as a new year begins.

After speaking at a graduation ceremony, I watched the university president hand diplomas to the seniors as they walked across the stage. What he said to each of them was simple but far more profound than he realized. He knew he had to keep the ceremony progressing, so he encouraged them to move quickly across the stage. As he gave them their degree, he said, “Congratulations. Keep moving.” And so say I. Whatever you've done in your past—well done. Now keep moving.



## TALK IT OVER

Fictional character Marleen Loesje said, “The longer you wait for the future, the shorter it will be.”

1. In your opinion, what’s the greatest reason students get stuck in their past?
2. Is there any memory or person that holds you back from embracing the future?
3. Talk about where your energy comes from—the past or the future. Why?
4. Can you name a time you saw a student break free from the rearview mirror and look ahead?

## ASSESS YOURSELF

Assess yourself, using the criteria below, on a scale of 1–10 (1 being weak and 10 being strong).

- a. I am keenly aware of where I get my energy  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- b. I work through my struggle to overcome my fear of failure  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- c. I maintain a healthy sense of adventure and anticipation  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- d. I can celebrate the past, but I can let go of it to pursue the future  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## TRY IT OUT

Get in a quiet place with a pad of paper or a computer, and make a list of some of your favorite memories—experiences, achievements, friendships, etc. Make this a column on the left side of your document. Then take a moment to celebrate those memories. Seriously—relish the good times you’ve experienced in your past. Now make another list, on the right. This one should contain all the potential memories and accomplishments that could lie in front of you if you really put your mind to it. Let your imagination expand a bit. Consider the new environment you are now in, and dream of what could happen if you applied your time, your mind and your energy. Once you finish, compare the two lists. Both are something to enjoy—but ask yourself: Would you want to trade the right column for the left one? Consider what would happen if you did. What would your life look like if you only grasped what was behind you?

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**FOR COMMUNICATORS**

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E L M O R E**

the ART of

**ENGAGING COMMUNICATION**

IMAGE TEN  
[ Facebook or TV ]







## *Facebook or TV*

IS YOUR MESSAGE A ONE-WAY TRANSMITTAL OF INFORMATION OR AN INVITATION FOR LISTENERS TO ENTER THE CONVERSATION? THE BEST LEARNING OCCURS IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT. PEOPLE LEARN BEST IN COMMUNITY AND IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNICATOR OR FELLOW LISTENERS. WORLDVIEW EMERGES FROM INTERACTION.

Did you see the movie *The Social Network* when it came out in October of 2010? It was all about how Facebook was launched from a university dorm room by a couple of Harvard students. While Mark Zuckerberg claims there's a bunch of fiction in the story—it remains a testament to one thing: People love to interact. We're social and love to be connected. We love the volley of a conversation, and we love to update others on what's happening in our lives.

Compare Facebook, or even MySpace (which paved the way for Facebook), with television. Do you realize that people spend more time on Facebook and other such sites than they do watching TV? You read that right. We spend more hours on the internet than we do watching television. This fact has television network executives scrambling to discover ways to draw folks back to TV programs. Their research has turned up these findings:

Social networking sites like Facebook are so effective because:

1. It's about people you know or want to know better
2. It invites interaction and connectivity with others
3. It makes communication simple and fast
4. It allows contact with others to occur in real time

This explains the failure of so many “canned” television programs. It also explains the presence of more and more “reality” TV shows. It's why shows like *American Idol* and *Dancing with the Stars* allow viewers to vote on who stays on the show. It also illustrates why more and more shows on MTV and VH1 allow people to tweet or text the performers as they watch a program, to be a part of the action.<sup>xvi</sup> We want to weigh in. We want to have a say in the direction of the program. Let's get honest—some of us want to be the star.

Effective communicators recognize this. They know that if they're going to get a message across to an audience, they must let the people do some of the talking. Consider this fact: In conversation, talking too much doesn't make a favorable impression on listeners. People who talk too much pay a price and lose a certain degree of credibility. Few people want to sit passively and simply listen to someone lecture for an hour. Great speakers know when to "get off the stage." This simply means that when we are communicating, we understand when we've said enough for now, and we pause to allow listeners to respond. Depending on the size of our audience, this can be done a number of ways:

1. Placing your audience in small groups of three or four to discuss a well-crafted question
2. Choosing a person or two to represent the audience and join you on stage to interact
3. Allowing for a question-and-answer period during your presentation
4. Providing a way for listeners to tweet or text in comments to the speaker
5. Creating a game or activity for audience members that relates to the topic

## HOW EPIC ARE YOU?

The fact is, listeners will have less and less mercy for one-way information as time marches further into the twenty-first century. If you're a great communicator, they will put up with it longer than they will for average speakers, but eventually, all audiences want to respond. If they cannot, they realize the time they're spending won't transform them. My friend John McAuley once told me:

"There is no life change without life exchange."

