

'Possibly the best business self help book ever written'
Robert Middleton, CEO Action Marketing,

interactive book

Facing The Tiger

Unleashing The Human Spirit at Work

Dr. John J. Scherer

with Dorota Nawalaniec



To each of the Participants from 55 countries in all the workshops over the years who contributed to this book by courageously facing their tigers in our presence.

Thank you...

PREFACE



Personal 'check-in' with John and Dorota

Why are you here?

I mean, why are you HERE? (on the earth...)

'OUR ASSIGNMENT': THE WHY

I am convinced that we—that is *everyone*—shows up for life with a three-part 'assignment':

1. To continuously discover and develop who we truly ARE.
2. To fully express who we are from moment to moment in what we DO.
3. So that our self-expression makes a contribution to Life itself.

'SEVA AS SADHANA': THE HOW

In Eastern traditions, there is a phrase that says it perfectly: "*Seva as sadhana*."

Seva is your daily work, what you actually DO, such as washing dishes, talking on the phone, sitting in meetings, making decisions, selling something. If you wake up in the morning and step into the role of mother/father, life partner, manager, executive, front-line worker, artist, teacher/student, doctor, lawyer, athlete, friend, or in fact into *any* role that involves you interacting with other people, your *Seva* can become your *Sadhana*.

Sadhana is the process of deepening your self-awareness and developing into the human being you are capable of becoming. Some would call it 'spiritual practice'. ***Seva as Sadhana is the essence of this book: how to turn what happens during your day into deep personal development.***

This is not about religion, theology or what people believe.

What I mean by 'spirit' is that which animates or moves you. What has you get up in the morning? What is it that hums or beats at the center of who you are? That place from which you navigate your way through the day. What I am talking about is beneath your mind, beneath anything that lives like a thought you can have. I mean that place from which those thoughts originate. That place to which you yearn to come home.

That place.

American writer, T.S. Eliot, said it this way:

Everyone gets the experience.
Some get the lesson.

This book will help you turn your daily experience from things that happen TO you into things that happen FOR you. This is where the 'tiger' concept comes in. We are framing what happens TO you as a 'tiger' that, as you will see, plays a major role in the transformation of a possibly-threatening encounter into a life-changing experience.

So, when a 'tiger' comes at you, *WHO do you become?*

'COME HOME TO YOURSELF': THE WHO

This is not about changing yourself. You don't need to *change* yourself. You need to *come home* to yourself. This changes everything...

It means coming home to your *Self*.

Not the little self, the one that worries all the time, tries hard to impress people, and keep up the illusion of safety and control. I'm talking about coming home to the *huge* Self, the one that truly *lives* and loves and knows why it's here, and can't wait for the next sunrise. The one that yearns to encounter

the next challenging person or situation, because of what will be learned in that fire. Your *true* Self, your higher or deeper Self, the one who is waiting to be discovered or—re-discovered.

For the past six months, while the two of us—both sheltering-in-place—have been having almost daily online writing conversations about ‘facing the tiger’, the world itself has been grappling with a major ‘tiger’ that has disrupted every aspect of The Old Way. Nothing is the same as it was, and we do not believe there will be any going back to ‘the way it was’.

If this book can help you find fresh ways of approaching challenges as big as the ones we are facing in 2020, imagine how confident and skillful you could be when called on to face *other* ‘tigers’ that might be in your life now—or show up later on.

We believe *Facing the Tiger: Unleashing the Human Spirit at Work* will help you discover powerful ways to take transformational action that benefits you, those around you, and even Life itself.

That is why we wrote this book...

John Scherer

Dorota Nawalaniec

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WHAT PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD ARE SAYING ABOUT THIS BOOK

1. “I have known John for 25 years. He walks his talk. He humbly acknowledges his ‘shadow’ and quickly converts it into a resource for his own development. Read this book and learn from a master.” – **Barry Johnson**, Creator of the Polarity Map(R) and principles. Author of *And, Making a Difference by Leveraging Polarity, Paradox or Dilemma—Volume One: Foundations* HRD Press (2020)
2. “Thanks to John, I realized that I don’t have to force myself to change, but rather accept who I am and just be myself. And that changes everything. If you asked me how it happened, I would answer—thanks to the questions. By asking questions we are open to new experiences; we are involved, we are actually returning to our childhood, when each question was about discovering the world, learning who we are.” – **Mirek Godlewski**, Executive Chairman at eubioco, Senior Advisor at BCG
3. This may be the best business self-help book ever written. It’s like *Think and Grow Rich*, *Seven Habits*, and *The Millionaire Consultant* all rolled into one. Only better. – **Robert Middleton**, CEO, Action Marketing, USA
4. John Scherer’s writing reflects the kind of wisdom won—or perhaps gifted by—a life lived in courage, openness, and service. Come to his table. Share in the feast. Bring your warrior heart. – **Elizabeth Kanada Gorla**, Leadership & Personal Development Coach, U.K.
5. Find out WHAT you can become (a wiser human being), WHEN it can happen (any time of day), HOW (practice Facing the Tiger), and WHY (greater purpose, power and peace). I love this book! – **Joanna Heidtman**, Ph.D., Management and Leadership Consultant, Krakow & Warsaw, POLAND
6. Simply stunning. **Terry Rogers**, M.D., Lakeside Milam Recovery Centers, Seattle, USA

7. 'Facing the Tiger' is a rare find among personal development books for it's simplicity, impact and tools it gives you to feel the difference right-away. I will be happy when my son Leo reads it one day with pride and discovers it as a real gem. – **Edyta Korona**, Psychologist, Entrepreneur, OD expert, Product Leader, Marketing and Digital Associate SLC, Poland/USA
8. John's work calls forth the self-awareness and deep discovery we have been waiting for all of our lives. – **Dominic Cirincione**, First Co-Director, Center for the Study of the Person, Executive & Leadership Development Coach, Hermosa Beach, USA
9. John Scherer is one of the finest intellectuals and one of the world's best educators in the area of leadership alive today. His Facing the Tiger and The Five Questions, coupled with his unique Leadership Development Intensive (LDI), are a powerful life-changing experience which I recommend to everyone. – **Professor Cezary Wójcik**, Founder, Leadership Academy for Poland
10. John's Five Questions and the Facing the Tiger tools that go with them can change the way a team works together. The process is life changing, makes work more enjoyable, and creates bonds that little can break. – **Tom Ruhan**, CLO, Allegro, POLAND
11. What are you looking for? In *Facing the Tiger*, John, my spiritual brother, shows how to discover one's greater Self in the midst of everyday experiences, using simple, powerful processes. Read this book and feel divine wisdom moving through your soul. – **Sri Shuddhaanandaa Brahmachari**, Author, *Making Your Mind Your Best Friend* and Founder, Lokenath Devine Life Mission, Calcutta, INDIA
12. This book can help you make conscious choices about the key principles that guide your life and thus guide you to a higher level of leadership, performance and self-fulfillment. John, I am so grateful & appreciative of your friendship and sharing your wisdom and remarkable insights concerning the human spirit in the workplace. – **Cam Strong**, President, CJET Global Insurance, Seattle, USA
13. 'John's work helps us get out of the way of their egos and tap into our ultimate source of effectiveness.' – **Ken Blanchard**, Author, *The One-Minute Manager* (USA)

14. John Scherer belongs to that great tradition of elders who teach through powerful *questions*. There are few, if any, who can equal him in our times. – **Bob Kamm**, Author: *The Superman Syndrome*, Los Osos, USA
15. On the table in my office is the stalking tiger I earned on my Leadership Intensive with John many years ago. I face it every day. At first I wanted to build a cage for the tiger, but John showed me how to *befriend* it. What a wild ride! I wouldn't change anything. – **Sir Tor Dahl**, CEO of Tor Dahl Associates, Chairman Emeritus of the World Confederation of Productivity Science, USA/ NORWAY
16. This book is not for everyone. It opens up a new world for those who are brave enough to take on the inner journey. This universal process works across countries, cultures and continents, regardless of differences. John's book shows us how to dive in and 'park the ego at the doorway'. Carpe diem! – **Jenny Georgieva**, MSOD, OD Consultant and Executive Coach, Bucharest, BULGARIA
17. *Facing the Tiger* gives you that 'Ah-Hah!' feeling – the sudden, startling, BIG insight that makes you shiver; the kind John's clients get in person every day. – **Dave Myer**, former EVP, ACE Hardware International, Chicago, USA
18. John is one of the most gracious, intelligent, enthusiastic, and compassionate human beings I've ever met. If someone asked me to do what I thought worthy-but-impossible, I'd first go to John. He might ask me to open up my heart, but he'd be willing to bleed with me, and likely what had seemed impossible moments before would be all but finished. – **Terry Bain**, Author, *You Are a Dog: Life Through the Eyes of Man's Best Friend*, Spokane, USA
19. My handwriting is all over the book's pages, asking myself—among other things, 'WHAT is something I can do now, anonymously, that three generations from now people will benefit from?' Oh, my! You opened up a window full of light and possibility. For the first time I am wondering what seeds I have planted during my passage here. – **Monique Renaud-Gagne**, Executive, Nassau, THE BAHAMAS
20. In my view John is a genius when it comes to personal, professional and organization development. I continue to use his models, his methods, (and even his stories!) because I simply have

not found better ones. – **Robyn Wynne-Lewis**, Founder of Core Consulting, Hawkes Bay, NEW ZEALAND

- 21.** In a world hungry for quick answers, in *Facing the Tiger*, John Scherer offers us a different diet entirely: five delicious and life-enhancing questions! – **Mark Kelso**, Composer, lyricist, and playwright of *Luci: Fall of the Bright Morning Star*, Massachusetts, USA
- 22.** John's book is THE place to go in your search for unleashing the human spirit at work—starting with your own. – **Vicki Carter**, Operations Manager, Spokane, USA
- 23.** John's metaphors are inspired. His words are easy-to-understand, yet deep enough to be profound. Like an artist: some see colors, some see shapes, and some appreciate age. You will find what you are looking for in this book. – **Dr Lee Lu**, Adjunct Professor, Benedictine University, TAIWAN/USA
- 24.** John's approach opens up the most important things any leader could reflect on. They are invaluable tools for connecting Life and Leadership in both directions: You leading your Life—and your Life leading you. The result is greater impact coming from who you truly ARE. – **Markus Schwemmle**, Managing Partner, systemworx, Munich, GERMANY
- 25.** My life cleaves neatly into two: Before John Scherer and After John Scherer. Simply put, I owe him my life for learning the difference between 'doing Kathy Davis' and 'being Kathy Davis'. – **Kathy Davis**, Director, Leadership Development Intensive, Houston, USA
- 26.** John reminds us that what happens to us every day can serve as vital 'lessons' for our personal development. His Five Questions empower and inspire. They are valuable principles that will transform your life. They sure have mine! – **Carol Orsborn**, Ph.D., Author, *How Would Confucius Ask for a Raise?* Nashville, USA
- 27.** First, 'facing my tigers' has led me to have honest, authentic, difficult conversations on a daily basis. (Before each conversation I smile inwardly, as I realize this is yet another tiger! Gosh, didn't know I had so many!) Second, since I learnt about 'Shadow Stretches', I have transformed *Jealousy* into *Knowing Exactly What I Want*. It's amazing! A part of me that I hated (my jealousy) has

suddenly turned into a loving inner compass that is directing me toward my most important needs (knowing what I want). And lastly, the great lesson about 'bringing my loving intention to The Chaos', which is slowly transforming my Life. Thank you, John. – **Leena Godiwala-Deubet**, Consultant to NGOs and Stay-at-Home Mother in Mumbai, INDIA

- 28.** After working alongside John and benefiting from his work for the last 22 years, I can honestly say that his book, like his life, packs a life-changing punch in a velvet glove! – **Lynnea Brinkerhoff**, Executive Development Coach, Change Consultant and Social Entrepreneur, San Francisco, USA
- 29.** As a doctor, I prescribe this book! As someone who has experienced the Executive Development Intensive (EDI) and had multiple team members do the same, my/our return on investment has been substantial. The need to "Face the Tiger" has never been more critical than today as we face major personal and societal challenges and John's 'Five Questions' are a source of knowledge, enlightenment and strength, enabling us to move toward greater purpose, power and peace in our world. Thank you, John. – **Bruce Cutter**, MD, MMM, Summit Cancer Centers, Spokane WA, USA
- 30.** *Facing the Tiger* springboards your passionately purposeful life into a deeper awareness of your divine destiny. My friend, John, invites you to ask powerful questions that lead you to infinitely better results, not by *changing* yourself, but by *becoming* your Self. – **Mark Victor Hansen**, Author, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, Los Angeles, USA
- 31.** Our 'assignment' in what John calls 'The Workplace School of Life' is to discover, become and express who we truly are. There is 'homework' offered here, but it is 'work that takes you home to who you truly are,' making this challenge remarkably easy, but powerful. – **Domien van Gool**, Founder, The Leader Academy of Europe, Brussels, BELGIUM
- 32.** I've been the recipient of John's guidance for over two decades. It has helped me merge companies, work through my true self, and take my personal life to new heights. Facing the Tiger is actually as transformative as it sounds. – **Ingvar Petursson**, Former CTO, Nintendo of America, The Big Island, Hawaii, ICELAND/USA

- 33.** John, your materials are an invaluable and rich resource which I draw on all the time to design practices and mini-lessons for my coaching clients. They love the clarity and depth of insight that come out of your thought exercises, observations and wisdom. – **Jean Ogilvie**, Coach and Organization Development Consultant, Ottawa, CANADA
- 34.** John has played an instrumental role in transforming our company—and our lives. Part change-facilitator and part spiritual-development ‘guru’, John is a shining light in this world. – **Rick Hosmer**, Senior Partner, Klundt & Hosmer Design Associates, USA
- 35.** Seriously taking on John’s Five Questions will perform magic in your life, making it a gift to yourself and making you more of a gift to those you care about. – **Mike Murray**, President, Creative Interchange Consultants International, USA
- 36.** What I got out of John’s message was, ‘Wake up, Art! God isn’t through with you yet. This book gets my high five!’ – **Art McNeil**, Author, *Leadership: The “I” of the Hurricane*, CEO, Creating Corporate Energy, and VISTA Chair, USA
- 37.** Those of us who know John Scherer are not surprised that his Five Questions are not intended to be answered. Rather they describe a way-of-being that leads us to the mystery, depth, and greatness of our own lives. This is not a book of good advice, but an announcement of good news to everyone who accepts the challenge to ask these questions. – **Rev Dr William Leshner**, former Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions, USA
- 38.** While John’s book is written as a seemingly light touch self-help book, it is in fact a powerful teaching book, full of academic rigour, substantial applied behavioural science knowledge and insights, made easy to guide its reader to engage in a journey of home-coming to be who they can be. These exercises can be done by a work team, couples, families and partners at work. Facing the Tiger is a book we should visit and revisit frequently to ensure we are in a good place to do the work of the BIG SELF. – **Mee-Yan Cheung-Judge**, PhD, Founder of Quality & Equality Ltd, Global Scholar-Educator-Practitioner in Organisation Development

INTRODUCTION

“As a human being, are you a finished product or a work-in-progress?”

Over the years, I have asked this question—a gift from my close friend and colleague, Art McNeil—of thousands of people around the world. As you might guess, most people say, “Oh, I’m not ‘there’ yet; I’m still a work-in-progress.”

The next question I like to ask is, “Well, where do you do your ‘progressing’ or ‘developing’?” People respond with a variety of answers:

- reading a good self-help or leadership book
- going to personal or professional development seminars and workshops
- at my church, synagogue, mosque or spiritual development group
- sitting quietly alone or with close friends

These are all wonderful places to be a work-in-progress. I know from personal experience. But every day you spend your waking hours in a *perfect* ‘classroom’ for profound personal, deep—you might even say spiritual—development. As you will see, the people around you are the *perfect* ‘faculty’ for what you need to learn, and the ‘stuff’ that happens to you every day contains your perfect ‘curriculum,’ resulting in what I call your ‘School of Life.’ *Seva as sadhana*.

THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

- **This ‘school’ is tuition-free.** There are some ‘costs’ associated with being in the program, but, as you will see, the investment is all internal, involving reflection and self-mastery.
- **Your ‘faculty’ is always around**—the ones you like and the ones you can’t stand. In fact, as you will see, the ones you don’t particularly like are potentially the most important ‘teachers’ in your developmental process.
- **There are no ‘grades’.** There is, however, continuous, real-time feedback. Oh... and your own inner critic. The trick is to figure out what it all means.

- **School is always ‘in session’** and the lessons are always the right ones for you in that moment.
- **There is no final ‘exam’**—only moment-by-moment ‘tests.’ If you don’t do particularly well on a ‘lesson,’ don’t worry, it will keep coming back until you get it!

When you start to see life itself as a ‘classroom’ for becoming fully who you are, then everything that happens to you is a developmental opportunity.

LIFE AS A ‘DOJO’

Years ago Black-Belt, Ellen Stapenhorst, introduced me to Aikido, the relatively young Japanese martial art that emphasizes *flowing with* an attack rather than blocking or striking. The word, Aikido, is broken into its parts like this:

Ai – To blend or harmonize

Ki – Energy or intention

Do – Path or ‘Way’

In Aikido practice, it all begins when someone called the ‘Uke’—“Oo-keh” moves to engage. In that moment, the two of you begin to train not *against* each other but *with* each other. In an interesting and transformative re-frame, your Uke is not *attacking* you, but rather providing you with *an opportunity to practice your craft*.

If you are attempting to become a better tennis player, for instance, it’s rather hard to do it by yourself. You need a partner on the other side of the net whose role is to hit challenging shots at you. The better they are as a player, the more you are called on to ‘raise your game’ in the process of *mastering your craft*, which, in this case, means becoming a better tennis player.

So, in Life, when someone or something ‘comes at you,’ why not frame what is happening as *an opportunity to ‘practice your craft’ and ‘raise your game’*? It takes a lot of inner work, like embracing The Five Questions, but eventually it is possible to get to the place where you can

actually experience *gratitude* for this opportunity to master your craft, which in this case means becoming a better _____ (fill in your name here).

In this way, that person 'coming at you,' your Uke, becomes a *tiger-to-be-faced*. Learning how to face your tigers is therefore a crucial aspect of self-mastery.

SELF-MASTERY

This kind of learning is not just about mastering a subject or a set of skills, the object of most classrooms. This classroom is more about *self-mastery* which Lao Tzu described in 600 BCE:

Those who understand much may be wise, but those
who understand themselves are even wiser.
Those who are master over many may be powerful, but those
who are mastering themselves are more powerful still.

~ Lao Tzu,

This means learning how to manage *internal* things like success, failure, fear, pride, confusion, frustration, anger, joy, jealousy, competition. In self-mastery there *are* skills to be learned, but they are skills that assist you in *processing what is happening to you*. To go back to the T.S. Eliot quote, it is figuring out the *lessons* in the *experiences*.

HOMEWORK THAT TAKES YOU 'HOME'

If you decide to face your tigers by taking on The Five Questions in the course of self-mastery, *there will be homework*.

Paradoxically, the work you will need to do has nothing to do with changing anything about yourself. It's exactly the opposite. This homework is *work that takes you home*—home to who you truly are, to that Self which is capable of mastering being you, discovering the *person inside your position* or

role. It's hard work to peel back the layers that have covered over this vital center, this core essence of who you are, but it may be one of the reasons you are here.

Your homework may involve some of the most challenging self-development you have ever attempted. If you take it on, however, it could allow you to relax and enjoy your life, regardless of the circumstances. Whether or not you are aware of it, this could be something you have been searching for, striving for, saving for, maybe even fighting for. But the first step is accepting that where you are right now is *exactly* where you need to be to start the journey. If you are in Paris and want to go to New York, you have to start in Paris!

WHY FIVE QUESTIONS? WHY NOT FIVE ANSWERS?

Some might wonder how an approach based on *questions* could be of any value when what the world is seeking is *answers*.

First of all, questions are much more powerful than answers. As long as you are asking a question, you are open to input and discovery. The instant you find the answer, you stop looking; you shut down to new input. Answers eventually lead to rigidity. Rigidity leads to certainty. Certainty leads to stagnation. Stagnation leads to the need for fresh thinking, and that requires asking new questions. The questions asked here are universal, aimed at everyone. But what 'comes up' in *you* while you engage in these questions will be completely unique. And very personal.

What you need is an approach that creates *transformation*, a very different outcome from mere *change*. Change happens on the outside. Transformation on the inside. *Change* can be accomplished by applying answers; *transformation* requires living into the right questions, and these five are a great place to start.

YOU CAN'T REALLY *CHANGE* YOURSELF!

Most personal change efforts are based on the core belief that there is something wrong with who you are now. Consider this: you couldn't have any other kind of attitude, relationships, health, management style, or success, *given who you have been up to now*.

If you want to create any kind of fundamental *difference* in your life, the secret is not to try to become someone or something else (*change*), but to become more fully who you are (*transformation*).

NEW WATER FROM THE OLD WELL

Perhaps you can now see that changing something implies *replacing* or *negating* what is there. Transformation, on the other hand, implies reaching deep within what is there now to find the 'seeds' for a new and larger reality. It is more like the true meaning of *education*: from its Latin root *e-ducare*, 'to draw out,' as in drawing water out of a well. *You can think of the kind of transformation described here as drawing new water out of your old well—by going deeper than you dipped before*. The way to get your bucket deeper into your well is by taking on these powerful questions, instead of jumping at attractive-looking answers. When you courageously engage with these five questions, everything has a chance to shift inside and around you. It starts with fully understanding who you are, down deep, and then being *that* person.

If you are ready for this possibility, let's begin. The approach is actually very simple. Not easy, but simple.

Picture your Self as a 'core' or an 'essence' that lives at the center of a Mandala:

THE MANDALA

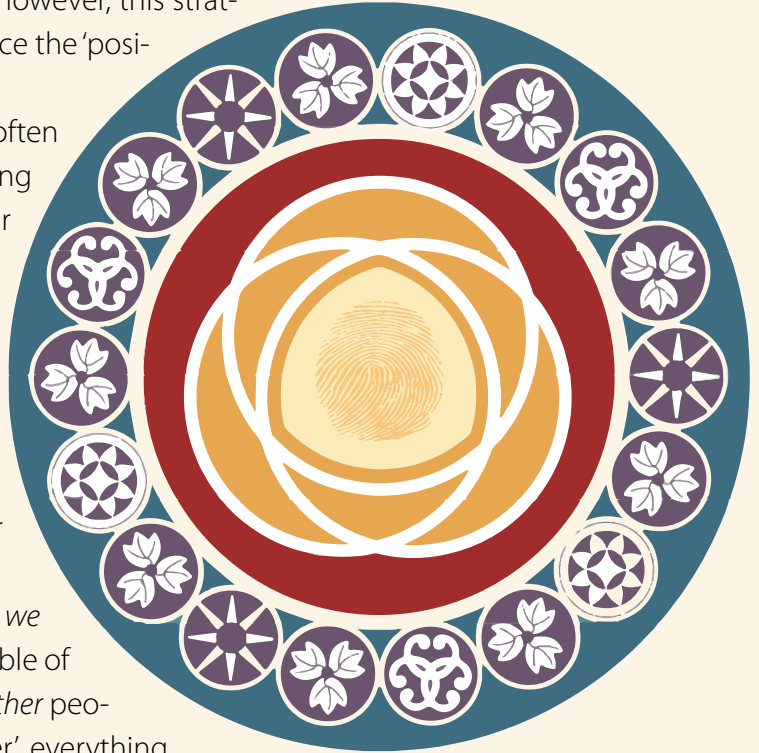
Most of us live from day to day on the surface, out on the perimeter, of our lives. This is where ‘stuff’ happens to us: the good, the bad, the hard, the easy, the joyful and the painful. By staying out there we avoid feeling the ‘negative’ things very deeply. However, this strategy means we also don’t often deeply experience the ‘positive’ things either.

When we interact with other people, it is often the outer layer of who *we* are (the lovely blue ring of the Mandala) interacting with the outer layer of who *they* are. Then we wonder why we do not have more influence or respect or connection...

The next (red) layer or ring of the mandala represents ‘negative’ aspects of who we are, hidden from our awareness—and, if possible, from other people. As you will see, this red layer plays a major role in our transformation.

As we become the deeper aspects of who *we* are, we become more present—and more capable of interacting with—the deeper aspects of who *other* people are. As we move toward that ‘golden center’, everything on the surface changes and we become more real!

In the Golden Center is your own fingerprint. It’s who you are beneath all the roles you play and the expectations of others. It’s where everything right and good about you lives.



GETTING STARTED

Let's explore these Five Questions together and discover—or maybe *re-discover*—that path of turning work and life itself into deep development. When you were born, you were a master of that way of learning. In fact, it was all you knew how to do at first. You were a *learning being*, designed to grow and develop and discover yourself and the world in every moment of every day.

Born to be learners, we turn into 'knowers'.

Let me show you how to turn anything and everything that happens to you at work—and at home—into a *developmental 'lesson'*, a flash of awareness that deepens and expands you more fully into your real Self at the center of The Mandala, and maximizes your contribution to others and even to Life itself.

I'll say it again: To become wiser-at-work and more of what you are capable of being, you don't need to *change* yourself. You need to *come home* to your Self. This changes everything...

Now I hope you can see why 'This book is for you...'



This icon represents a chance to apply a particular concept to yourself. This is one way to turn your experience into more than just 'reading a book'. Doing the interactive exercises will deepen your self-understanding and help you apply it to your life.



Throughout the book, *this* icon (except here!) will take you to a video about an important personal development model or concept. (These videos can also be excellent ways to share the concepts with friends or colleagues.)

A tiger is shown in a natural, jungle-like environment. The tiger is positioned on the right side of the frame, looking towards the left. Its fur has a distinct orange and black striped pattern. To the left of the tiger, there are branches with green leaves. The background is a soft-focus view of a forest. Overlaid on the left side of the image is the text 'QUESTION #1:' in a bold, orange font, and below it, 'What CONFRONTS me?' in a white font.

QUESTION #1:

What CONFRONTS me?

'FACING THE TIGER'

The first of The Five Questions asks you to look at your life and pick out something that is 'coming at you,' an Uke, like a tiger in the jungle. Your 'tiger' might be as simple as an important meeting you need to lead, or a difficult phone call, or a conversation with a colleague or partner, or as significant as a decision about your career or a personal relationship. Look for some kind of situation that has strong emotional energy associated with it, one you would like to avoid if you could because it might not 'end well'. Paradoxically, working with what you might see as a 'negative' experience provides powerful insights. There seems to be more 'juice' there, with the lessons you are seeking being closer to the surface. Not to worry, you will soon see the positive potential in your 'negative' situation.

ON RUNNING FROM A TIGER

If you found yourself in the part of the world where tigers live, and one suddenly appeared in front of you, what would be the first human instinct? Run? Yes, run! However, if you turn away and run, six million years of evolutionary 'training' kicks in. The tiger sees a small, slow figure trying to run away, and thinks (as my colleague, Mark Yeowell, says), "Oh! Fantastic! Another slow, yummy one with a crunchy center. It's lunch time!" Whereupon the tiger runs you down and kills you, either eating you now or saving you for later.

Tigers are hard-wired to chase a small, slow, figure running away. Are you kidding? They can't stop themselves. If you have a kitten, and you drag a string in front of it ten times, how many times will the kitten jump on the string? Ten times out of ten. Chasing a smaller figure running away is hard-wired into the tiger's—and all felines'—operating systems.

The bottom line: if you run away from a tiger, your chances of survival are essentially zero.

However, the people who live with this threat say that *if you turn and face the tiger, your survival odds go up*. Now, let's be clear; it may still eat you! But the tiger will stop and think about what it wants to do. If you face the tiger, your chances of survival are something greater than zero. In the simple act

of turning and confronting the tiger, you have created—not a guarantee—but a *possibility*, a possibility that wasn't there before. That's all, just a chance, but it's *a chance for a different outcome*, which is significantly better than the alternative.

In the 'facing-the-tiger' situation you are thinking about, one option is to walk or run away from what is happening, hoping it doesn't chase you. But consider this: If you are *not* 'facing one of your tigers', *it's already eating you*, otherwise you would not be seeing it as a 'tiger'.

Where do you sense the presence of a 'tiger' in your life? Let's get specific:

- at work (with a client, customer, colleague, boss or subordinate)
- with family members or loved ones
- friends, neighbors or other relationships

How would you *name* your 'tiger'? Because, "When you *name* it, you can *tame* it." Give what is confronting you a 'handle'. Call it something. The name you give it will almost certainly change as you go through The Five Questions, but you must start by saying in words what it is that confronts you.

CRISIS: A CHOICE POINT

You may never face an actual 'tiger' in the jungle, but the physiological and psychological response in your body, mind and emotions when you are confronted by *any* frightening situation, conflict or crisis is exactly the same, be it the Covid-19 virus or a tough conversation with your life partner. By the way, the original Greek word for 'crisis' is the verb KRISEIN, which means 'to choose or decide.' A crisis is simply a choice point: "What should I do?!"

In my work with individuals, couples, work teams and even large organizations, I have seen seven different responses to crisis/conflict. I call them The Seven F's.

Here they are:

- **FIGHT**—Engaging to overcome, moving *toward* to defeat the threat
- **FLIGHT**—Disengaging, moving *away* quickly, avoiding contact
- **FREEZE**—Stopping, standing, *paralyzed* 'like a deer in the headlights'
- **FADE**—Backing away *slowly* and consciously with your face toward the 'tiger'

- **FIGURE OUT**—Using my mind (privately) to *understand* the problem and what I should do next
- **FIX**—Attempting to *solve* or resolve the situation, eliminating the cause of the conflict
- **FACE**—Engage with an intention to *discover together* with my ‘Uke’ what is happening, what can be learned, and what to do next

Most people react in a familiar sequence. What is *yours*?

ON FREEZING: A PERSONAL EXAMPLE



Before developing The Five Questions and the Facing-the-Tiger approach, my first response to a conflict with someone I cared about, personally or professionally, was to FREEZE. “OMG! How did I get here?!” Then my default childhood training would kick in and my first thought would be, “It must be my fault. I must have done something wrong.” Very quickly, I would move into trying to FIGURE OUT what was happening and, as soon as possible, FIX things. The startling insight I had when I saw my pattern, however, was that what I was trying to FIGURE OUT and FIX was not the problem or the cause, but the upset itself! All my energy went into trying to reduce the intensity of the other person’s emotions. “What do I need to do for them to stop being so upset?”

This pattern of mine ended suddenly for me one afternoon in Hartford, Connecticut, when Carol, a client, friend, and Senior VP at Aetna (our largest client at the time), was driving me to the airport after a consultation with her leadership team. In our second year of working together, she had become a real champion of our work inside the company, having hired us to do several large change projects in her division, and sending over 100 of the company’s key managers through our Executive Development Intensive (EDI). After our meeting, as we were getting into the car, I noticed she was more quiet than usual, but didn’t think anything of it.

We made small talk as we turned onto I-84, with Carol driving and me in the passenger seat. Suddenly she turned toward me and began to shout, “John Scherer! What the @\$% were you doing in there?! You embarrassed me in front of my people! You

undercut everything I have been trying to do with them! I can't believe you did that to me! I'm inclined to never work with you again!"

I froze and my life passed before me. I could hardly breathe. My heart was pounding in my chest. I remember turning toward her in my seat, absolutely terrified. It all kicked in: first my childhood training ("Be a good boy"), then sheer terror ("Holy sh+t, she's about to fire me!") Here was my favorite client—and by then good friend and colleague—telling me we were 'done'. Practically, that also meant that 50% of our company's revenue was about to go out the window. The problem was that I had just hired three new people and signed a five-year lease on a new office suite, based in large part on continuing contracts with her and her company... Life, as I had known it, was over.

All this ran through my mind in a flash and opened up a deep hole into which I knew everything would fall.

Then an amazing thing happened. Even though my fear was pulling me down into terrifying future visions of personal and professional failure, in that moment a small 'space' appeared between my emotions and some part of me that was not 'hooked', that was not at the effect of those emotions. Inside that little space, I found myself letting go...

I let go of our friendship, the contract with AEtna, my new office space, the people I had just hired, even the future of my fledgling business. Then I let go of my pride, as I confronted what felt like the real possibility of a shameful bankruptcy—or at least the drastic reduction of what we were doing in the world and how we were doing it. I recall sitting there, calmly, quietly, allowing her hurt and anger to come at me. It was like being in the 'eye of a hurricane', with all kinds of emotional turmoil swirling around me. I felt—and gently discarded—the urge to try to figure out what had happened or to explain and defend what I had done. I just sat there, 'holding the burn' as we say in yoga. This meant letting go of my default reaction to try to 'fix her upset', and instead, making space for her to 'empty her bucket' of strong emotions.

Eventually, when she had fully-expressed everything that was making her angry, her intensity diminished. Then, in the pause that came, I breathed a sigh of relief and shared briefly what had happened inside of me during our exchange. After a few minutes of quiet conversation, I said something like, "Where do we go from here?" She he turned

toward me, smiled warmly, and said, “I know from time to time I get angry with my team just like I did with you. Thank you, John, for the way you handled this exchange... I wish my staff could do what you just did.”

By the time the 30-minute ride to Bradley Airport was over, we were in a new and stronger relationship, one with even more trust and mutual respect.

We both learned a lot from that experience, but what I discovered about ‘facing the tiger’ has been part of my life ever since. *Facing is not fighting. It is also not allowing yourself to be hurt.* It is not defending, either, even cleverly. It is something else, and that’s what taking on Question #1 is all about.

At this point, you may have a question of your own like, “OK, I think I get it about ‘facing the tiger’... But how can I do what you did?!” By the time you get to Question #5, you will know how.

THE SCOUT MASTER AND THE GUNSLINGER¹



Terry had been appointed Chief Operating Officer (COO) of his insurance company by the outgoing CEO. The new CEO didn’t particularly like Terry but was willing to honor the promise made by his predecessor to allow Terry to continue. That made them appropriate-but-wary colleagues. After two years of this, their organization was polarized from top to bottom around their unresolved conflicts.

You could say Terry was a ‘gunslinger’, ready to explore any opportunity that felt right to him and that showed signs of potential. Dale, his boss, was just the opposite, a ‘Boy Scout’, careful not make mistakes, cautious about moving too fast, and ‘nice’ to a fault. Except when his irritation leaked out during staff meetings in sarcastic, put-down humor, which subordinates laughed away nervously. Terry, beloved by those who worked for him, was a ‘people person’ with a warm, engaging, inspiring and motivating style, who saw the big picture and sought ways to involve people in that vision. The fact that both

¹ This real-world example is a chapter in *Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work*.

were Eagle Scouts and that Dale had a statue of a cowboy in his office makes what happened next even more intriguing.

At one point in this unfolding drama, Terry participated in the seminar I created based on The Five Questions called the **Leadership Development Intensive (LDI)**². During that experience, Terry had a chance to rehearse a Face-the-Tiger conversation with Dale, speaking to an empty chair as if Dale were sitting there (an occasional method of facilitation). After several minutes of Terry moving back and forth between the two chairs, speaking first for himself, then for Dale, suddenly he stopped in mid-sentence with a look of complete surprise on his face. He told me and the group what he was seeing: The person who *should* be sitting in that empty chair, the person who should be receiving Terry's anger about not being seen or respected or appreciated, was not Dale, but *Terry's own father...*

Terry had the life-altering insight that in his interactions with Dale he was looking for something he needed from his dad.

This insight enabled Terry to look at Dale in a completely new way, moving him to make a commitment to have a Face-the-Tiger conversation with him as soon as he could to share this insight and work out a new way of interacting.

As it so happened, on his way back home from his LDI, Terry found himself 'Just going by the office to check my e-mails,' not expecting to meet anyone at 6:00 PM on a Friday evening. As he walked to his office, he noticed that Dale's door was standing open, and Dale was there, at his desk! 'OMG!' Terry thought, as he told us later. "He's here! Well, ok, buddy, you'd better go for it. There's no time like the present to face the 'tiger!'"

He went in, sat down, shared his insight, and asked Dale to forgive him for expecting him to compensate for what he missed getting from his father. Terry spoke of his intention to dramatically shift the way they related to each other, especially in front of their people in the company. Seeing how destructive his sarcasm and put-down humor was to Terry, Dale agreed not to use it on Terry anymore, admitting it was an indirect way of dealing with his extremely popular, but unpredictable COO. He also promised to let Terry

² For more information on this program, go to www.SchererCenter.com/LDI.

in on financial discussions that had been off-limits up to then. For his part, Terry agreed to stop bad-mouthing Dale to his people, and to check certain decisions with Dale, ones that he knew Dale was nervous about.

Their open wound had started healing.

Even people several levels below the executive floor could tell that there was 'a new game in town', one without the rancor and sarcasm of the recent past. While Terry and Dale never became best friends, their relationship deepened enough to allow them to genuinely appreciate the amazing gifts each was contributing to the company's success. Their new respect for each other also allowed their people to agree or disagree on crucial decisions without being seen by the other 'party' as disloyal. The result: better decisions, made with the focus on the real problem to be solved, rather than on fighting with an 'enemy on the other side.'

In summary, 'facing the tiger' is something you can do once you have:

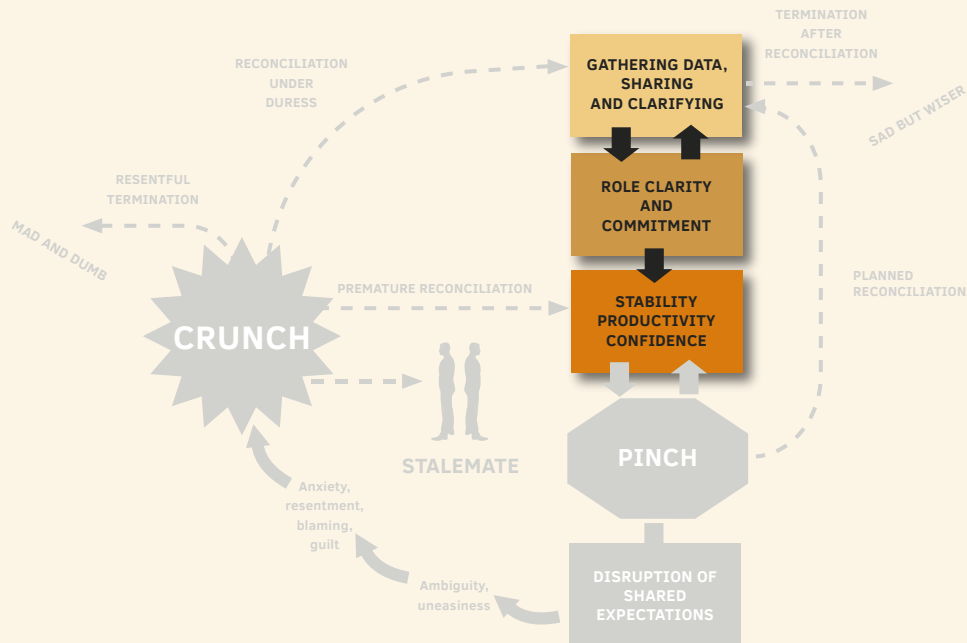
- a) the motivation to take the risk,
- b) a 'roadmap' showing where you want to go, and
- c) a process for getting there.

The last two are clearly revealed in something called The Pinch Theory, a model that Dr John (Jack) Sherwood and I introduced in 1975.

THE PINCH THEORY³

Here is a sobering truth: *there are no healthy relationships without 'tigers'...* Let me prove it. Below is a kind of 'map' that will show you:

- *why* 'tigers' are a built-in aspect of all meaningful relationships,
- *when* a 'tiger' is worth facing,
- *how* to get started facing it, and
- *what* is likely to happen if you don't.



³ Adapted from 'A Model for Couples: How Two Can Grow Together' by John J. Sherwood & John J. Scherer, Journal for Small Group Behavior, February, 1975.

It starts at the top. Every relationship begins with a period of **Gathering Data and Sharing and Clarifying Expectations**. Rarely does someone walk up and say, “Hi, my name is Tom. I’d like to gather some data and share and clarify some expectations!” Nevertheless, that’s exactly what’s happening when people are getting to know each other, personally or professionally. Whether it’s a job interview or a social event, both people are trying to figure out *What’s going on here? Who is this other person? What can I expect from them? What does it look like they’ll expect from me?* You’re both ‘gathering data’ and getting as clear as you can about expectations.

This first stage is about learning or discovery.