I believe this statement from the bottom of my heart. As a rule, people must wrestle with a topic themselves, not merely sit passively and hear about it from someone. The messages that get through are the ones that invite participation from the audience. For almost ten years, I've been affirming that Dr. Leonard Sweet was correct when he said this generation is an EPIC Generation:

**E – EXPERIENTIAL**

They don't want a sage on the stage with a lecture, but an experience.

**P – PARTICIPATORY**

They want to participate in the outcomes of where a message goes.

**I – IMAGE-RICH**

They grew up with visual images and prefer them over facts and figures.

**C – CONNECTED**

They are connected socially and technologically with people.



Whenever I or one of our Growing Leaders speakers hosts a *Habitudes Experience*® on a school campus, we never simply teach *Habitudes*® verbally. That would miss the point completely. We use eight building blocks during the conference, including slides, music, small-group discussion, video, personal interviews, games, panel discussion and journal time. Whatever the learning style of each audience member, we will touch on it as we allow people to interact with the topic, the speaker and each other. Everyone participates.

If you've read the book *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*, you know the true story of the Goff family in San Diego and their New Year's Day Parade. More than a decade ago, when the kids were young, the family sat around bored on New Year's Day. Dad decided boredom wasn't fitting for a day that God made, so he asked the kids for suggestions, and they decided to have a family parade down their small street. And as they notified neighbors, the family decided NOBODY could watch their parade. Folks must participate. Now the parade is huge. It's an annual street tradition, complete with a Grand Marshal and Queen. And nobody is allowed to watch. Nobody can sit on the curb. Everyone marches in the parade. It's a wonderful story about how much better life is when we participate.<sup>xvii</sup>

## RESEARCH SAYS

Loads of relevant research has been done by educators, such as Drs. Alexander and Helen Astin from UCLA, Dr. Bill McKeachie from the University of Michigan and Dr. George Kuh at Indiana University, and earlier by Dr. Lev Vygotsky from Russia. These scholars provide helpful data on how people—particularly young people—learn best. I've listed three of their discoveries below. None of them should surprise us:

**ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT** – Student success increases with the degree or depth of student engagement in the learning process. When we increase the amount of time and energy students must invest in their experience, transformation increases as well.

**SOCIAL INTEGRATION** – Student success is deepened through human interaction, collaboration and formation of interpersonal relationships among students and members of the community. When we increase interaction in the educational process, learning increases.

**SELF-REFLECTION** – Student success is strengthened when students reflect on and internalize their learning experiences, transforming these experiences into a form they can apply. When we allow time for listeners to reflect on data, retention increases.

Recently, I spoke at two events on back-to-back evenings. My topic was the same on both nights, so I decided to try a little experiment. On the first night, I provided the best information I possibly could, sharing statistics and stories the audience could relate to and even use. At the end of the night, I could tell people enjoyed it,

but something was still missing. Relatively few audience members purchased any books or DVDs at the resource table.

On the following night, I made some changes. After my opening comments, I immediately clustered people in small groups at tables and gave them a question about themselves to answer. They were hooked. In fact, during the next hour, I broke them into groups for discussion and feedback four different times, and I ended the night with a question-and-answer time. The changes I made were simple—but they made a world of difference. People raved about the night, and they bought loads of books and DVDs afterward. They loved it. Hmmm. I think I know what they really loved about the event. They got to be the star.

I actually believe that motivation already exists inside of everyone. Great communicators call people to participate in a topic they value, so they can become the best version of themselves. Case in point: In his book *Drive*, Daniel Pink invites us to imagine it is 1995. Two digital encyclopedias are about to be created. The first is from Microsoft, a stellar company full of smart people and money. It will be sold on CD-ROMs and later online. The second will launch in a few years, driven not by a company but by thousands of ordinary people who write and edit articles for fun. The question is: Which of these two products will survive? No one in their right mind would have predicted the second one—but that's actually what happened. In 2009, Microsoft pulled the plug on Encarta, but Wikipedia continues on as motivated people engage in what they love doing. Participation is everything.

## TALK IT OVER

1. Can you think of times you have seen someone practice this principle well?
2. What role does interaction play in the communication process?
3. How EPIC is your communication? Brainstorm a few ways that you could invite interaction from listeners.

## ASSESS YOURSELF

How interactive is your communication? Rate yourself from 1–10, with 1 being the lowest score and 10 being the highest score.