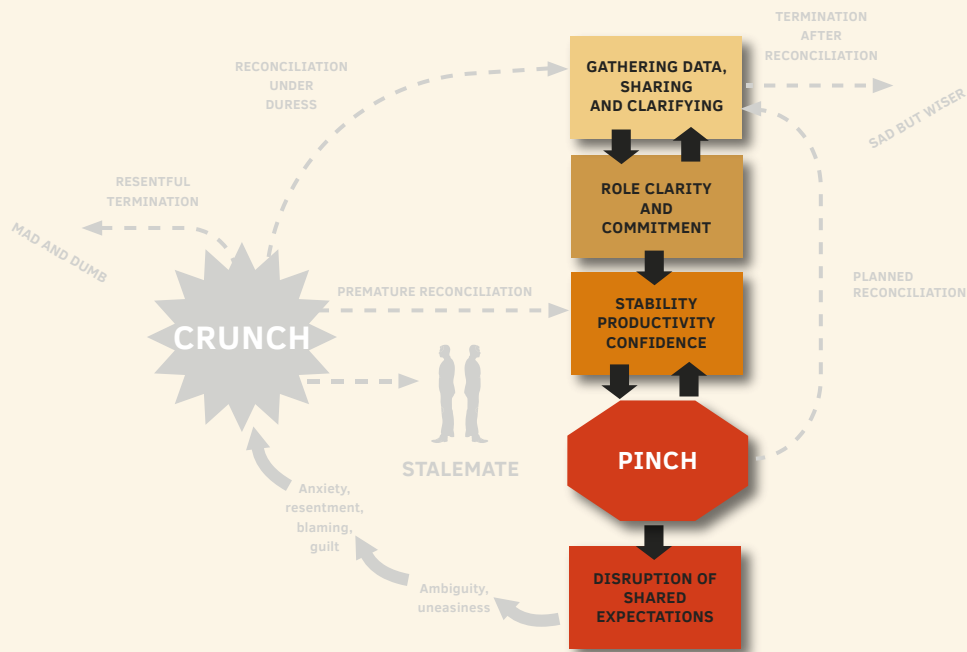
The dilemma is that, in the early stages of a relationship, both sides are *trying to look good*. Both people are in what my colleague, Ron Short, calls ‘the mating dance of the Watusi bird’. Both of you have your ‘feathers’ all fluffed up and are prancing around trying to look like the best _____ (fill in the blank) possible, like job interviewee or hot date prospect.

This is not a bad thing; it’s a human thing.

In trying to make a good impression, you don’t say, “Oh by the way, under pressure, my face gets red and I yell a lot.” Or, “When things get really stressful, I’m probably going to miss work for several days.” These kinds of things just don’t come out. You don’t talk about your ‘down side’; you emphasize the positive things. Plus, even if you wanted to, it is impossible to know, in advance, what you might need to talk about down the road. Many things only come up later as the relationship—and life—unfold.

But, based on the information that *does* get exchanged, you start to have a sense of what the expectations are, and you are then able to move to the next phase: **Role Clarity and Commitment**. “Ah, now I see what it would mean to be Director of Marketing for this organization,” or “Now I see what it would be like to be in a relationship with you.” To the extent that the role feels comfortable, you then make a commitment. You go, “OK, I’m choosing to be a part of this. I’m in.”

As soon as that commitment occurs, you are able to move to the next phase, which is **Stability, Productivity, and Confidence**. You could say the relationship ‘works.’ You can now work together, live together, whatever. There is a certain amount of stability here also: “Now I have a sense of clarity about what is likely to happen between us”. And some productivity: “It’s working now—and I have some confidence that this just might be fine.”



THE 'PINCH'

It's right in the middle of that period of Stability, Productivity, and Confidence, however, that somebody is going to experience what we call a **'Pinch'**. A Pinch is a little thing that happens between you and the other person that bugs you. It is something that, if it were to keep happening, could become a real problem.

Some examples of Pinches that people report happening in workplaces and home life:

- being late
- missing deadlines
- leaving coffee cups on people's desks
- talking about people behind their backs
- taking credit for what someone else did

- not taking out the garbage after saying you would
- leaving the toilet seat up/down

In my own North American culture, especially being from Virginia, I was trained to *not* talk about Pinches. Maybe you were taught the same thing. What do we say to ourselves that makes us hesitant to talk about Pinches?

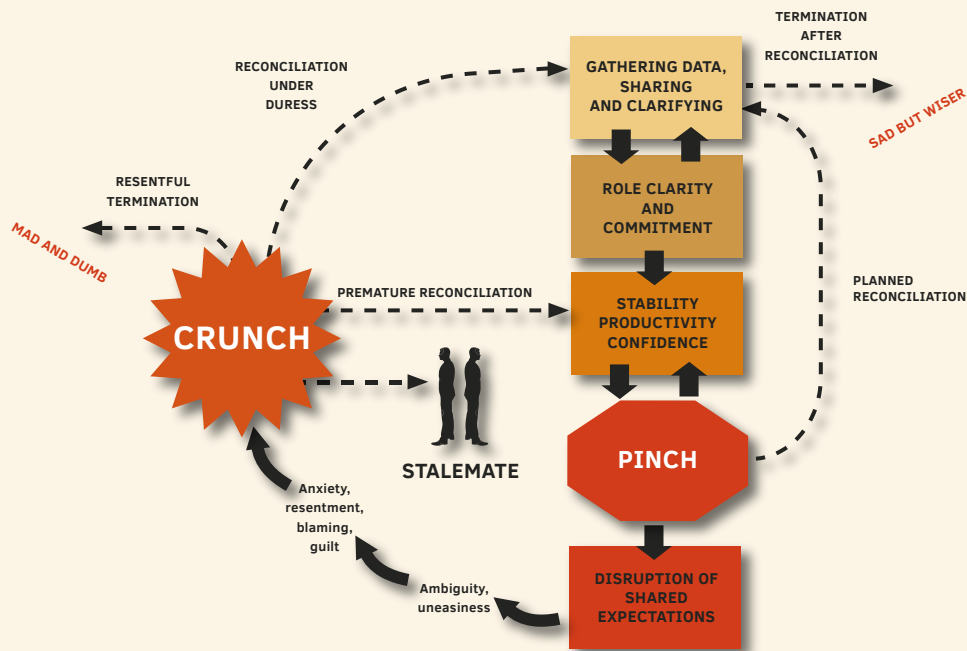
- “It’s no big deal...”
- “It’s really my problem...”
- “I don’t want to create a bigger conflict...”
- “It probably won’t happen again...”
- “I’m sure they didn’t mean it...”

The bottom line is that when a Pinch occurs you say to yourself, “Oh well... Let’s just go back to what we had before.”

Here’s the key point: If you *don’t* talk to the other person about what just happened, what do they learn? Nothing! In fact, as hard as it might be to believe, they might not even know that they *did* anything! I suppose it’s possible that they are lying awake at night trying to think up ways to tick you off or mess up your life, but chances are they are just going along, doing what they do, being the way they are.

So let’s say you *don’t* talk about what has happened and no information gets exchanged, guess what happens next? The Pinch can occur again, and even again. And every time it happens, inside you, a little weight goes on a scale. *Click*, “That’s 1...” *Click*, “That’s 2...” *Click*, “That’s 3...”

Then, after a certain number of times, depending on the issue, that scale tips over and you find yourself in a new situation, which drops you down into the next phase: **Disruption**. What is happening now is a very clear disruption of the expectations you had at the beginning. You say to yourself, “Whoa, wait a second... This is not what I signed up for! I didn’t know _____ was going to happen!” Something snaps, and you can no longer pretend it doesn’t bug you. It throws you very predictably onto the path to the left side of the Pinch Model, where there is initially a certain amount of **Ambiguity** and **Uneasiness**. You can be thinking, “If I can’t trust them about _____, I wonder what I *can* trust them about?!”



THE CRUNCH = CRISIS

That very quickly moves you from a Pinch to what we call the **Crunch**, accompanied by **Anxiety** and **Guilt** (“I should have said something...”), **Anger**, and **Resentment**. Imagine the volume dial on your music system that shows you how loud things are. When a Pinch occurs, your emotions just barely jiggle the needle on the meter, but when you get to the Crunch point, that needle is slammed over into the red zone. It’s ‘on the peg’. This state is what we usually call ‘being upset’.

The good news is that the Crunch is actually a crisis, which, as you remember, goes back to its Greek root which means ‘to choose’. You are going to have to *do* something. You can’t take it—or fake it—anymore.

What are your options?

The most popular choice is to do the same thing you did in response to the first Pinch: “I don’t want to make a bigger problem out of this, so let’s just go back to the way things were.” We call that

Premature Reconciliation. It's premature because there has been no conversation, no discussion of what happened. You just 'gut it out,' 'suck it up,' and 'get on with things'.

Okay, great, you're back to the way it was before the Crunch.

But then what happens? Right, the Pinch occurs again. And what do you say to yourself? "Oh well... Here I am again... I still don't want to create a bigger problem." This time, however, it doesn't take quite as many 'trigger' moments to put you at the Crunch point again. If the pattern continues, you go round and round in a big circle, passing through the period of Stability, Productivity and Confidence. Pretty soon your relationship is shot, trust and respect are gone, and/or you can't get any work done with this person anymore. After a few trips into the Crunch, *fear*—which is always beneath anger, by the way—comes into play, driving out the confidence and stability that you had before.

After a few tries at Premature Reconciliation, you may be ready for another option. You may find yourself saying, "I don't need to take this @#\$% anymore. I'm out of here!", and you spin off into what we call **Resentful Termination**. There are lots of ways to do this:

- You arrange to get transferred
- You arrange to get promoted
- You arrange to get fired
- If it's a personal relationship, you can pack and leave
- You do whatever you need to do to get away from the scene
- Do your best to avoid contact with the other person

RESENTFUL TERMINATION: *LEAVING MAD AND DUMB*

The problem with Resentful Termination is that when you leave that way, you leave Mad and Dumb. *You take your anger and your ignorance with you.* You may think you're leaving the bad stuff behind, but you are taking your unfinished business with you to the next marriage, the next job, the next relationship. Every time you went around that loop from Pinch to Crunch and did not address the issue(s), a little lump of 'you-know-what' went into a sack: plop, plop, plop. After a while you're carrying around a big gunny sack full of 'you-know-what', and you say, "I'm leaving. I'm not going to be around that @#\$% anymore."

If only it happened that way...

Because when you leave, what you don't realize is that you drag that sack with you wherever you go next. Ever-hopeful that you've left all that 'you-know-what' behind, you go to the next place, the next relationship, the next job. "Hi, my name is Tom. I'd like to gather some data and share and clarify some expectations. Man, this is a great! This isn't anything like that other situation!" However, that sack is still connected to you. Then, one day, somebody in the new situation does something that ticks you off and that sack comes over your head and goes PLOP all over everybody in the room, and they think, "What the heck was *that* all about?!"

What happened was that all your unfinished business just got dumped on these new people, whether or not it was rightfully theirs—like the angry guy who goes home from work and kicks the dog.

STALEMATE

Let's say you don't want to leave the job or the relationship because it's got a good pension plan, or you've got kids or a family to think about. What are you going to do? There is another option. It's really almost a default option, because most people spend at least some time in its clutches. Instead of your energy going 'up and out' in an expression of upset, it's the path that goes 'down and in.' We call it Stalemate. That's where you don't have the energy any more to try to make it work, and you don't want to leave, so you end up resigned to the situation. You end up stuck in the middle of things.

A lot of marriages and partnerships hang out in this place. It's as if, like we said back in Virginia: "There's a light on the front porch, but there's nobody home." In that particular relationship everybody has given up. Nobody is trying anymore. They just hope to survive. This happens at workplaces as well.

RECONCILIATION UNDER DURESS

Fortunately, there's another option: go back up to the top, 'face the tiger', and talk about what is happening. We call it Reconciliation Under Duress. Since that option is so scary for many people, it usually only happens 'under duress', under pressure. Maybe the boss comes in and says, "Look, you two get

this figured out or else I'm going to figure it out for you." Or if it is a home situation, your partner says, "We are going to a counselor or I'm out of here." It is truly ironic that "Let's talk about what's happening" is often the last resort.

If you take this path back up to the top, you usually start by saying something like,

"You know, Agata, the very first time you did _____, I should have said something. I apologize; I have to take responsibility for not saying anything, but this is not working anymore. Can we talk about it?" Then they say, 'Yes' or 'No', and you go from there. What's happening is that *new data* is entering the system, which makes it possible to develop new (shared) expectations. "OK, I get it now! It doesn't work when I do _____. How do we need to change? Let's make a new agreement." You negotiate back and forth until you get a new sense of Role Clarity. As soon as you do, you create a new sense of Commitment to the relationship.

It is important to understand that when you bring up a Pinch you may *not* get what you *want*, but like the Rolling Stones song says, you may actually get what you *need*. Because what you need is a more accurate, more true relationship, based on what is *more real* for each of you. At least you are now clear about what is possible and are less likely to put energy into complaining or wishing it were different. All that energy that was spent going around and around avoiding can now be put into the relationship—or the work—again.

THE PINCH: A CHOICE POINT

So, the relationship 'works' once again.

Fantastic! What happens next?

Actually, it's another Pinch...

Is there *any* way to be in a real, dynamic, mutually-beneficial relationship at home or at work and *not* have Pinches? No. It's impossible. Why? Because: what is the likelihood that 100% of the time—forever—you are going to be able to give that other person exactly what they need at exactly the right time and in exactly the right way? Or that they will give you what you need when you need it 100% of the time? The chances are *zero*. Sooner or later a Pinch is going to occur. But a Pinch is not a bad thing...

‘YOU’VE GOT MAIL’

In fact, when the Pinch occurs, you ought to be grateful, even celebrate! Because a Pinch is telling you that there is something about your relationship that is out-of-date. There is something that needs to be made more real, more current. Think of the Pinch as a kind of ‘gift’, an early warning radar signal. Like the icon on your computer inbox that says, “You’ve got mail. There is something here you just might want to check out.”

That means when anyone walks up and says, “I’ve got a Pinch with you; can we talk about it?”, the first words out of your mouth should be, “Yes! Thank you!”

Can you see why? Because:

- they likely thought about it before approaching you
- it has taken some courage on their part to bring it up
- they are saying the relationship is important enough to risk the conversation

When you and the person with whom you’ve reached a Pinch or Crunch point recognize and address the issue, you have a chance to resolve it. You have become aware, as the old motor oil commercial put it, “You can either pay *now*, or pay *later*.” You can pay a relatively small amount to put in a new oil filter, or, down the road, you can put in a new engine, or maybe even have to buy a new car.

MAKING ‘PIT STOPS’

Race car drivers understand this principal. They know from practicing every day on the track what needs attention and they make ‘pit stops’ to address those issues. They know they have thousands of parts running really fast, really hard, and they *expect certain things to need attention*.

They don’t get mad at the car if a ‘warning light’ goes on. They simply pull into the pits to check it out. After all the practice runs they have taken, they know right where the hot spots are likely to be. They check it, fix what needs attention, and then v-r-o-o-m, back out on the track again. The saying on driving teams is: “The race is sometimes won, not on the track but in the pits!”

We, on the other hand, don't often realize that any important relationship requires attention ('Pit Stops')—as well as 'practice laps' where we anticipate issues and make a plan for how to address them. What do we do instead? We get in and we 'drive' our relationships round and round, really fast, under great pressure, never making pit stops, and then all of a sudden B-A-N-G! Things blow up, and we have to get another employee, friend or life partner.

Isn't that ridiculous? The Pinch Theory says you should *plan for Pinches*, applying the principle we call **Planned Reconciliation**. That means standing at the Pinch point or the Crunch point and saying, "Thanks for telling me about what's happening. Let's talk about it."

This is 'facing the tiger'.

TERMINATION AFTER RECONCILIATION: *LEAVING SAD BUT WISER*

When you face the 'tiger' and have the Pinch or Crunch conversation, you do not have to leave **Mad** and **Dumb**. You might decide—after truly seeing *your* role in what happened—that this relationship is just not going to work. Look at The Pinch Theory diagram: When the arrow goes up and off to the right, we call it **Termination after Reconciliation**. When you leave from this place, you leave **Sad** but **Wiser**.

'Reconciliation' comes to us from the Greek, *diallasso*, which means to be changed (*llasso*), through the center (*dia*), or you could say 'through the heart'. To be reconciled to another person means to allow yourself to be fundamentally changed, through your 'diameter', your 'center', your 'heart'. You could say that you are opening yourself to transformation.

It is possible to get to the point where you've changed (*diallasso'd*) so much that you think "I just can't *diallasso* anymore. I have tried my best and this is not going to work. I realize now how I got into this situation. I see my role in getting to this place that I don't like. I've learned some important things. The only path left is to go our separate ways."

In this case, you leave **Sad but Wiser**. This is not avoidance; this is wisdom at work here. Would you rather *hire* somebody—or start a *relationship* with somebody—that is coming off another relationship Mad-and-Dumb or Sad-but-Wiser?

Seen in this way, Pinches become opportunities to learn something crucial about yourself and enhance your capability to live and work with greater purpose, power, and peace, the primary objective of The Five Questions.

USE A THIRD PARTY

Any time you get to the Crunch, it helps to have what we call a Third Party in the conversation, someone who is a committed listener, who is neutral about the issues—and is a pretty good communicator. (Hopefully someone who has read this book!) It doesn't have to be a therapist or life coach or a consultant, although that would be best in truly adversarial situations, or where there is a lot of 'history'.

WHEN TO 'FACE THE TIGER'

Let's get real here... If you confronted *every* Pinch that happened to you, you'd have little time left for anything else! The Pinch Theory gives us some clues about how to discern which 'tigers' deserve to be faced and which do not. Obviously, a *Crunch* must be dealt with. When you're really upset about something, that's a good indicator of an issue that needs to be confronted.

Here are four questions I have found helping me choose when to face a 'tiger' among all the 'stuff' that happens every day:

- **How important is the *relationship*?** If the Pinch is with your life partner or someone you work or spend time with on a regular basis, consider facing even a relatively small issue. Think of the grain of sand in the shoe. If you're in a sprint lasting only a few seconds, a grain of sand is no big deal. If, however, you are running a marathon, that grain of sand is going to end up hurting you

a lot. (Trust me on this one.) Not only that, but the whole race is going to be about the grain of sand and nothing else. In an important relationship, the smallest issue deserves to be faced.

- **How important is the *issue*?** If the issue is, for instance, about my integrity, I will confront it with virtually *anyone*, regardless of the importance of our relationship. When one of my core values is called into question, or becomes an ingredient in a conflict, I feel compelled to deal with it, even if it's with someone I barely know. I ask myself, "What will be the impact of this Pinch on my personal integrity?"
- **What will happen if I don't bring it up? Can I live with the 'Pinch' if it keeps happening?** If, in fact, it is something I can live with without resentment, then I can let it slide. But the minute I become aware of even a little resentment, I need to bring it up—to keep it from moving into a Crunch.
- **What will be the impact on my confidence if I do not face it?** Many of us have had an early experience or two of failure in attempting to deal with a Pinch or a Crunch. Maybe the 'tiger' got us. We may have walked away having learned that 'facing a tiger' is not a good thing to do. Or, more significantly, avoiding can reinforce a core belief that we are not *able* to do it successfully. There is a great Zen saying: "If you think you *can't*, you *must*." As a swimmer at Roanoke College, I recall standing on the diving board one afternoon as my Coach, Frances Ramser, challenging me to practice again a dive I had just messed up big time. "Do I have to?" I asked, hopefully. "No", she said. "You can step down off the board now if you want, or even do another, easier, dive. But if you want to be a diver, yep, you've got to try that dive again. If you don't, you'll never have that dive. That dive will always *have you*."

Sometimes you need to 'face a tiger' just because
you need to re-discover that you can.



THE PRACTICE: NAMING THE 'TRIGGER'

In other words, what we call a 'trigger'. Write down a description of what they do that 'triggers' you.

- On a scale of 0 to 5 what is your current level of reluctance about facing this tiger?



TIGER CASE STUDY

And now take a look at your Tiger.

1. What **confronts** me? A situation/ problem I would like to see resolved:

- _____
- _____

2. What's the **cost** for me and/ or the system having the 'tiger'?

- _____
- _____

3. What have I **tried** so far to resolve the situation?

- _____
- _____

4. What would be **possible** if / when this situation is resolved?

- _____
- _____

5. Who else would **benefit** from my 'facing this tiger'?

- _____
- _____

Once you have this 'trigger' person or situation written down—or at least clear in your mind—you are ready to take on **Question #2: What Am I Bringing?**



QUESTION #2:

What am I BRINGING?

WHAT MAKES *THIS* A 'TIGER'?

When you have *named* your 'tiger', imagine turning and facing it. What would you be 'bringing' to the encounter? Your hopes, your fears (hope notes), your history—with this person or similar situations—your 'internal conversation' that has you hesitating to openly face what is happening. *In short, what is the 'story' currently alive in you that has the situation be a 'tiger' for you?*



Hopes

In your situation with this 'tiger', what are your hopes? What would you like to see happen in you and 'on the other side' of an encounter?

HOPES:



Fears

But what are you concerned *might* happen? What is the worst-case outcome that you fear?

FEARS:



Your History

What is your 'history' with 'tigers' in general? What do you typically do when facing a Pinch or Crunch? What is your history with *this specific 'tiger'*? What has been your default 'strategy' for dealing with it? How is that working?

HISTORY (with this or similar situations):

YOUR INTERNAL TIGER-FACING 'CONVERSATION'

Considering your history, hopes and fears, what is the accumulated result in your mind? What do you 'say to yourself' when thinking about this 'tiger'? What is the internal conversation, the worst-case scenario, that makes you hesitant to face it?

My default internal 'conversation' that makes me hesitant:

('If I _____, then they might _____
and then _____
_____ might happen!')

For instance, in my case, here is an example: "**If I** tell a work colleague that I have some feedback about what I see as his role in a recent conflict, **then they might** say 'I don't have a role in that conflict. What happened is all your fault' **and then** I would carry the 'unfinished business' without resolution, leading me to avoid him, resulting in a strained or more distant relationship."

This is the moment to clarify what is *your* Internal Conversation about facing your tiger?

TAKING IT FURTHER

Let's look a little deeper at what is happening *inside* and *between* you and your 'tiger' whenever you interact...

In your 'tiger' situation, what is *really* happening?

Here is a scene from a typical workplace interaction between a boss and a team member. Immediately after you read it, I am inviting you to jot down as many words as you can to describe the two characters. It actually is important for you to have a few words for each character, as those words will be used to help you discover something important in facing *your* 'tiger'.

THE SCENE

'Daniel', a manager, is sitting behind his desk, looking at his watch every few seconds, then looking at the clock on the wall. At that point, **'Anna'**, one of his Team Members, walks up to him out of breath, and puts a report on Daniel's desk, saying, "I did the Weekly Report as fast as I could, boss, but Marketing—as usual—didn't get their input to me until just a few hours ago..."

[It is important to know that Anna and her team have not been able to get the weekly report to Daniel on time since the task was assigned five weeks ago.]

The dialogue continues:

Daniel: "That's a bunch of garbage, Anna! Marketing *never* had a problem getting their stuff to us before *you* took over the team! Maybe we need to look at your readiness for this new role I put you in."

Anna: "Boss, I am so sorry... I am trying as hard as I can... But I get the impression that Greg over in Marketing, the guy who is supposed to be giving us that input, has a 'thing' about me being a woman at the same level on the org chart. He has told me several times, 'That job of yours needs to go to somebody who can take the heat!' I can take the heat, boss, but I need you to support me."

Daniel: "That's just making excuses, Anna. The pressure is building... You need to show me, Greg, and even the President that you are the right person for this job!"



Now, as you look at his interaction, how would you describe these two characters?

Daniel

Anna

Now, step back and look at this interaction between Daniel and Anna from a distance, as a pure observer:

WHERE did all those words you wrote down happen?

Some would say, "In Daniel's office at his desk."

Or, "Inside Daniel and Anna."

But actually... No...

**whatever you wrote down
happened
in *YOUR*
mind!**

How do we know this? Because, what if another person observed that interaction, and used very *different* words to describe what they saw?

If we had a video of that scene in real time, and I said "Stop when we get to the part when Daniel is ANGRY", and you said, "Stop! Right there, that part when he said, 'That's a bunch of garbage, Anna! Marketing never had a problem getting their stuff to us before YOU took over the team! Maybe we need to look at your readiness for this new role I put you in!' *That's* Daniel being ANGRY for sure!"

But if another person, looking at the *same* piece of video said, "No! Right there in that same sentence, Daniel is not ANGRY, he is clearly SCARED or TERRIFIED that *he* might be in trouble because of Anna's issues."

Or, concerning Anna, maybe you said, "She's APOLOGETIC or WEAK", but someone else said, "Not at all! She is clearly FRUSTRATED and DETERMINED."

What is going on here?! What really happened when Daniel and Anna interacted?

Right now you might be quite certain about what you *think* occurred. But when you are open to the possibility that another person might 'see' the characters and their interaction in a different way, an important life principle gets revealed. We call it 'The Three Worlds'.

THE THREE WORLDS: BRIDGING THE INTERPERSONAL GAP⁴

In every interaction, there are things ‘going on’ in *three* distinct, important, real and equally-valid *locations*:

- In THEIR World
- In MY World
- In THE World (‘Just the facts’; what you would see on a video recording)

“Take a look at those o two videos about **The Three Worlds**”

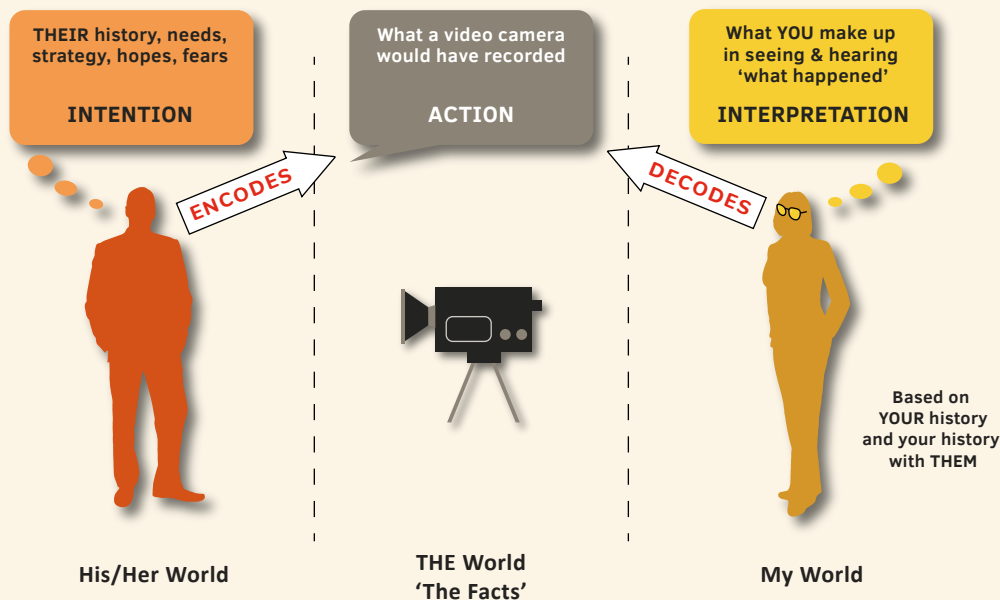


Part I: Bridging the Interpersonal Gap



Part II: ‘What happened at the door?’

⁴ Adapted and modified from John Wallen’s pioneering “Interpersonal Gap” Theory (1969).



THEIR WORLD OF ENCODING THEIR INTENTION

It starts on the left, with the INTENTION(s) of the person initiating an interaction.

Their Intentions are *internal* to them and, unless they speak about them, unknown to you. Their World is made up of all the conscious and unconscious history, hopes, fears and intentions that moved them to say or do something, which turns into visible ACTION.

'MY WORLD' OF DECODING WHAT IT MEANS

My World is what I 'saw and heard', filtered through *my* history, hopes, fears and intentions that result in an INTERPRETATION happening in me. It's how what happened 'showed up' for me. You could even say it is what I 'made up' about what happened! Because what I 'see' is a result of raw, un-interpreted life coming to me *through my own 'glasses'*.

My Interpretations are, at least initially, also unknown to the other person—and sometimes unknown even to myself.

THE WORLD OF ACTION (BEHAVIOR)

ACTION is a product of someone turning an INTENTION into words, behavior, tone of voice, etc. It is what occurred in 'the real world' that could be seen and heard on a video.

Because there is such ambiguity and difference in each person's 'world' of interpretation, *actions have no standard, set, single meaning*. The same action can have an infinite number of meanings to different people, depending on the interpretation that comes to them.

WHAT HAPPENS IN OUR WORLD

Where does the INTERPRETATION of what someone says or does to us come from? It comes from how we 'name it'. Until we perceive what happens, it is just raw data, meaningless sensory input. But in the act of perceiving something, *we give meaning to it*. We know ('name') what it 'is'.

This leads me to the Biblical creation story in Genesis 2:19 (I will translate loosely from the original language) – Adam is walking around the Garden of Eden and says to the Creator, "What is all this stuff?!" And the Creator says, "You name it, Adam, and whatever you name it, that's what it will be." And Adam named all the things he saw around him, *and that's what they became*.

My question is, *What was all that stuff before Adam named it?* Some people say 'stuff'? My answer, which is only partly facetious, is "God only knows..." Apparently, from the story, it wasn't *anything* until Adam named it, and *when he named it, that's what it became*.

You name something or someone a 'tiger' and that's what it becomes: a 'tiger'.

An example closer to home: Let's say you live or work with someone who leaves things lying around. What does this mean? Here are some possible Interpretations:

- "They're a 'slob'."

- “They’re an artist and they see the area as their studio.”
- “They are so creative! Look at how little it matters to them what things look like when they are done bringing something new into the world.”
- “They have so many things going on that are much more important than keeping a place neat.”
- “Man, I sure have a hang-up about neatness! They’re such a good teacher for me!”

What does it mean that you live or work with someone who leaves things lying around?

Here’s what it means: *it means you live or work with someone who leaves things lying around.* Everything else is Interpretation.

That’s it—until you name it, until the ‘program’ that has shaped your ‘glasses,’ tells you what it ‘is’ and what it means. In the nanosecond that the Action/Behavior occurs, it doesn’t yet have any meaning and therefore has not had a chance to have an effect on us. Yet.

Until we come up with our interpretation, the one we unconsciously ‘chose,’ *all* meanings or interpretations are possible. *Our* interpretation closes down all *other* interpretations. This happens so fast and so automatically that we believe that we saw or heard ‘what really happened,’ rather than realizing that we were actively involved—albeit unconsciously—in *creating that meaning*.

It is like what happens in Quantum Mechanics: until we ‘locate’ the particle, it theoretically exists anywhere—or everywhere. The instant we ‘locate’ it, there occurs something called ‘a collapse of the wave function’ and all the other possible locations for the particle disappear. The instant we ‘name’ something and ‘know what it IS,’ all other interpretations or meanings or explanations virtually ‘disappear’.

That is until and unless we understand The Three Worlds and become curious about other potential interpretations...

Because of this unavoidable aspect of reality, communication can be seen as two sets of cartoon-like ‘bubbles’ interacting with one another. The other person’s Action or behavior is an encoded expression of their Intention (Bubble), and my Interpretation (Decoding) is the reality I made up and believe is real (My bubble). You might say the most basic and recurring problem in any relationship is the difference, or ‘Gap’ as John Wallen described it, between someone’s *intentions* and their *impact* on others. Becoming aware of these ‘worlds’ and learning to accept and explore them out loud is the first step toward ‘bridging the Interpersonal Gap.’ In that process, you can become someone people

will want to talk to and listen to—someone who is becoming wiser at work, in part because you are interested in discovering *exactly* what *was* going on in your tiger's behavior.

You may think you are seeing 'what is really out there' and are in charge of your life and your decisions. But unless you have done some long and significant inner work on yourself, that is highly unlikely. What if I told you that your life is being run by something—or someone—inside you that is basing decisions on what may have been true a long time ago, but now might not be necessary—and possibly not serving you in every situation? Let me spell this thought out further.

You and I live a lot of our life 'on automatic' and don't realize it.

A few common examples:

- The next time you get dressed, notice how you put on your shoes and socks, how you brush your hair, how you put on your pants or slacks. The other day I did and was struck by how automatic it was. Even the choice of which clothes to wear are made within a relatively narrow band of what is actually available. Instead, we find ourselves looking for what would be appropriate or attractive or 'not crazy' or 'what's me/not me.' There are millions of clothing options out there that you never even consider, unconsciously staying inside what is familiar or 'right' for you.
- How many times have you gotten in your car, driven somewhere and, on arriving, realized that you can't remember much at all about the trip? During the drive you were making lots of decisions—turn here, shift gears here, put your signal on here, go slower here; but they weren't actually conscious decisions, where you *thought about* what you were going to do and then did it. The actions you took were a result of habitual patterns that have by now taken on an automatic quality.
- When was the last time you were interacting with someone you have difficulty getting along with and they said something that 'set you off'? If you look at your response, you may realize how predictable it was—how automatic. When someone says or does X, you have virtually the same reaction every time: You think, feel and do some variation of Y.

So, while you may *think* you're walking around freely making decisions all day long, you don't realize how much of what you say and do every day is 'more of the same.' There may be some variation,

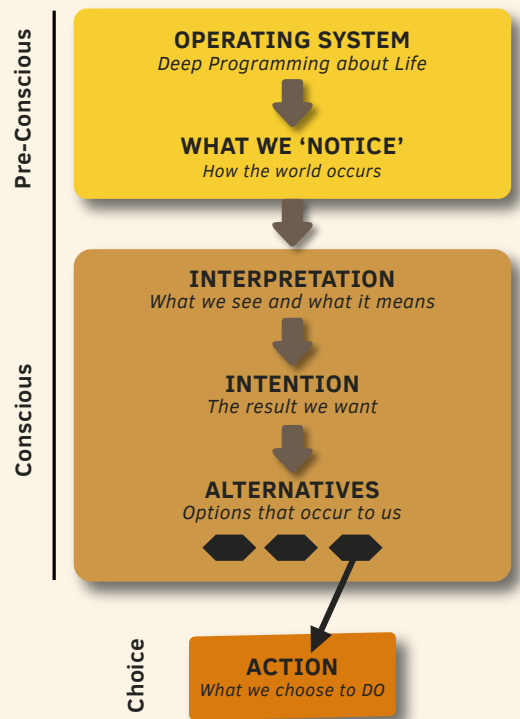
but it is almost always variation within pre-set limits, like driving faster or slower in first gear. You know how it is with a loved one or work partner: One of you says something and off you go into a predictable pattern of interactions that can go all night, all weekend—or for the rest of your lives together! You may think you’re doing things differently, but it is change within the same paradigm.

What makes this so important is that most of us:

- don’t realize that we are, in fact, operating inside old, likely out-of-date paradigms,
- can’t see how that limits our options and, therefore,
- *rarely* experience truly ‘fresh’ moments, resulting in
- an inability to create transformation in our lives.

THE 'FUNNEL': YOUR DECISION-MAKING, ACTION-TAKING PROCESS

WHY YOU DO WHAT YOU DO—AND SOMETIMES
DON'T DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO





'The Funnel' video

Let's start at the bottom and work our way 'up'...

ACTION

It starts with you, facing a situation (like your 'tiger') and making a choice about what to DO. It is a choice, selected from a set of:

ALTERNATIVES

These are the options that occur to you as you face a situation (like your 'tiger'). Intuitively you know these alternatives are not the *only* ways someone could response to that kind of situation, but these are the ones that occur to you in the moment, or even after some thought. But these alternatives are shaped by what is behind them:

INTENTION (OUTCOME)

What is the intention you are bringing to the encounter with the situation ('tiger')? What outcome are you hoping will happen? If the action you have selected actually 'works', what would be the result? But there is something behind your Intention and the outcome it represents, which is based on how you have 'seen' something.

INTERPRETATION (MEANING)

When you look out at the world your mind instantly ‘knows what it is’. But this is your analysis of what you are seeing and the meaning that flows from your analysis. “I am seeing X which means Y and in the face of *that*, I feel or intend Z.” But all of this flows from:

WHAT I NOTICE

If a *carpet expert* walked into the room where you are, what would they notice without even thinking about it? In a matter of seconds, they could probably tell you the square footage of the room, the thread-count of the carpet, its cost, age, durability, and whether the colors ‘work’ or not. They notice the carpet because of what they ‘bring’ to the experience.

But if an *electrician* walked in right behind the carpet expert—again without any conscious thinking—what would they notice? Probably how many outlets there are on the walls, where they are placed, the sufficiency and location of the lighting system, etc. What might they miss completely? The carpet! As a result of what they bring, the electrician will see things that are important to them and miss other important things. Just like a carpet expert will see and miss what they see and miss. Each walks in with a different set of eyes, history, training, experience, expectations, and sense of what is important, which virtually *determines* the shape and make-up of the ‘world’ available to them. (And isn’t that an interesting double entendre of the phrase ‘make-up’?!)

Like the carpet expert or the electrician, you notice what you notice—and do *not* notice what you do not notice. (I thank my friend and colleague, Ted Buffington, for the powerful phrase: **“Notice what you notice.”**)

A HARD MAN TO WORK FOR



Here is an example, taken from a Washington, DC, organizational setting. As part of an executive team development session for a client a few years ago, I spoke with the CEO about the findings from data-gathering interviews I had done with his vice presidents. Among the feedback items was the comment from most of them that the boss was a 'hard man to work for.' They said he rarely gave people positive feedback, almost always finding something to criticize. This led his people to avoid him, some with gut-wrenching fear that dominated their time at work.

He was stunned. "They're the best people around," he said. "If that changes, I'll fire them!" He caught what he had said, gave a rueful chuckle and said, "OK, I got that! What should I do about it, John?" I suggested that, at the team development offsite the next day, he should look for opportunities to 'catch someone doing something right,' as Ken Blanchard says. "When you do", I went on, "tell them right away—authentically—what you saw that you appreciate." He allowed as how that was going to be a challenge, but, with some encouragement and coaching, he said he'd give it a shot.

The next day, as we worked our way down the agenda, I noticed that Sue the marketing VP, was starting to act nervous. "What's going on?" I asked her quietly at a break. "Well, when the VPs met yesterday to decide who would bring up each agenda item, no one wanted to do the 'Feedback to Fred' piece, so we drew straws. And I lost. I'm expecting to get fired..." I encouraged her, said Fred had been coached to be more open, and that she should expect something different from him. Disbelieving, she went back in the room, and later in the afternoon, it was time for her report.

"Fred, I have to tell you that I drew the short straw on this one!" Nervous laughter around the room as the two people on either side of her tried to surreptitiously slide their chairs farther away from Sue. The danger: 'Organizational Lightning,' as some readers will recognize...

"I have learned more from you about this field in the five years I have worked for you than I could even imagine. But I have to tell you that for the past 18 months I have felt like quitting."

"Why is that?" Fred asked, genuinely curious.

"Well, for one thing, you never tell me if I've done a good job. Instead, you stick your head in the cubby and say things like, 'Those figures on page 38 don't add up to 100%,' or 'Where's that report I asked you for last Friday?' I can't take any longer not knowing what, if anything, you value about me or my work."

The whole room held its breath as Fred gathered himself to respond. I formed a short prayer, something along the lines of, "Please, Fred, do the right thing here!"

"Sue, first of all, thanks for telling me this. I don't like hearing it, but I think you are on to something about me. I have had a problem ever since I was a kid giving compliments to people. I think it's because I didn't want them to think of me as being phony... And I also want you to know how much courage it took to say that to me and how much I appreciate you for that." (You could have heard a pin drop in that room.)

Then, without a nano-second of time passing, Sue blurted, "*And another thing is...*"

The room erupted and Sue said, "What?! What is everyone so excited about?"

Before anyone could speak, I said, "Sue, before someone responds to your question, would you be willing to tell Fred what you heard him say?"

"OK..." she began hesitantly... "He said had a lot of problems as a kid growing up and was phony some of the time..." L-o-n-g pause... A really long pause. When it became apparent that she had finished paraphrasing Fred, I invited the group to respond to her question ("What is everyone so excited about?")

"Sue!" one of the other VPs began, "Fred did what you say he never does: he gave you a compliment! He said he appreciated your courage in standing up and telling him all that!"