1. I include opportunities for listeners to give feedback  
< 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 >
2. I invite listeners to interact with one another  
< 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 >
3. I create opportunities for listeners to reflect and process  
< 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 >

4. I use a variety of images, videos or illustrations to communicate

< 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 >

5. People are more connected as a result of my communication

< 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 >

6. When speaking, I gauge the involvement of listeners and adjust accordingly

< 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 >

## TRY IT OUT

In your next talk, find a way to make it **EPIC: Experiential, Participatory, Image-rich and Connected**. Use these four words as a gauge for your message. Develop some creative ways to turn your speech into an experience the audience participates in, connects with others through and learns something from. Along the way, develop two discussion questions. Have your audience talk them over somewhere in your speech.

Because our culture is so participatory, keep in mind the classic statement-to-question ratio as you interact with others. If you overload your message with one-way statements, people must work harder to stay with you. Sprinkle questions throughout your talk, and invite people into the journey. To practice, when you're out in public, find ways to engage people, whether they are a vendor at a store or a barista at Starbucks—and begin asking questions and involving them in your life.



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[ A VALUE BASED RESOURCE ]

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# Thermostat and Thermometer

## Image Four



People are either thermometers or thermostats. They will merely reflect the climate around them or they will set it. Leaders develop values and principles to live by, and set the tone for others.

You may remember when you first figured out the difference between a thermometer and a thermostat, in your home. As a kid, I began to understand it when my science teacher brought it to my attention in the fourth grade. Up until then, I just knew our home had a thermometer hanging outside of our back patio that told us what temperature it was outside. And, I knew we had a little box on our living room wall that Mom and Dad would fiddle with when things got too hot or too cold. I'll never forget when it first dawned on me that while both had something to do with the temperature -- they were fundamentally different. The thermostat set the temperature. The thermometer only reflected what the temperature was.

This is a great picture of another leadership principle. Most people are like thermometers. In fact, most athletes are like thermometers. They tend to reflect the culture around them. They buy things that others buy, say things that others say, work as hard as others work, and value things that others value. Oh, there are slight variations. But most people don't set the "climate" for the world they live in. They just mirror back that climate.

Leaders, on the other hand, are people who decide to take life to the next level. They become thermostats. They set the social climate they are in. For instance, you may know people who set the emotional temperature of a group. These kinds of people are contagious like the flu. They are excited about life. You may know some that determine the attitudes of others, just by their presence in the weight room. They're pacesetters. They influence, rather than merely get influenced by people. My challenge to you is to move from being a thermometer to a thermostat.

So, how do we do this? Leaders who are "thermostats" have developed values and principles they live by. They are authentic. The word "authentic" comes from the root word "to author." It means to write your own story, not copy someone else. When someone owns a set of values, it's like they have a moral compass on the inside that guides them in their decisions. People respect those who are values-driven and principle-centered. When leaders fail to develop values, tragedy almost always follows. NBA star, Kobe Bryant, admitted to inappropriate



behavior with a young woman in July of 2003. Ironically, just two weeks before he admitted to his poor decision, he spoke on TV about how important it is for athletes to be examples for kids today. Ouch. Talk is cheap.

Years ago, a boy grew up in a Jewish home, watching everything his father did. Evidently, his dad didn't realize the influence he had. They attended synagogue until their family moved to another city, and there was no synagogue nearby. Dad decided to just switch to a different religious belief. He said it was only a way of meeting business contacts anyway. This father's failure to live by values outside of his own benefit led his son to question morality, ethics and religion. As he grew up, he believed that religion was a "crutch" for the masses. He wrote that money was behind anything meaningful in the world. The boy's name was Karl Marx, and he led millions of people into a destructive belief system during the 20<sup>th</sup> century called Communism.

The problem was simple. Karl Marx's father had created a set of values by default, not by design. He didn't think through what was best for his family or his community. He did what was best for himself. Young Karl was a thermometer, reflecting what his dad had modeled. Unfortunately, Karl Marx was successful at making people believe he could be a trusted thermostat.

### Going Deeper

Norman Cousins, who profoundly impacted the field of medicine with his discoveries of the power of our emotions and values, reminds us that medical school students often describe the nature of their courses as "hard" or "soft" courses. The classes that are considered "hard" are ones like anatomy, biochemistry and physics. The ones that are often described as "soft" are ethics and patient-physician relationships.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, a decade or two after graduation, those same doctors discover there tends to be an inversion in their minds. What they once considered "hard" now is soft and vice versa. The knowledge base of medicine is always changing, but the "soft" subjects regarding values and relationships tend to be enduring. Everyone has to figure out how they plan to live their lives and what the compass will be that guides their careers.

In the exercise at the end of this chapter, I challenge you to make a list of words that best describe the person you wish to become. These words are the beginning of your personal "core values." They can be guiding principles to help you make decisions in your life. Begin now to think about what words you would want to be your "compass" on the inside enabling you to be a thermostat.