"No he didn't," she said with quiet certainty. "*He would never say that!*"

See how she missed it? When Fred did something that did not exist as a possibility in Sue's world, *she couldn't see it*. When Fred did, in fact, do something that was not possible in her worldview, she *had* to miss it. Otherwise, she would have had to revise her entire belief system and, even more difficult, let go of the deep programming from her Operating System on which those unconscious beliefs rested. "He would never say that!"

She could have passed a lie detector test on it; that's how deep was her certainty about what Fred did—and did not do.

It took almost an hour and several colleagues working with Sue for her to even open to the possibility that Fred had in fact expressed appreciation to her— and meant it. As I recall, that conversation was the beginning of a new level of respect and appreciation between them both.

YOUR 'OPERATING SYSTEM' OR LIVING ON AUTOMATIC'

OPERATING SYSTEM: SUMMARY

Maybe now you can see that when you wake up in the morning and 'boot up' (turn on your conscious mind), what comes on-line first is your own personal Operating System, the automatic, habitual, unconscious, default way you navigate your way through your day/life.

At the human level your Operating System functions as a kind of 'Autopilot', influencing jobs you take on, the people you are drawn to, the clothes you wear, the body you develop, and all the thoughts and judgments you have about yourself, others and life. It is nearly impossible to think *about* your Operating System because you think *from* it. Your Operating System is not made up of thoughts; it *generates* your thoughts.

At this point, you may have an internal argument taking place: "I am not on automatic! I am not a robot. I have free will. I do what I want. I make my own choices about things. Nobody tells me how to dress or what job to take."

Would that it were so...

It is true that our minds make what appear to be freely-chosen decisions all the time. But what we fail to understand is that the range of options we have available to us from which we choose, is severely limited in ways we are not usually aware of. We all walk around inside—you could even say 'trapped in'—a 'learned' view of reality, our 'Operating System' in the diagram above.

One more implication, you can't see (or hear) anything that doesn't already exist in your Operating System. This is the early programming you (and each of us) received when we were little and were learning about ourselves, other people and life. This Operating System 'ground the lenses' of our 'eyeglasses' through which we look out at what is in front of us. It's a strange thought that we are actually only seeing (or hearing) things that can be traced back to our own history. But how could it be any other way?

Our Operating System is pre-conscious, automatic, out-of-our-direct-control, and is 'on' every second, *creating* what we see, feel, think, intend and do.

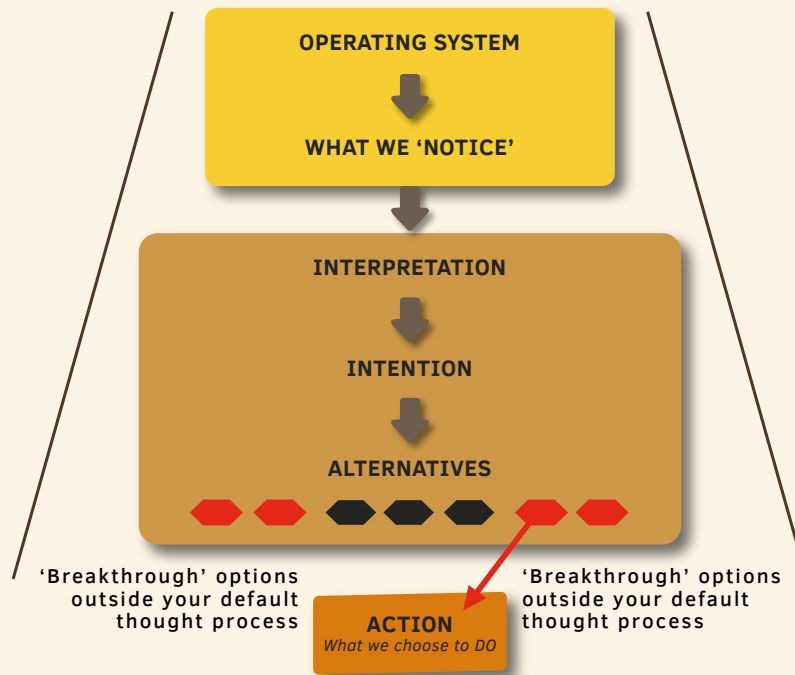
Each 'step' in this virtually instantaneous process of 'seeing' and thinking about that serves to *narrow down* or even *determine* the possibilities present in the next step. By the time we get to considering Alternatives and choosing an Action, there are literally millions of options that never even occur to us, given the 'trip' we just made down what I call 'The Diagnostic Funnel'.

When 'facing a tiger', if you want something *different* to happen, more-of-the-same is not going to get you there. What you need access to lies just outside your familiar or default options. The Five Questions represent an invitation and a process that expands those alternatives, reaching out and 'stretching' into fresh and undiscovered ways of seeing both your situation and some temporarily-unfamiliar possibilities regarding what to *do*.

Remember the Uke, your 'partner-in-development', from Aikido? The reason 'tigers' are so necessary to your growth is that they present you with an experience where your default responses have not been working, where you HAVE TO 'raise your game'. As long as everything is going great, you can stay safe in your 'comfort zone'. By approaching your interactions with 'tigers' as challenging encounters with an Uke, you can begin to develop yourself, exploring new options, expanding and deepening who you are and maximizing your contribution to Life.

When this expansion occurs, here is what happens to your 'Funnel'...

EXPANDING YOUR OPTIONS



At that point, you are able to 'see' and choose an Alternative that before was beyond your awareness or outside your comfort zone. The process of self-development at the deepest level begins with becoming aware of—and embracing—your Operating System, which is the source of your 'world': what you see, what you think, what you feel and, ultimately, what you DO. Only then can you begin to re-program your fundamental principles.

This 'Funnel' also shows clearly *my* mission in writing this book: to expand our ability to see and hear what is really 'out there', and, in that process, expand the options that are 'in here' when 'facing' not just 'tigers', but *any* moment of life.

Getting clear about what you 'bring' prepares you to take a long, hard look at how you have been 'on automatic' without realizing it. You may be surprised at what you are about to discover as you take on **Question #3: What's Been Running Me?**



QUESTION #3:

What's been **RUNNING** me?

MY 'SOMEBODY TRAINING'

If you are alive, you have an Operating System which manages an Autopilot that was programmed very early in your young life with instructions on who to be, what to do—and *not* do—what the goal in life is, and how to get there. Actually, instead of saying that you have an Operating System, it would be more accurate to say that—unless you have been doing some of the inner developmental work described here—your Operating system *has you*.

As former Harvard Professor and spiritual development coach, Ram Dass, put it, “The moment we emerged from the womb, we were enrolled in ‘Somebody Training’. As a little one lying in the crib, we were all born into a virtual ‘classroom’, being taught by the other ‘Somebodies’ around us to ‘be Somebody.’”

More than likely your Somebody Training ‘*Faculty*’ didn’t realize what they were doing. They were just loving you the best they could—which might have been a lot—and trying to ‘raise you right’. Everything they said and did around you became part of your Somebody Training ‘*Curriculum*’. Even in situations where the classroom was not so affirming, or where your Faculty were a negative example, you were still involved in ‘Somebody Training’.

Comedian Lily Tomlin used to say, “I always wanted to be somebody. Now I realize I should have been more specific.” Your Somebody Training was, in fact, *very* specific. You were not in training to be just *any* Somebody. You were learning to be a particular kind of Somebody—the kind of Somebody that your Faculty believed would have a chance to make it in the world. Just as parents in every species of animals on the planet do what they can to prepare their offspring to survive, your parents and other ‘Adjunct Faculty’ did what they could to equip you for life as they believed it to be. In interacting with all of these people, you ‘figured it out’, coming to some conclusions, about yourself, others and Life.

LETTERS FROM MOM: HARD EVIDENCE OF MY SOMEBODY TRAINING



A few years ago, out of the blue, I received a package of old letters and photos from my cousin, Elizabeth, who had discovered them while going through her mother's things (my Aunt Betty) after her death. As I read the letters, written to me and to my grandfather by my own mother when I was a child, I was stunned and then moved to tears by what I saw and heard in them. It dawned on me that what I was actually looking at was the outline of the Curriculum from my Somebody Training, embedded in the letters!

First, some background. When they were written, I was almost two years old. My father—already a full-blown alcoholic—had taken a job as a newspaperman with The Washington Post in Washington, DC, and my mother had gone with him, working as a secretary for the Navy Department. I was left in Richmond, Virginia, three hours away, to live with my grandfather (a Lutheran minister), my grandmother, various aunts and uncles, Annabelle (an African American maid), and Sister Ruth (a Lutheran Deaconess/Nun).

All these people loved me dearly. As the Scherer namesake—I am John Jacob Scherer IV—and the 'apple of their eye', I received a lot of attention and affection from them all. But, in retrospect, the painful fact was that Mom and Pop were not there for me, coming down from DC to visit me every two or three weeks, leaving a crying little boy to find his way with everyone else.

Listen to these two (unedited) letters from my mother, one to me and one to my grandfather, and see if you can detect aspects of the 'curriculum' that became a central part of little Johnny Scherer's Somebody Training...

1322 L Street NW
Washington, D.C.

April 6, 1942

Dear Son:

It was too bad that I had to leave when you were so upset and mad at your mother. I had hoped that you would be asleep by the time my bus left, but you seemed to sense the fact that I was going to leave last night and couldn't go to sleep. If you think you missed me this morning, you really ought to have seen your mother looking around for her little man when she first woke up and then remembering that it would be about two weeks before she could see him again! 'Fa-voo' asked me about you and I was so upset that I told him about our last little contretemps.

Sometimes when I think it over, it seems best that I don't come down there and get you all upset, because the emotional excitement is not good for you. It is entirely selfishness that prompts me to visit you, little man. You would be a lot better off if I didn't do it. But I do hope you can bear up under it and not let it worry you too much. Try not to give them too much trouble over it.

Please thank the folks for such a nice Easter and for taking such grand care of you for me. Pretty soon now I should be able to repay them in some measure. Tomorrow I'm going to buy you some little suits for the warm weather and a shift or two. You are popping out of everything else.

Give our love to all the folks, and tell Grandpa to save a day sometime for that fishing trip. Pop and I would both like to go the first chance we get. Be good and take care of things.

Bons baisers,

Mother

(Fluent in French, Mom often closed her letters to me with that phrase, which means something like 'good kisses.')

MY SOMEBODY TRAINING CURRICULUM

What did *you* see?

Here are the embedded messages from my Somebody Training that I recognize in this letter, based on what I read in them today:

It was too bad that I had to leave when you were so upset and mad at your mother. I had hoped that you would be asleep by the time my bus left, but you seemed to sense the fact that I was going to leave last night and couldn't go to sleep.

Embedded Somebody Training Message: Don't get upset or angry—even about something as painful as my mother leaving and not coming back for two weeks. Getting upset is bad.

If you think you missed me this morning, you really ought to have seen your mother looking around for her little man when she first woke up and then remembering that it would be about two weeks before she could see him again! 'Fa-voo' asked me about you and I was so upset that I told him about our last little contretemps.

Embedded Message: It's *my* fault that my mom misses me, as is the fact that when I get upset I cause '*contretemps*' (French for argument or conflict).

Sometimes when I think it over, it seems best that I don't come down there and get you all upset, because the emotional excitement is not good for you.

Embedded Message: Emotional excitement is a bad thing, and something to be avoided. Wanting something, like having my mom there with me, will result in people being less inclined to do the thing I yearn for. Don't yearn for anything; you won't get it anyway.

It is entirely selfishness that prompts me to visit you, little man. You would be a lot better off if I didn't do it. But I do hope you can bear up under it and not let it worry you too much. Try not to give them too much trouble over it.

Embedded Message: Mom loves me, but what I feel (e.g. the worry in my heart) is not good for me—or for those around me. I can't trust my feelings. Don't let my feelings be a problem for those around me. Keep my emotions under control at all times.

Please thank the folks for such a nice Easter and for taking such grand care of you for me. Pretty soon now I should be able to repay them in some measure. Tomorrow I'm going to buy you some little suits for the warm weather and a shift or two. You are popping out of everything else.

Embedded Message: This is a BIG ONE: Being where I am (in Richmond with my grandparents) apparently creates a *debt* of some kind which my Mom will have to repay someday—but probably won't be able to. ***My presence is a burden and creates a debt that needs to be repaid.*** I will need to add value everywhere I am and 'sing for my supper' in a probably-forlorn attempt to 'balance the books'.

Give our love to all the folks, and tell Grandpa to save a day sometime for that fishing trip. Pop and I would both like to go the first chance we get. Be good and take care of things.

Embedded Message: I am responsible for 'taking care of things'—even though I am only 18 months old! Wow...

See how this early Somebody Training programming works? Those messages from my mother came from a 100% loving *intention*. She had no desire to embed teachings in her letters that would create life challenges for her only child years down the road, but she did—and they did. But remember... This it's not a *bad* thing she was doing; it was a *human* thing.

Here is another example from a letter my mother sent two days later to my grandfather, whose affectionate nickname was ‘Judge’ to his close friends and family. Even though this letter—and others like it, I’m sure—never got read to me, they were reflective of the ‘energy field’ inside which I was being raised. It reveals the psychological/emotional ‘music’ playing in the background of the family circle that my Faculty resonated with.

1322 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
April 8, 1942

Dear Judge:

How is my little man behaving himself these days? I do hope he was not too much trouble to handle yesterday and that someone is going to try to curb that temper of his.

Somebody Training Message: Don’t let Johnny be trouble for people. Make sure he is easy to get along with. Don’t allow him to have and express ‘negative’ feelings.

It was most reassuring to me to see you use a firm voice and expression with him the other night. Really, Judge, it will be a kindness to him in the long run to let him understand that the world was not made for him and that people are not just hanging on his every word and ready to give him everything he wants, or thinks he wants.

Somebody Training Message: The world is *not* going to respond to my needs. What I want is not important—and not going to happen, so I need to learn not to want anything and to ‘make do’ with whatever I have.

He must not get a distorted view of the world and people. It might ruin him permanently to find out some time later that we were all wrong, that there are other people, that he must share things, that he must work for things and that things do not always work out as we think they should. You ought to be able to tell him that God has plans for us other than the ones we figure out.

Somebody Training Messages: My natural view of the way things are is not valid. For instance, I must *earn* everything that comes to me. I need to see that there is no ‘free lunch’. (‘Singing for my supper’ returns...)

Give our love to all the folks. Take care of yourself, Judge. Kiss my boy.

Boone

Aren’t these letters amazing and precious things to have?! (Thank you, Elizabeth!)

These letters are a literary and literal ‘Time Capsule’. It’s as if I am able to listen in on my mother’s heart all those years ago as she tried to be the best mom she could be, given the circumstances—and her *own* Somebody Training. I want the reader to understand clearly that I loved my mom a great deal and, since her death at our home in 1991, I love her even more, as I have discovered and explored the world of *her* Somebody Training. From this perspective, I now see how her love and concern for me got translated into life ‘lessons’, which ironically and inevitably coupled a positive intention with unintended impacts.

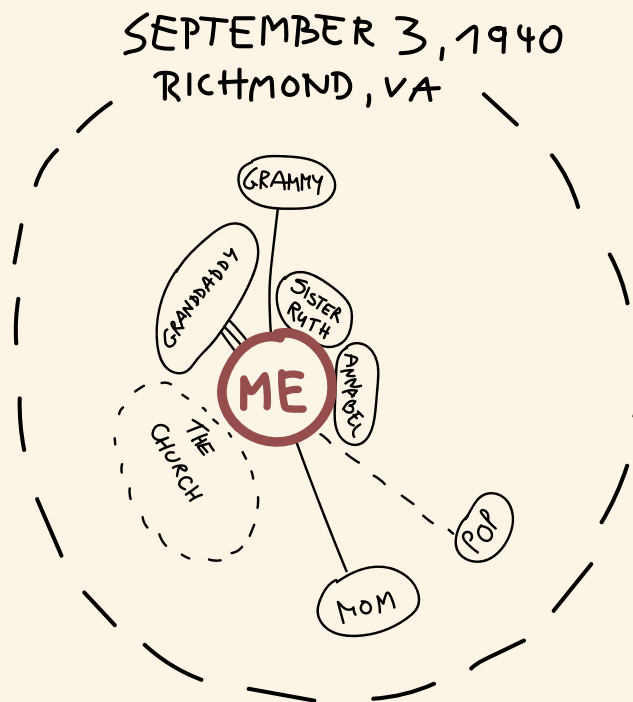
Your parents and other family members did something like this with *you*. In their ‘classroom’ you learned about yourself, other people, and life. The lessons went deep, living invisibly in your bones. So here you are, years later, still being run, some—or most—of the time, by this early ‘programming’.

HOW TO EXPLORE AND UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN *SOMEBODY* TRAINING MAP



John on 'Drawing Your Somebody Training Map'

MY "SOMEBODY TRAINING" MAP



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN...

To create your own Somebody Training Map, think back to your first 5 or 6 years:

- Who were the most important people around you? (Your 'Faculty'.)
- Imagine each of them as a *circle*. The larger the circle for each person, the more emotionally significant they were to you at that time. Also, the closer their circle, the more contact you had with them. (Circle size = significance. Distance = frequency of interaction.)
- WHEN and WHERE you were born created an important 'meta-context' for your Somebody Training because it affected *everyone* in that time and place—even your Faculty. For instance, in my case: I was born in 1940, in Richmond, Virginia, the segregated South in the USA. In Central/Eastern Europe, people born in large cities or small towns (or who immigrated) and were either before or after 'The Wall came down', etc. So imagine a large circle around *everything* on your Map and name it with your date of birth and where most of your Somebody Training happened.

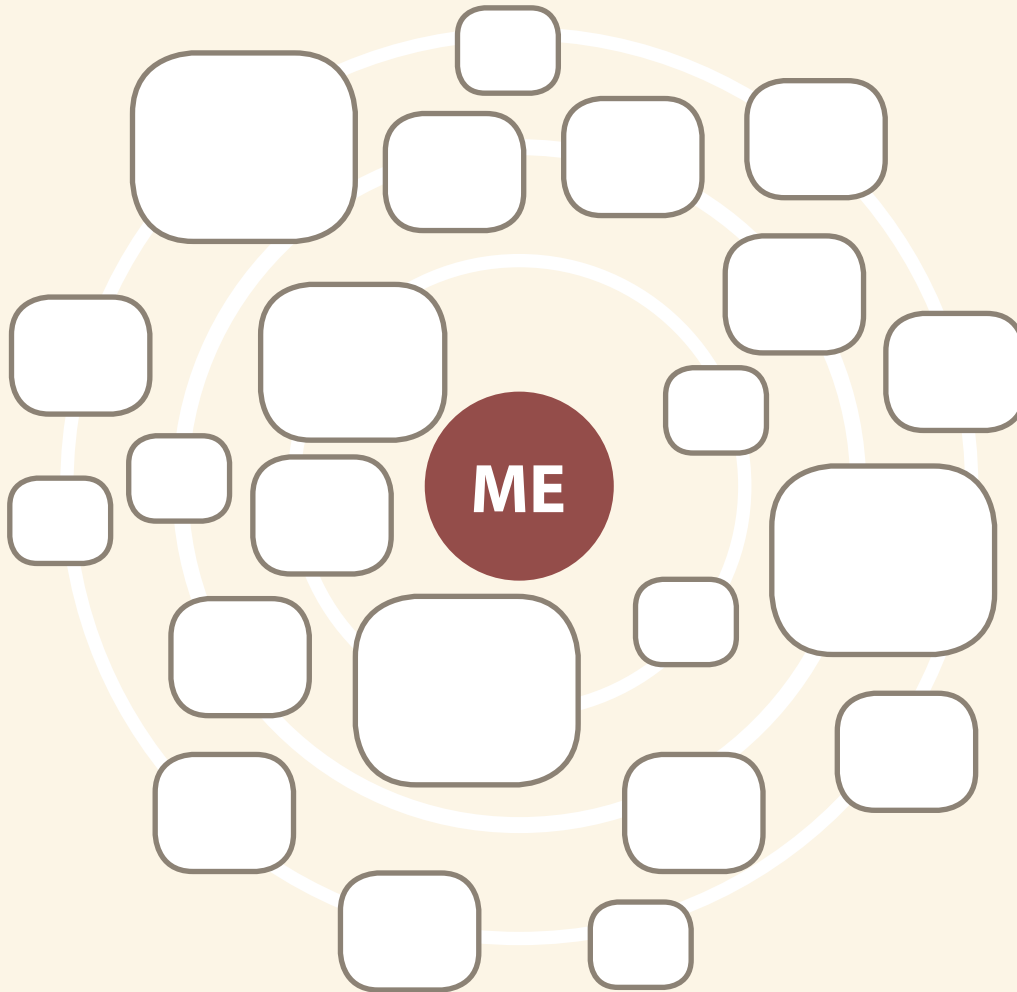


Draw your own Somebody Training Map...

MY 'SOMEBODY TRAINING' MAP

Larger the square = more impact/importance

Closer = more interactions



MY 'SOMEBODY TRAINING' MAP

WHAT I 'FIGURED OUT'

ALWAYS:



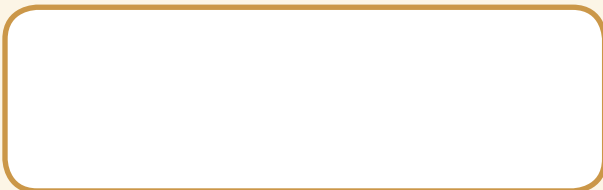
NEVER:



SO THAT:



**FAMILIAR CONCLUSIONS AND FEELINGS
FROM THAT TIME:**



MY 'SOLUTIONS' OR 'STRATEGY':



Everyone's Somebody Training contained an upside and a downside.

THE *DOWNSIDE(S)* OF OUR SOMEBODY TRAINING

At the time we received our Somebody Training it was intended for the good. Like every mammalian species, the older generation passed on what they believed were the necessary skills and patterns for surviving in the world. And it has worked pretty well. I mean, look where you are now! You have gotten to this point in your life partly by continuing to follow that early guidance.

As you will see, the downside is not in the *advice* you received, it's in *having to follow that advice*—even when it doesn't make sense. When you were little, that advice was potentially life-saving, like, “Don't talk to strangers!” Even though you are older now, you might still find yourself having difficulty speaking to groups or to people you don't know. As a verse in one of the Lutheran hymns I remember from my childhood puts it: “Time makes ancient good uncouth.” We need to grow up and develop the courage to apply the *principles* we learned in new ways to create ‘new truth’ and new ‘good’. But it can be hard.

Here are a few I am still working on:

- **Making Requests.** As a Combat and Deck Officer aboard our US Navy destroyer, I had no trouble giving orders with clarity and authority when required: “Right full rudder! All ahead Two Thirds!” But getting people to do what I want them to do has sometimes been surprisingly hard over the years, even a request as simple as: “Magda, I need you to get this report out to our clients by 4:00 pm today. I don't care what it takes!” Even more challenging, personally: “Could I have a hug?” I now find it a lot easier to ask for what I want, but occasionally the old internal ‘tape’ still whispers, “Johnny, you're going to be disappointed... Remember, if you are too forceful going for what *you* want, you could make life hard for other people—and that's a big No-No.”
- **Emotions.** If you were to ask me how I *felt* about something, I would probably say, “Let me *think* about it for a minute.” I am almost always able to locate what I am feeling and report it out—or express it—but I seem to be using my mind as a ‘search engine’ and a ‘handle’ for

dealing with the emotion that eventually reveals itself. It works, but I envy the people who experience their feelings more often.

- **Intimacy.** I thought I would be married to the same person for 50 years, have 2.5 children, a Ford station wagon, and a brick home in Virginia. That is how the script was written, but not how the ‘play’ unfolded. I have been married three times, each time to an amazing and wonderful woman. When my older son got married a few years ago, all three of them were there, clustered in conversation like sorority sisters. Each of them would probably tell you that I was sometimes hard to love, partly because of my tendency to ‘leave,’ to not be present when I was actually there, and also because of how challenging it was for me to confront or express strong negative emotions. I still sometimes freeze like a deer in the headlights at the first sign that someone I care about is upset at me, but now, using the ‘unleashing’ techniques (coming in Question #5), I can move off that stuck place fairly quickly. Even though that initial impulse to freeze is still there, automatic and unbidden, it now triggers a newly-developed skill of *recognizing and recovering*.

THE *UPSIDE(S)* OF MY SOMEBODY TRAINING

My Somebody Training (just like yours) contained not only things I needed to build *over*, but also things I could build *on*. As a child growing up in the Scherer Somebody Training, I learned to be a ‘good boy,’ to put others’ needs before my own, hoping that my Faculty would be proud of me—and love me. I remember clearly my grandmother telling me, “Johnny, God comes first, other people come second, and you come third, w-a-y down the line.” The core message in my Somebody Training: “Be a good boy!”

The lesson ‘took’. I became an Eagle Scout at age 15, was awarded the Richmond Chamber of Commerce Junior Citizen Award at 16, started a club for young magicians like myself, and did everything I could to live up to the Scherer name. I set about mastering ‘the manly arts’ required in Virginia at that time: athletics (swimming, running, tennis, all the ball sports), self-defense (boxing and wrestling), and being a gentleman (things like opening doors and standing for women on the bus, and waiting for the hostess to lift her fork before eating.).

Blending the five generations of Lutheran ministers on my father's side with American pioneer Daniel Boone's brother William on my mother's side created quite a gene pool! It has taken many years of hard inner work, however—a lot of facing my 'tigers' and using the Five Questions—to find my way through those old messages to a more authentic, soulful, and unleashed way of being.

The fundamental *upside* of my early Somebody Training is a bone-deep tendency to approach life as a pioneer-with-spirit, working on the outer edges of the ordinary, unleashing the human spirit at work in loving service to the world.

I'll take *that* kind of 'training' every time...

AND TODAY?

In retrospect, even though the 'script' of my life is different from what my 'Faculty' might have intended, I am still following the fundamental principles from their Somebody Training, and often the results are positive. I can see the footprints of that 'program' in each of the several kinds of work I have done in my life. In the Navy as Combat Officer on board a destroyer, I saw my real work as helping the people around me do a better job and yet grow personally at the same time. Then more directly, as a Lutheran Pastor and Chaplain at Cornell University, my work was 100% about serving Life via the human beings around me. Later, when two colleagues and I started the country's first competency-based graduate program in applied behavioral science, my work as Gestalt-trained Core Faculty involved teaching mid-career professionals how to facilitate change and transformation, starting with themselves. Some years later, I began my consulting, speaking and leadership development career, and ***Facing the Tiger*** is one of the outcomes.

In 2010 the Stephen Covey organization selected me for their list of America's top 100 Thought Leaders in Personal/Leadership Development. That same year, my alma mater, Roanoke College,

invited me to its graduation, and my speech was selected by National Public Radio for their list of 'The Best 100 Commencement Addresses in America. Ever.' Then in 2015 my professional association, The Organization Development Network, selected me to receive its Lifetime Achievement Award. Maybe Mom and Pop, Granddaddy, Sister Ruth and Annabelle, my Somebody Training Core Faculty, would be proud—and maybe even relieved—that all the 'stuff' that happened in my early years actually helped me turn out OK.

In fact, as I was writing this section, I could literally hear my Operating System's 'voice' whispering in my ear: 'John Scherer, putting all that down in writing is WAY too arrogant. People will think you are bragging. Go back and erase it all...' But, as you can see, I took the chance that you, the reader might read that section and think, 'What an arrogant man!' When we get to Question #5, What will UNLEASH me?, I hope you will understand what I was doing by *not* listening to my Operating System and choosing, instead, to 'navigate' off a 'stretch', an alternative *outside my default programming*.

That said, one element programmed into my Operating System—the impulse to serve others and be a positive force for creative change in the world—has led, I hope, to many lives, relationships, and organizations being transformed. I wonder from time to time how many people are walking around today who have been touched by my presence with them. As you will see in exploring Question #4: What CALLS Me?, unleashing the human spirit is not something we *DO*, it appears to be who we *ARE*.

Today, as a result of practicing 'facing the tiger' and using the Five Questions, I feel like I am finally *becoming* the man I always *wanted* to be...

SO, WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

The short and simple answer is: your Somebody Training.

Remember: It's not a good thing. It's not a bad thing, either. It's a *human* thing. You are born—you start your Somebody Training. You go along, trying your best to be the person you are supposed to be, until something in life forces or invites you to consider who *else* you might be. Occasionally you encounter a situation, a relationship, a challenge that just won't be handled by operating the way you usually do. That's what a 'tiger' is... In those moments, you may feel like the Navy fighter pilots I knew, who spoke occasionally of finding themselves 'out of airspeed, altitude, and ideas'.

When that happens, the instinct is to simply turn up the volume on what you know best, revert to your Operating System, and try even harder to be your special Somebody. If and when *that* fails, you can find yourself in a truly pregnant moment, when you are radically ready to explore alternatives. Like John Morrow...

JOHN MORROW'S WAKE-UP CALL



Often, this invitation takes the form of a 'wake-up call'. I think of John Morrow, a bright, alive, on-purpose manager in the New York headquarters of a national association. "I was *sent* to this program," he said matter-of-factly at the opening session of his LDI (Leadership Development Intensive). "There's no delicate way to put it. Before I came, people had been telling me things like, 'You're really good, but...!' and 'John, you make your numbers and get results, but...!' I figured, with a nudge from my boss, that it was time to find out about the 'but'! What I discovered was that while I was getting results I was also 'leaving a trail of bodies', or as one colleague put it, 'John, you're impressive, but you're an asshole!'"

"At home, I was one kind of person: warm, understanding, able to take the long view, firm without being mean. At work, though, I turned into some kind of monster: short with people—mean, actually—and wanting everything *now*, or else dire consequences would follow. It was almost a Jekyll and Hyde thing.

"What a delight to discover at my LDI another 'me' inside, one with interests and skills and qualities I never knew I had, and then to discover, standing just behind him, in an inner 'center', my 'essence' or 'spirit', which is able to bring the best attributes of *both* my inner worlds into play in appropriate ways. From this place, I have access to a perspective on things and people that is higher and broader than my previous normal operating mode. I learned to recognize what other people *naturally* bring—not just what I want them to bring. I can now acknowledge the baggage that other people carry and how it impacts them (good or bad) and I accept working with that person—exactly the way he or she is, rather than as I think he or she should be.

“In the LDI I saw that in the past my beating up on people was because they were not—in ‘my world’ at least—living up to the standards that I set for *myself*. “If only they were as hard-working and dedicated as *I* was, they would see my point and we would get the job done!” Because they were not being the image that I set for *me*, I beat *them* up! Isn’t that ironic? Now I can see more clearly and accurately what is happening inside myself and with other people. *I can also bring the way I am at home to work*. What a difference it has made!”

Eight months later, John Morrow, the guy who wasn’t sure whether he would still have a job when he returned home, was promoted to Vice President of his organization, something that simply was not possible prior to his work of self-discovery. Apart from this rather significant ‘hard’ result, here is the e-mail he sent to me about the long-term personal benefits from his insights:

1 NEW MESSAGE

From: John@Morrow.com
To: John@Scherer.com
Subject: After the LDI

As I told you, John, what I took away from my LDI is an acknowledgement of my own 'baggage' — stuff that I didn't even know I was carrying! When I confronted that, it was just lifted from me. It took me time to re-program myself — I am always working on it, but it gets easier. Having the weight off my shoulders made the re-programming so much less difficult.

One thing I notice now, five and a half years after my LDI, is that for the first 18-24 months, I thought about my 'baggage' every day. Not with resentment, but just reconciling so many things in my life, re-ordering what is important. After a while I started getting down on myself about still thinking about it. 'Come on, John, it's time to move on!' I realize now that I was falling back on the old game — beating up on myself. However, at some point, it just stopped. One day the old baggage crossed my mind and I realized how long it had been since I had thought about it. Isn't that great?! I realize now it was just a healing period, something I had to go through, and I came out the other side. Now I can say with complete honesty that I have become more myself and I like who I have become. For anyone who hasn't yet gotten to that place, let me tell you, it's a short, cliché-like sentence — 'I know and like who I am' — but it changes everything.

He ended his note to me with these words:

Now, John Scherer, I am going to close this e-mail, since my eyes are filling up with tears. Use this any way you want if it works for you, or just pass if it doesn't fit. You have an important message and people need to hear it. Feel free to use my name if you want — I have no problem with that. So, from that special place in my heart that you helped me find, I send my love to you and the LDI Team.

As it is with most people, John's wake-up call was a surprise to him. He had not realized what was happening. Although the world is constantly giving us feedback about how our life is working—or not working—like John, we often fail to take notice. So, Life, or the Universe, has to keep giving us experiences designed to help us 'get the lesson'.

Your task as an adult is to come to understand the presence and impact of your early Somebody Training and how it has been running your life, *so you can go beyond it*. Remember, "When you *name* it, you can *tame* it." Perhaps you are ready to start building ON and building OVER that early programming, unleashing yourself into a more fulfilling and effective way of being and working in the world, which refers to every aspect of your life, not just what you do from 9 to 5!

The first step is to accept and appreciate your Somebody Training Faculty Members for their loving intent, and then get about breaking the old patterns using Question #3 to become better friends with your Operating System, that 'ancient' programming that has been running you—until now.

'PEELING THE ONION': DISCOVERING WHAT HAS BEEN RUNNING ME

Remember the Mandala? The concept is that, like the onion, you have many layers, leading down to your 'Golden Center'. By discovering and moving through the layers, you can begin to see more clearly what's been running you, opening a path to the inner core of who you are, the 'you' that is *not* being run by your Operating System. To get started, we will be using a process called 'Peeling the Onion'.

THE PERSONA: HOW I WANT TO BE SEEN

In the days of the ancient Greek Theater, actors on stage used masks, held on sticks. The smiling and frowning thespian symbols associated with the theater are reminders of this old prop. By using multiple masks, a single actor (always male) could play two or three roles by holding up different masks as he spoke his lines. The actor, standing *behind* the mask, delivered his lines *through* the mask, making it possible for the audience to know which character was speaking and how to relate to him. It's more than interesting that the Greek word for mask was **persona**, from which we get 'person' and 'personality'. The important thing to understand is that the audience was not relating to the *actor* (the actual human being behind the mask), but to his *mask*.

It's the same today.

As a result of your own Somebody Training, you have developed your own 'social mask' or Persona, which you 'aim' outward toward your world. You might think of yourself as on a stage, holding your Persona in front of you, showing the audience what you want them to see—and hiding what you don't want them to see.

Another way to understand how your Persona functions: Picture a life-size blow-up doll of you that inflates when you 'boot up' in the morning, kept full of air during the day with a hand pump. As you peek out at the people around you from behind the doll, you sometimes pump like crazy to keep the full-length shape as big as you can get it. "Are they buying it?" you wonder. "No?! Better pump harder!"

'PEELING THE ONION'



'The Persona'

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR 'PERSONA' CHARACTERISTICS

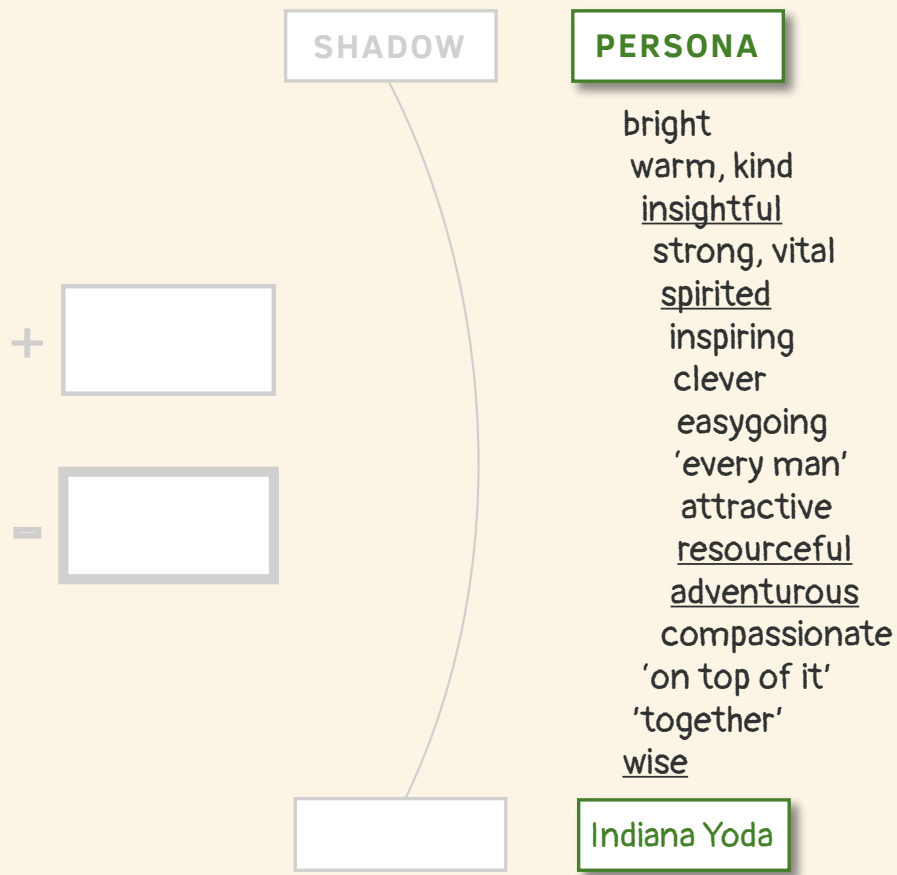
Imagine an onion with the outer layer (the one to the far right) being those aspects of yourself you *would LIKE* the world to see. Make a list of as many words as you can and write them down that outer layer. Questions to help you generate your list:

- What kind of person am I *supposed* to be?
- What kind of person am I *trying* to be?
- What words would I *hope* people would use if they gossiped (*positively*) about me? (Some words ought to feel a little embarrassing, but true. Put them down anyway.)

STEP 2: HIGHLIGHT THE 'BEST' ONES

When you have 10-15 words, go back and circle 3-5 of the most important ones—the *last* ones you would ever want to lose.

This is what my **Persona** layer looks like from my own Onion with the most important ones in **bold**:



STEP 3: PROBE EACH WORD'S HISTORY

Take a few moments to look over your words. Whether or not you can remember it, each quality or characteristic is on your Persona list because of a learning moment from your Somebody Training

or another powerful moment in your life. Think about who or what might have caused *that* word to show up on your Persona list.

STEP 4: SELECT YOUR PERSONA ICON/CHARACTER

Now identify a **character** for your Persona that has as many of your key characteristics as possible, someone from history, literature, TV, movies or another iconic source. (Do *not* choose someone you know personally...) You are looking for someone who can serve as a kind of 'icon' for you. If you 'click' on this character, most of those important qualities would open.

PERSONAL EXAMPLE

Last year, an LDI group gave me a new Persona Character: **Yoda**, a source of life-transforming wisdom for the Jedi Knights of this world. As I told them: "I love Yoda! But he's 900 years old, lives by himself in a cave, and hobbles around with a cane, issuing bumper-sticker wisdom to lost Jedi Knights who wander in. But something is missing: I also need someone who is more adventurous and a resourceful problem-solver, who interacts with more people and in more challenging situations." And **Indiana Jones** sprang to mind. Putting these two together, I arrived at a Persona Character named '**Indiana Yoda**'. Feels perfect for now!

Who is *your* Persona?