**Big Deal Question:** Why do most people remain thermometers, just imitating what everyone else is doing? What helps some break free from this tendency to blend in?

## Reflect and Respond

Most people expect athletes to live by standards or values. They see them as role models for kids. Is this a role you embrace?

Many athletes say they own a set of values, but then don't live by the values they claim. Why is there a gap between what we say and what we do? Why is hypocrisy so difficult to avoid?

What does it take to live by a set of values?

A young girl and her dad were visiting an amusement park one Saturday. They walked up to a booth where a man was guessing people's weight. A large and rather heavy-set man stepped up, and the employee attempted to guess his weight. Then, the hefty man stepped up on the scales -- only to find they had broken. The needle moved only slightly and the scale reported the man weighed just 25 pounds. At that point, the little girl said to her dad: "Look dad! A hollow man." As people examine our integrity and values -- may they never say that about us.

At that same amusement park, the little girl asked her dad for some money to buy some cotton candy. As she walked away from the vendor, a woman saw her with her large cotton candy on a stick, and commented: "Wow! How can such a little girl like you eat all that cotton candy?"

The girl just smiled innocently. "Oh, I'm much bigger on the inside than I am on the outside." When it comes to our character, may those who know us be able to say this about us.

## Self-Assessment

Take a moment to do an honest evaluation on whether you "act" or "react" more often in life. Are you a thermostat who acts based on principles and values you embrace, or do you react to situations like a thermometer, reflecting the temperature in the room? Rate yourself below. Why did you give yourself that evaluation?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10  
Thermometer Thermostat

Do you have a set of core values? If not, why not begin a list of your values below. Let me give you some guidelines, before you begin to write:

1. Values can be defined with simple words that describe what you deeply believe.
2. Values are words that describe what you live by or what you want to live by.
3. Values are beliefs that define who you are and are guidelines for your big decisions.
4. Values are stronger than thoughts or opinions. They are ideals of you at your best.
5. Values are the inner-based principles that will fuel the direction of your life.

Think of some words that could be your core values. Write them down, and then write a statement of what those words mean to you. Discuss and explain to your group why you chose your words. (Some people have written nouns like integrity, trusting relationships or service. Others have chosen adjectives like generous, caring or hard-working. It doesn't matter -- just be consistent.)

If you're not ready for this exercise, try this challenge. Go find an organization, company or team that is successful. I believe that if you took the time to push through all the activities, services, programs, or products, sooner or later you will come face-to-face with a person who has no confusion about who they are or what they are about. Write down what you observe about that leader or coach and their values.

# The Fun House Mirror

## Teaching Image Five

### Summary

Carnivals often have mirrors that distort how we really look. Poor leaders do this, pretending or posing to be better than they really are. Our character is the true reflection of who we are.

### Chapter Objectives

1. To expose the reality that most people want to make a good impression so much that they are willing to distort or exaggerate the truth about themselves in order to do so.
2. To convince players that a false reputation is not rewarding and, in fact, lies will eventually come back to haunt you.
3. To help athletes see that integrity is more important than image.
4. To teach team members how to embrace who they are and be honest about themselves.

### Creative Ideas

There's a fun game that's been around for decades. It's called: Two Truths and a Lie. Everyone in the group must come up with two statements that are true about their past, and one statement that is a lie. All three must sound equally believable. The goal is to share all three statements with the rest of the group and get the others to guess wrongly about which statement was the lie.

Here's another idea. Divide your group into two or more smaller teams. Then, visit a shopping mall or some other public place. Challenge each of the teams to stage a scene in a store that convinces others that at least one of their team members is someone that they are not. For instance, one team member could pose as a sales clerk and pretend to wait on the other team members. This could lead to the team member actually waiting on a real customer. Afterward, talk about the results. Were they able to convince anyone that they were someone else?

### **Liar Liar**

Scene 1: 39:06–40:00; Scene 2: 1:05:22–1:08:18

In this movie, Fletcher Reede (Jim Carrey) is an attorney who desperately wants to make a good impression, but who has been cursed by his son who made a wish that he could not lie for one entire day. He can't exaggerate the truth or distort any reality -- and it revolutionizes his life.

### **Catch Me If You Can**

Scene 1: 1:13:08–1:14:57; Scene 2: 1:38:22–1:43:19

In this movie, Frank Abagnale, Jr. (Leonardo DiCaprio) discovers that he can con people to gain money, fame, women, glamorous jobs, and pleasure trips. The problem is, when he grows weary of living a lie, the FBI is on to him and it's too late to get out. Abagnale serves time in prison.



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