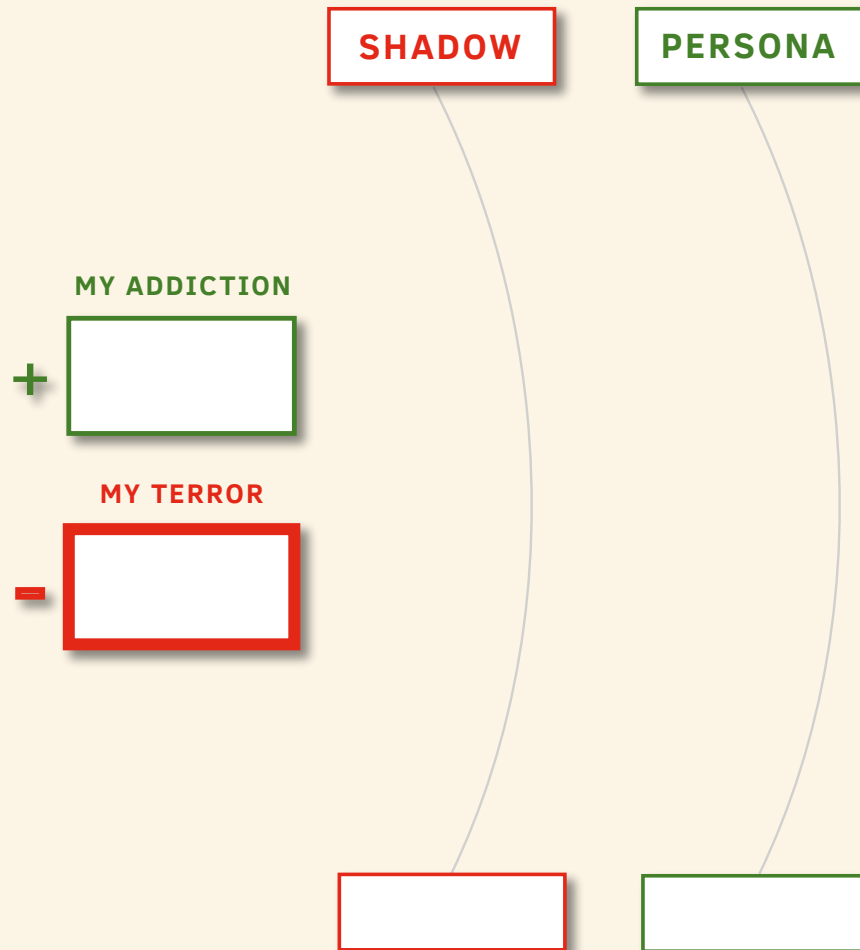
In recent LDIs, **Persona Characters** have included:

Superman	Tyrion	Moses
Mother Teresa	Oprah	Princess Di
Aragorn	Xena, Warrior Princess	Albert Einstein
Buddha	Chuck Norris	Adam Malysz
Maya Angelou	Daenerys	Lewandowski
Frodo	Charlie Brown	Nelson Mandela
Wonder Woman	Florence Nightingale	Jeanne d'Arc
Gandhi	The Dalai Lama	The Gladiator
Gandalf	Elon Musk	Steve Jobs

Sometimes it is not a person but a powerful *phrase* that will work best. One Toronto woman, looking for an image that captured the sense of having to be 'The Complete Woman', including the perfect body, wife, mother, and community volunteer, chose **'The Package'**. The character might turn out to be a simple phrase that resonates with you, like **'Brave Leader'** or **'Compassionate Force'** or **'The Super-Hero'**.



Draw your own 'onion', starting on the far right of your page. (Below is an example of a finished structure of the "Onion", to help you see how to position what you are drawing.)



THE POWER OF THE PERSONA

Your Persona is more than a clever concept. It is alive and works *in* you, *on* you—and *for* you—all day long. When you walk into a room, notice what it is that you notice about everyone there. You may

find yourself noticing who is 'attractive', or who looks 'safe', or 'interesting', or who seems to have power or status. What you notice is not random. It is no accident that you notice what you notice. Your Persona, and the various 'currencies' it works with, are shaping what you see. Remember the carpet expert and the electrician from Question #3? *You notice what you have been trained to notice.*

It should make you wonder what you are missing...

If I walk into a room and my Operating System is running me and my Indiana Yoda Persona is activated, I notice (without thinking) who needs help or is looking for answers, what interesting or challenging problems or situations are present that need addressing by my 'courageous and resourceful wisdom'. I may not be aware that I am noticing these things, but as long as I am unconscious about my Persona being 'on', I will find myself in conversations with people, listening for—and hearing—issues they are facing, problems to be solved, or wisdom to be delivered—even if people are not actually talking about them! That's the point. You will see what your Persona is primed/trained to address. In order for your Persona character to have remained in place for so long, you have, again unconsciously, created a drama, a play, within which your role 'works.'

Your Persona Icon, like an icon on your computer screen, represents a set of programs and 'routines' beneath them. Like computer programs, a lot of programming went into making it easy for your Persona easy to access. 'Click' on your Persona Icon—which happens all the time—and this program, written during your Somebody Training, comes alive, helping you see what you need to see and do what you need to do. As long as you remain unconscious about all this, *you don't have a Persona; it has you.* The good news is that, as I said before, it has brought you to this point.

Consider the possibility that you have 'maxed out' on your Persona, that you can't go where you want to go next with your life by polishing or pumping up your Persona any more. What you need is just a little of someone or something *else* that lives inside you, someone who is a little frightening, and about whom you have a lifetime of negative programming. It just happens, however, to be exactly what you need: your Shadow.

THE SHADOW: HOW I DO NOT WANT TO BE SEEN

Your Somebody Training also included warnings NOT to be certain things. Either one or both of your parents received a similar warning in *their* Somebody Training, which they felt must be passed on to you. Or you may have done something that made your parents nervous, something they felt they had to correct or ‘nip in the bud’. My mother’s letter to my grandfather contained several perfect examples of this, like, “We can’t let Johnny think he can get what he wants.”

Every ‘lesson’ embedded in your Somebody Training to *be* a certain way implied that there was also a way you should *not* be. If you are supposed to be *nice*, then you must not be _____ (fill in the blank). If you’re supposed to be *strong*, then it’s crucial that you not be _____, etc., etc.



John on The Shadow

Following the same process used in discovering the Persona, here’s a simple way to find out what your Shadow looks like:

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR ‘SHADOW’ CHARACTERISTICS

The next layer (the arc to the left of the Persona) represents things you would NEVER want people to think or say about you. Ask yourself these questions:

- What words would I use to describe the traits I hate or despise in people?

- What kind of person am I *not supposed* to be?
- What kind of person am I *trying not* to be?
- If people gossiped about me, what would be the *worst* words they could use?

Take a look at my example: I wrote down a few words that came to me and marked the worst ones (the first ones I'd like to get rid of).

	SHADOW	PERSONA
	cold, cruel	bright
	<u>stupid, slow</u>	warm, kind
	<u>destructive</u>	insightful
	shallow	strong, vital
	'out of it'	spirited
+	judging	inspiring
	ugly	clever
	needy, whiny	easygoing
	dependent	'every man'
	loser	attractive
-	<u>power-hungry</u>	resourceful
	useless	adventurous
	has-been	compassionate
	<u>hateful</u>	'on top of it'
	pathetic	'together'
	<u>arrogant</u>	wise
	Trump	Indiana Yoda

STEP 2: PROBE A WORD'S HISTORY

As you did with your Persona, take a few moments to look over the words you have written down for your Shadow. Each word has a story behind it. Each quality, trait, or characteristic is on your Shadow list because of some learning moment from your Somebody Training or after that.

STEP 3: HIGHLIGHT THE 'WORST' TRAITS

Now highlight the three or four words that, when you are truly honest with yourself, are the 'worst' ones on the list, the ones that you would let go of first if you could? (For me they are currently **Cold/Cruel, Power-Hungry, Has-Been.**)

STEP 4: SELECT YOUR SHADOW ICON/CHARACTER

What character from literature, history, movies, or television epitomizes some or all of these most negative traits? You might simply think of someone you despise, someone you would never want to be like. You are looking for someone who can serve as another 'Icon' for you, so that whenever you 'click' on this character, the most important of your Shadow traits are represented. My Shadow Icon for the past few years has been **Donald Trump**.

In recent LDIs, **Shadow Icons** have included:

Gollum	Angelica (Rugrats)	Cinderella's Sister
Lord Voldemort	Judas	Lord Sauron
'Arm Candy'	The Devil	Eyore (Winnie the Pooh)
Donald Trump	Professor Umbridge	Margaret Thatcher
Cruella deVile	Wicked Stepmother	Homeless Bag Lady
'Stupid Bitch'	Joffrey	The Emperor (Star Wars)
Hitler	Stalin	Grey Mouse
Vladimir Putin	'Total Failure'	Darth Vader

Just as with your Persona, it may not be a person from history or a literary character, but a powerful phrase that captures the essence of your Shadow. My friend, Mark, in looking for a character that epitomized a brutish, violent, take-no-prisoners approach to life, chose **'The Way Men Are'**. A highly successful entrepreneur friend of mine found a character that for him embodied manipulation, self-centeredness, and sleaze: the **'Used Car Salesman'**. Just make sure that whatever you write in that box resonates in your heart and soul as a perfect label for what you would hate to think was like you. You can tell it's the right Shadow Character when you feel disgust, revulsion or embarrassment at the thought.

Just as the Persona tends to drive us *toward* certain 'positive' ways, the Shadow's mission is to drive us *away* from certain 'negative' behaviors. Just as **Indiana Yoda** in my Operating System looks for situations where I can be helpful and inspiring, my program's reluctance to be a **Trump** leads me to miss moments when what might be needed is stepping fully into my power and authority and letting others know clearly what it is that I want.

My American colleague, Susan, herself a seminar leader of amazing skill and sensitivity, chose **Leona Helmsley**, the hotel magnate who used to buy properties and then fire everybody, as her Shadow Icon. For Susan, calling attention to herself is a 'bad thing,' which she avoids like the plague. In learning to deliver our seminars, she worked hard on developing her capacity to stand in front of

a group of people and speak forcefully, or act as if she had something to say worth listening to. Being 'Leona', with all the attention-getting, self-absorbed things that went with that Shadow Character, was so awful for Susan that, until recently, she found it challenging to wear makeup or jewelry that might be seen as ostentatious. But 'Leona' had no problem delivering a powerful seminar!



"Ok, now it's your turn – come back to page 91, write down your Shadow words, mark the worst one and create your own Shadow Character."

MY ADDICTION AND MY TERROR

What has kept your Operating System going for so long, years after its development in your childhood? Where does its power come from?

Psychologists have known since the turn of the 19th Century—and the spiritual masters for many thousands of years—that what motivates us as human beings is a combination of seeking Pleasure and avoiding Pain. Pavlov's dogs learned to go for what gave them food and avoided what gave them a mild shock. B.F. Skinner applied this principle to humans and found that we, too, operate much like Pavlov's dogs, only dressed up a little differently. In organizations, the field of Performance Management—how to get people to do what they are hired to do—is based on similar assumptions. Just look at the powerful role that KPIs (Key Performance Indicators, the basis for annual financial bonuses) play in most corporations!

Here is a crash course on a few of the fundamental principles of Performance Management:

- **What gets rewarded, gets repeated.** When your Somebody Training Faculty wanted you to do something, they rewarded you when you did it.
- **What gets punished or ignored is less likely to happen.** Sometimes your Faculty gave you a punishing response like sharp words, a scowl, a spanking, or withholding something you wanted.

Your Somebody Training Faculty provided just the right balance of rewards and punishments to shape you into who you have become, sometimes without even realizing they were doing it. It just happened as a result of the way they interacted with you from day to day. That little person—you—figured out very early what 'The Game' was and who you needed to be and what you needed to do to get the thing that made you feel good, whether it was love or attention or control or privacy or respect—or whatever you thought you needed. Just imagine: you figured all this out before the age of five!

Here's the key point: You still operate as if you need the thing that makes you feel good more often than you realize. Unless you have done a lot of deep inner/spiritual development work on yourself,

you are still walking around *at the effect of* that early programming, moving instinctively *toward* people and situations that will get you what you are unconsciously seeking, and *away from* people and situations that might get you what you are unconsciously afraid of or want to avoid. By this time in your life, these two drivers have turned into things so powerful and unconscious that I want to turn up the heat and call them:

- Your Addiction
- Your Terror

Think of them as the self-contained power source—like a battery—for your Operating System, representing positive and negative ‘poles’. You may want to argue with me about it, but I believe these two forces live in you exactly that way.

Sample 'Addictions'

What I'm addicted to, or angling for...
'Way down inside, truth be told, I secretly yearn to be _____. 'Or:
'The BEST thing people – or life – could give me, or do to me.'

- Adored
- Worshipped
- Honored
- Highly / Deeply Valued
- Highly/Widely Esteemed
- Cherished / Loved
- Seen
- Deeply / Widely Appreciated
- Validated
- Widely/Deeply Respected
- Deeply/Widely Loved
- Widely/Warmly Remembered
- ...

Sample Terrors:

What I would never want to have happen to me – the worst thing people or life could do to me....
'It would be like the end of the world if people _____me'.
'My HOT BUTTON. What grabs me /hooks me / upsets me every time."

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| • Reject | • Abandoned |
| • Banished | • Exiled |
| • Dumped | • Dismissed |
| • Held in Utter Contempt | • Mocked |
| • Laughed At | • Shunned |
| • Forgotten | • Replaced |
| • Hated | • Obliterated |
| • Ridiculed | • Tricked / Used |
| • Scorned | • Completely Ignored |
| • Violated | • ... |
| • Betrayed | |



OK, let's come back again to page 91. Fill in the two boxes on the left side of The Onion with what you are Seeking (Addiction) and Avoiding (Terror)."

THE ADDICTION: SCORING LITTLE ‘HITS’ OF WHAT WE THINK WE NEED

For me, when my Operating System is running everything and I am on ‘Automatic’, unconsciously locked into my Persona (being Indiana Yoda), and hoping for a ‘payoff’ or some kind of hoped-for ‘benefit’, if you asked me what would be the most wonderful thing people (or Life) could give me, it would be to be **Warmly-Remembered**. When I am ‘pumping’ up Indiana Yoda, it means my Operating System is in charge, hoping people will see me as an awesome, resourceful and wise man, capable of facilitating life-changing transformation—and therefore worth remembering warmly.

THE TERROR: AVOIDING ANY ‘HINTS’ OF WHAT SCARES ME

Whenever you ‘walk into a room’ (a phrase to represent entering *any* life situation), your inner radar is in Search Mode, constantly—and usually-unconsciously—scanning the room for any signs of what you are seeking (your Addiction) and what you are trying to avoid. Like the shark, which can detect one part per trillion of blood in the water at great distances, your Operating System’s radar can pick up the slightest indicator that you might be running the risk of experiencing *even a tiny bit* of what you are desperate to avoid, your Terror.

For instance, when I am on Automatic, I am unconsciously doing things to avoid being a Lost, Sleazy and Power-Hungry Dictator, worthy of being **Forgotten**. Sometimes, by vigorous ‘pumping’ up my Persona, I am able to turn a potential ‘Forgotten’ situation into being ‘Warmly Remembered’. When that happens, my Operating System tells me I’ve done something worth celebrating! Then I can rest for, oh, several *seconds or minutes* before I have to ‘crank up the old routine’ again and sally forth to score some more Warm Remembering.

It’s a never-ending story...

Let’s say in a meeting with an important client they suddenly remember a tough situation they have to deal with and makes a stressed-out face while we are talking. If I am *not* awake and aware, my default impulse—triggered by my Operating System—will be to assume it has something to do with *me*. My mind will start to replay what transpired just before they made the face in an attempt to figure out

what Indiana Yoda needs to do to bring them back to a positive state. Without any conscious thought, I will find myself ‘pumping’ up my Persona again, saying or doing something to impress or enlighten them, to ‘get them back,’ to earn being Warmly-Remembered, and I will keep up this ‘act’ until the danger signals recede.

It’s exhausting...

Sounds bizarre, doesn’t it? It sure does as I write it. Yet that is exactly what happens off and on all day every day as long as we are on ‘Automatic.’ Until we become conscious and aware of the pattern—and take steps to change the way we process our life—we are walking around as a reactive, interpretive ‘machine,’ angling for as many ‘hits’ of what we are addicted to as possible, and avoiding any ‘hint’ of what we are terrified of. And it’s all unconscious.

‘SEEING’ OUR TERROR: A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE



Some years ago, I was conducting a two-day leadership-development retreat for Piotr, a CEO of a large company, and his team of direct reports. Several hours into the first morning I looked down the long table and there was Piotr, sitting there, shaking his head from side-to-side with a deep frown on his face. I panicked. I remember hoping no one around the table noticed, but inside, I thought, “Oh, oh... This is not working! Better pick up the pace, Johnny Boy. . .” and I started ‘pumping’ like crazy, trying harder and harder to be as much Indiana Yoda as I could be.

We got to a Break and, heart pounding, I walked up to Piotr as casually as I could and said, “So, how is this working for you?” He stood there, eyes and head cast down and shaking slowly—for a l-o-n-g time. Finally, he looked up and said, “John, this the best thing ever to happen to us as a leadership team since I’ve been here! Thank you!”

You could have blown me over like a feather. Stunned and relieved—and then also immediately embarrassed at how badly I had mis-interpreted the ‘data,’ finding what my Operating System constantly reminded me to be on the look-out for: *What am I doing that might result in my presence and my work being FORGOTTEN.*

We are constantly angling for our Addiction, but not wanting anyone to see what we are up to. Heck, we might not even want to see it ourselves!

I hope you can sense the irony at work here.

This is no way to live, is it? Yet, it is what passes as 'life' much of the time.

Fortunately, there is a way to *wake up and change the game*. With practice—lots of it—it is possible to turn *Automatic Living* (that is, what's been running you) into *Authentic Living*, full of a profound sense of purpose, power and peace. When we get to **Question #5: What Will UNLEASH Me?**, I will show you how to 'shift your state' from Automatic to Authentic.

A SUMMARY

What we have explored so far:

- When you were born, you became enrolled in the local Somebody Training school—your family-of-origin.
- The people around you—parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles, Pre-School Teachers, even neighbors—were your 'Faculty'.
- They did their best to help you turn into the kind of Somebody that could make it in the world.
- They helped you develop a sense of who you are, complete with clothes, a self-concept, certain skills and qualities for you to portray to the rest of the world—and to yourself—which became your **Persona**.
- As you matured, you polished and added skills and qualities to this Persona, which has served you well, getting you to this point in your life.
- Your Faculty also helped you develop a healthy resistance to certain *other* ways of being that were wrong or bad or would in some way detract from your ability to make it in the world—which became your **Shadow**.
- Without realizing it, their 'curriculum' also developed in you a sense of what you were *missing* or wished you had more of—which became your **Addiction**.

- It also developed in you a fear of experiencing something *else*, something so damaging (at least in your young mind) that it must be avoided at all costs—which became your **Terror**.
- When you ‘walk into a room’, unless you are conscious and aware of what is happening, this automatic way of living becomes who you ‘are’ from moment to moment.
- It all adds up to your Game-of-Life Strategy which you have been blissfully unaware of—until now. Sorry, but there you have it.

At this point, you may be feeling a little depressed, or doubtful. Keep reading, because there is Good News, Bad News and Even Better News.

THE GOOD NEWS

The Good News is this: Every one of those traits, qualities, and characteristics that you put down on your Persona list *is in you right now!* If they weren’t already present to some extent, they would have dropped off your list by now. You can’t fake your Persona, at least not for long, otherwise the feedback you would have received would have extinguished it as a possibility and it wouldn’t survive on your list. But if you’re still *trying* to be it—or *wanting* to be it—then it’s in you now, even if it only lives in you as a hope or an aspiration.

Here’s another cool principle: whenever you see a characteristic in someone else, *it’s in you first*. An LDI graduate, Sandy Pierce, said: “If you spot it, you got it.” Remember The Three Worlds: that when you look out at the world, you are seeing what’s ‘out there’ in terms of what is ‘in here’, your own history. It’s really ‘you’ in there, back behind the projected image, being all those things you are trying or pretending to be. Isn’t that ironic? Here you are, walking around all day every day, trying hard or pretending to be something that you already are!

So, relax. STOP PUMPING! Quit trying so hard to make your Persona ‘work.’ When you ‘walk into a room’, guess who walks in? It’s the *real* you, complete with all those characteristics you listed in your Persona. You don’t have to *try* to be bright or clever or inspirational or whatever *your* most-important Persona qualities are. Sometimes you just *are*—and, of course, sometimes you’re not. Welcome to the human race...

What makes the Persona a problem is the *having to*. It's not *being* Indiana Yoda that is a problem for me; it would be *having to be him all the friggin' time!* Stop trying to be a certain kind of person made up of only good qualities. Instead, simply trust that each of your naturally present Persona qualities will come forward when it is required. Remember: You don't have to *change* yourself into anyone else; you need to *come home* to yourself, to the fullest, most authentic 'you'—and that changes everything.



The bottom line: You already are who you are trying to be, so just become more fully who *that* is—'come home' to *that* person. This means you can get on with your life, bringing every one of your highly-developed Persona skills and well-honed qualities to more important purposes, as you will see coming up in Question #4: What CALLS me? What if all those gifts of yours were put in the service of something more fulfilling and more significant than trying to make you look good and stay safe?

But we are getting ahead of ourselves...

THE BAD NEWS

You guessed it—The Bad News is that whatever you put on your Shadow list—all the ways you would *never* want to be seen, are *also* in you. How do I know they are in you? Because you wrote them down! If you wrote them down they must be alive in you in some way, usually as something to be concerned about or avoided. If they didn't live in you that way, you would not even think to mention them. So, if you wrote something down on your Shadow list, it's in you as an issue, and the more you resist it or try not to be like that, the more 'alive' it is in you.

GREG HATES MONEY...



Years ago my wife, Catharine, and I knew a couple who today would probably be called serious 'Preppers'. They lived 'off the grid' with no money and no electricity, using hand tools to till their garden, raise their chickens, and make artistic items to trade for whatever else they needed in the nearby town. They were 'against money' and very proud of it. All they talked about was money and how bad it was, how the economic system was the cause of all that was evil in the world.

One afternoon, Greg, the man-of-the-house said to me: "We absolutely HATE money and everything it stands for! That's why you will not find *anything* around here that involves money or came from money!"

Having spent two days with them at their farm, I felt emboldened to say, "Greg, can you see how money dominates your life? It's all you talk about. It's all you worry about. It's actually at the very center of your lives here!" He actually paled, and we started a powerful conversation about what it might look like to truly BE 'off the grid' without constantly bringing that very same grid to life all day long every day.

Let's explore how to come to a peaceful place within yourself in situations like this.

Let's get into it this way:

Think of something you hate in *other people*. This is called 'Projection', a principle from Gestalt psychology. When you see something you hate in someone else, you are seeing 'bad' stuff that you don't want to be in you—but *is* in you, otherwise, you couldn't see it. Remember your 'glasses' from The Three Worlds, and "If you spot it, you got it!"? Since your Operating System tells you what you are seeing is 'bad', it can't be in *you* (because you are not 'bad'), and the mind resolves that tension by locating it (projecting it) 'out there' onto someone else. In fact, all forms of prejudice have their origin in this process of Projection.

Also, when your Shadow material is being denied—"That's not in me!"—it can 'leak out' in inappropriate ways. As you will see, when you don't acknowledge and accept the presence of a Shadow aspect of who you are, like Anger, for instance, you will find yourself getting upset about trivial stuff, leaving people to wonder: "What the heck was *that* all about?!" I bet Greg, who hated a system that exercised economic dominance, from time to time would show signs of his own potential to be 'power-hungry' and 'domineering' leaking out in strange moments.

If your Shadow Character is Hitler and you had 'Destructive' on your Shadow list, you are probably not destructive like Adolf Hitler was destructive, but you *are* destructive the way *you* are capable of being destructive. I guarantee you the people who know you best would be able to tell you—they probably won't, though—just what 'destructive' looks like when it shows up in you.

Greg's wife might not be completely surprised to read these last few paragraphs...

JAN: "I'M NOT LAZY!"



At Jan's LDI, his question was: "How does 'Lazy' live in me right now?" Laziness was on his Shadow list out of his dedication to not be like his father, who couldn't hold a job and mostly laid around the house, drinking. "No, way", Jan said, "I'm not like *that*! I am NOT lazy!"

When he looked at himself carefully and without blame, however, he could smell the faint traces of laziness in his procrastination throughout his academic life, even manifesting itself today in waiting until the last minute to prepare overheads for a presentation

or putting off a challenging work assignment until he absolutely had to do it. He smelled it in his reluctance to balance his checkbook and read his monthly spreadsheet as if it mattered.

Exploring Question #3, *What's been RUNNING me?*, Jan saw it clearly: "I *am* lazy at times about certain things. Meanwhile, I walk around telling myself that I am not lazy (like my father) because I work hard to generate income for my family and I get up and go to work every day to make a difference in the world. That kind of unconscious self-righteousness makes it hard for me to be compassionate toward people I label as lazy. And you know what? It also makes it hard for me to relax and take care of myself because that would be 'lazy'."

So, now that you have The Good News and The Bad News, you are going to absolutely *love* the 'Even-Better News'.

MY SHADOW IS MY 'TEACHER'

To recap: the Good News is that everything you are trying or pretending to BE with your Persona, you already are, so you can relax and just trust that whatever is called for by the situation will come out of you when it is needed.

The Bad News is that every single one of the Shadow qualities you said you were trying/hoping NOT to be are also present in you.

But the Even-Better News is that buried in your Shadow—in the very 'bad stuff' you have denied—are nuggets of pure 'gold' waiting to be uncovered, refined, and put to work in your life. I call them 'Stretches' because they take you beyond where you are now—and increase your 'range' as a human being. (Remember widening your options in The Funnel.)

You do not need more Persona. What if you have 'maxed out' from counting on your Persona? Maybe what you need in order to go to the next level of self-development is in your Shadow, in precisely what you are determined *not* to be. But just the thought of looking for something of positive value in your Shadow Character can be a frightening prospect. The Shadow is, after all, made up of things you have been under strong warnings not to be, with the promise of terrifying consequences if you let even a little of it happen. In its effort to protect you from your Terror (like Being Hated or Rejected or Dismissed) your Autopilot stops you from even getting onto the continuum of any Shadow characteristic.

Here are two applications:

First, you may not like to hear this, but your Shadow Character has a lot to teach you, and you will not be able to get very far along in your personal development quest without profound learning from this surprising and possibly disgusting teacher. It's time to un-learn a few lessons from your Somebody Training and 'go to school' with a character you disrespect, despise, or even hate, your Shadow. When you do, that person you can't stand will become a new 'Faculty' member that is even more important to your present and future than your original teachers were, because your Shadow is going to be helping you get crucial lessons you missed the first time around.

Second, every one of your Shadow qualities, which you have thrown out like old bath water, actually contains an incredibly valuable and precious ‘baby’ which you need to reclaim and eventually even embrace. Each Shadow characteristic is going to reveal, embedded within it, essential clues on how to take your life to the next level of purpose, power, and peace.

In the sections that follow, you will learn how to take your Shadow Character and the ‘awful’ attributes that go along with it and find in the ‘ugly’ something beautiful, in the ‘repulsive’ something desperately needed. Remember, becoming wiser at work is not about *changing* yourself; it’s about *coming home* to yourself. One of the most powerful things you can do in that regard is to tackle what comes next: discovering the life-enhancing, transformational Stretches embedded in your Shadow Character and its Characteristics—the things you are trying *not* to be.

‘GOING TO SCHOOL’ WITH YOUR SHADOW CHARACTER

What?!

I can hear some of you already: “Are you serious?! What could **Donald Trump** teach me?” Or how about **Hitler**, or **Gollum**, or **Darth Vader**, or **Shiva**, or **Grey Mouse**, or **Cruella deVille**, or _____ (fill in your own Shadow Character)?

BILL CLINTON?! ARE YOU KIDDING?!



At one of our LDIs, Emory picked **Bill Clinton** as his Shadow, saying, as he did so, “What a jerk!” When I said to him, “That means you have a lot to learn from Clinton, Emory!” he went into a tirade, (I’ve cleaned it up a little here) yelling that there was no way ‘that unethical slime-ball’ had anything to teach him—or anybody—and threatened to walk out of the room. This may seem strange, but I love it when something like this happens, because I know from experience that the more Emory *hates* **Bill Clinton**, the more his life will transform by opening to what his Clinton Shadow Character *has to teach him*. When Emory was able to calm down and discover in the hated character the qualities and skills he was desperately missing, you could have heard a pin drop in that room.

Here’s how it unfolded:

Me: “Emory, squeeze out all of what you consider bad about Bill Clinton until you are left with the human being that he is, complete with all his gifts, skills and qualities. OK, done that? Now, what is left in him that might be of great value to you, things you have not developed in yourself?”

Emory: “That guy has *nothing* to teach me! He’s an immoral jerk. So don’t even start trying to tell me there’s *anything* useful for me in him!”

Several people in the group, even a few Republicans, began to disagree and offered Emory some things to think about, like: “Well, Emory, he’s a great orator, articulate, clever” and “He knows how to work the crowd.”

Me: “Would ‘working the crowd’ be something you need to learn how to do, Emory?”

Emory: “Oh, OK, that’s a good thing. One I wish I had, actually. As a leader, I stand in the corner a lot and let others on the team ‘press the flesh.’”

Me: “What else?” and some people chimed in: “Clinton knows how to build coalitions to get things done” and “He isn’t afraid to go for big ideas and sell them to people.”

Then Emory himself offered one, quite pleased with himself: “OK. How about this: He snows people with bullshit.”

Me: “Emory! If you can’t make it positive, at least keep it *neutral*, buddy.”

Emory: “Okay... Busted. All right... He’s charismatic and knows how to make complicated things easy for people to understand.”

Long pause...

Me: “Is that it? Gee, is that all **Bill Clinton** has going for him when you squeeze out everything that’s ‘bad’? Let’s see... You said he is: articulate, bright, extremely well-informed, knows how to ‘work the crowd’, builds coalitions to get things done, isn’t afraid to go for big ideas and sell them to people, is willing to fight for what he believes in, and can make really complicated things simple to understand. Now, Emory, how many of *these* traits and skills are ones that you know in your heart-of-hearts are missing or underdeveloped in you as a leader?”

Another long pause as he thinks...

Emory: “They *all* are, actually. Every single one of them...”

Me: “How badly do you need them? How crucial are they to the next phase of your life at home and at work?”

Long pause, with some emotion coming to the surface...

Emory: “Yeah... I really do need to be okay with standing for what I believe in, and building strong coalitions to accomplish my goals at work. I need to be more confident about going into a room full of strangers and make contacts. Bill Clinton has never met a stranger! This is amazing, John! I would never have guessed...”

His voice trailed off in wonder and amazement at what his hated Shadow character had to teach him. He had gone past the Good News and the Bad News to discover the Even Better News.

A FEW MORE EXAMPLES



Adolf Hitler

Agnieszka, one of our LDI Facilitators-in-Development, chose '**Adolf Hitler**' for her Shadow Character and, given where she was born (Poland) almost cried at the suggestion that she go to school with him. When I invited her to squeeze everything that was evil out of him and look at what was left, she—with a lot of help from her fellow LDI participants—realized that Hitler was:

- A powerful motivator and orator,
- Capable of getting large numbers of people on board with his vision, who
- Built an effective nation where there had been mostly fear and chaos, and
- Thought big. (What could be bigger than taking over the world?)

She admitted that her life and career would benefit significantly the more she practiced putting these traits to work, ones that had been programmed out of her during her Somebody Training, leaving her thinking small, nervous about speaking to more than a few people, and acting like a hesitant and disorganized manager.

An important point: In this work with a Shadow Character, like 'Hitler', you are not working with Hitler, the actual historical person, but rather with what that kind of *character* is like, what are his/her characteristics, 'gifts', talents, and capabilities. Hitler the real person was evil. But if you could squeeze out of the real historical character everything that was evil, what was he *really* good at? See what Agnieszka said above, and think about what else *you* might add to her list about 'Hitler'.



Jabba the Hutt

Judi Neal, innovative founder of the international [Spirit@Work](#) Network, chose '**Jabba the Hutt**' as her Shadow Character because she saw him as sloppy, disgusting, totally self-absorbed, fat, and ugly. Not exactly the kind of person you want to take home to meet the family. But when Judi looked at what Jabba had to teach her, she saw the following:

- 'He's a great delegator. He's always telling people to do things. I tend to feel like I'm responsible for doing it all. He's showing me that it would be good for me to practice asking other people to do some things for me.'
- 'You would have to say that Jabba is stable! He has a broad base; he's hard to move off his position. He's definitely not a pushover! I need to learn when to stand my ground and not be so understanding and flexible. I think I fail to notice moments when what I need to do is stand firm and not move off my position.'
- 'Watching him eat those grapes—or whatever it was he ate—strikes me as being sensuous, not afraid to enjoy himself. I need to nurture myself a lot more, take better care of myself, have some fun, just let it go more often—eat something decadent, like a chocolate sundae every now and then!'

(Thank you, Judi, for giving me permission to quote you here by name. It's one of my favorite examples!)

A PERSONAL EXAMPLE: WHAT DOES DONALD TRUMP HAVE TO TEACH ME?



What My Shadow Character Has to Teach Me?

MY SHADOW CHARACTER <u>Donald Trump</u> IS REALLY GOOD AT:	IF I ALLOWED HIM TO TEACH/COACH/GUIDE ME, I MIGHT BE BETTER ABLE TO:
Being 'immune' to what others think.	Move ahead without caring about negative feedback.
Focusing on himself and what he wants/needs.	Enjoy life more, putting my needs 'on the table'.
Using his power without regard for consequences.	Stand in my natural authority to make things happen. Clear about what I want.
Demanding loyalty.	Believe more strongly in the uniqueness and value of my 'way'.



What does *your* Shadow have to teach ***you***? Use the format below to make it easier to see your Shadow’s capabilities and ‘talents.’

MY SHADOW CHARACTER IS REALLY GOOD AT:	IF I ALLOWED HIM TO TEACH/COACH/GUIDE ME, I MIGHT BE BETTER ABLE TO:

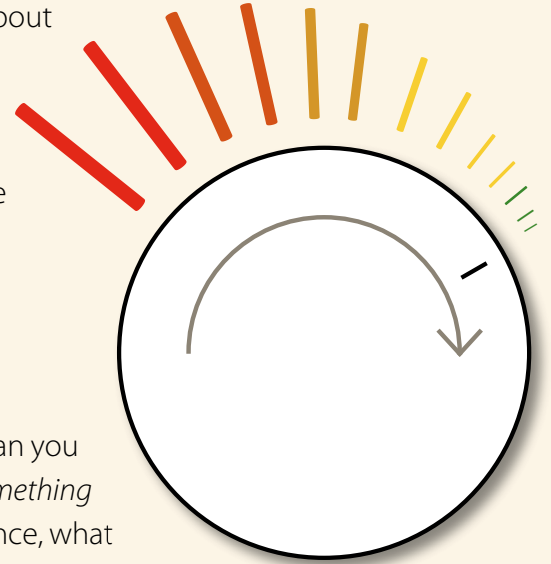
Now maybe you see that when you squeeze out all that is ‘wrong’ or ‘evil’ or ‘bad’ in your Shadow Character and look at the skills, capabilities and even gifts that are present, you can receive powerful, effectiveness-enhancing and even spiritually-enlivening insights. This is especially true when the character is one you have deeply-hated.

THE SHADOW'S 'VOLUME-CONTROL'

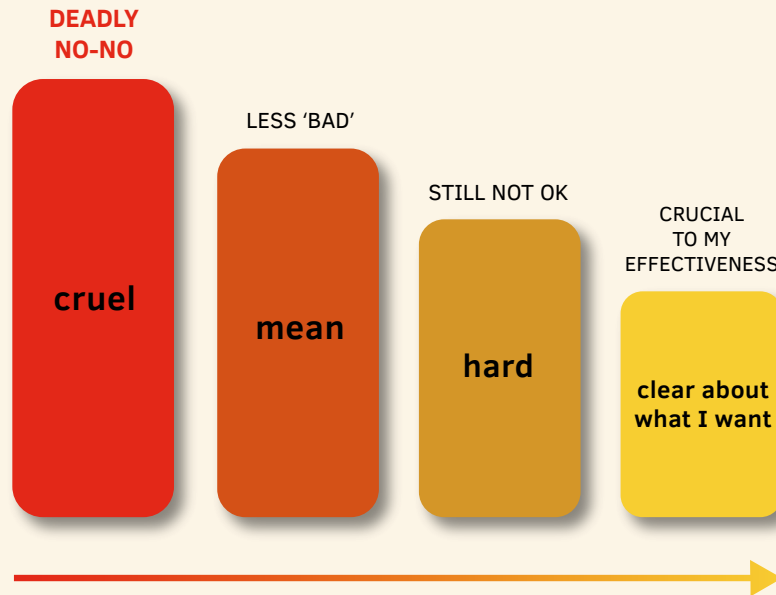
That was about your Shadow *Character*. What follows is about specific *qualities* residing in it. Your Operating System's Autopilot is programmed to resist any hint of what is in your Shadow, but inside each of the 'terrible' characteristics is a 'muscle' you desperately need to stretch and strengthen to become a more complete and effective human being. A personal example...

JOHN: 'CRUEL' REVISITED

One of my Shadow qualities, mentioned above, was *Cruel*. Can you see that Cruel, which is a 'bad' thing, is actually too much of *something* that, at the right time and place, could be a 'good' thing? For instance, what do I get if I put Cruel on a kind of volume control with a knob that will allow me to turn its intensity up and down? What if I could 'turn down' Cruel with my volume control (but not turn it off) until it becomes something that would not only be OK, but could even be crucial to my development into the complete human being that I am becoming?



Here's how it could work:



As you can see, as I turn down the intensity on Cruel (a 'Deadly No-No' from my Somebody Training), it first becomes Mean, then Hard (which is still Not totally OK for me). As I keep reducing its 'badness', it finally becomes **Clear About What I Want**, which is crucial to my leadership effectiveness and fulfillment in life. A fully functional human being from time to time must have access to—and express—their clarity about what they want!

For me, though, until I started 'facing-the-tiger' and working with The Five Questions, this whole continuum of options was *collapsed*. I couldn't tell one end of the continuum from the other. Simply being *Clear* often felt exactly the same as being *Cruel*. What used to happen inside me every time I thought about telling my staff I wanted something done immediately: I couldn't even get started! As my leadership mind whispered, "Now would be a good time to tell the Staff that you want your new program launched for sure by next Friday", my Operating System would whisper in my other ear: "John Scherer, don't even *think* about saying that! That would be cruel! And you wouldn't want *that*, would you? You *know* what happens to people who are cruel!"

VICKI: 'SELF-CENTERED', REVISITED



At her LDI, Vicki identified **'Self-Centered'** as one of the Shadow characteristics she was definitely not supposed to be. Her disgust with Self-Centeredness meant that she often felt taken-advantage-of by the people she was serving, like her children, her boss, her companions, even relative strangers. As a result, she occasionally felt exhausted, resentful, and unappreciated. Once she realized that buried within *Self-Centeredness* was the life-transforming stretch of *Self-Nurturing*, Vicki has been able to live in a more balanced way and has since been caring for those she loves in ways that also *feed her*, taking into account her own needs. "I still fall back into my old habit of sacrificing myself from time to time, but now I catch myself doing it. This Shadow Stretch process is a blessing and a curse! From now on, I can't run my Old Game anymore without being aware of what is going on!"

Note: It is important to keep the essence of each word as you convert it from Deadly No-No to Crucial Stretch. As you work with a word, do not turn the 'bad' word into something 'good' and opposite. Notice that, for Vicki, 'Self-Centered' did *not* turn into 'Kind'. She already had plenty of *that* in her Persona; she didn't need any more kindness, which for her was taking care of *others*. She needed Self-Nurturing, taking care of *herself*, something that was not in her comfort zone, something that came from one of her Shadow Characteristics.

A SCARED NAVY SEAL? REALLY?!



Peter sat quietly in his LDI, interacting with his fellow participants, fully engaged, yet very much in the background. You might not have known he was in the room. From our conversation as part of his Pre-Work, however, I knew that he had been a member of highly-decorated SEAL Team One, serving several tours in Vietnam, receiving the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, with a Combat V. While he was 'in country' he was involved in multiple firefights and barely escaped one ambush with his life, working under fire to help save members of his team. Peter was a true hero in the eyes of anyone who knows anything about the military world.

You would never have guessed his SEAL background, however. Quiet, mild-mannered, soft-spoken, it came as little surprise that his Persona Character turned out to be **Brian Picolo**, the humble-but-heroic American football player. It was a perfect fit. Peter's Shadow Character emerged as **John MacEnroe**, the world-beater tennis player, and he told us he couldn't stand what he saw as MacEnroe's arrogance, petulance, self-centeredness, and uncontrollable anger.

At one point Peter spoke hesitantly to the rest of the group in a voice barely audible: "Excuse me, everybody... Do you think it would be OK if I turned down the air conditioner? I mean, if not, that's okay..."

"Oh, I don't know...", someone said playfully, "What do the rest of you think? Should we give Peter permission to turn down the air conditioner? Personally, I don't think we should..."

The whole group playfully shouted things like, "No way!" and "Absolutely not!"

"Oh, OK", Peter said quietly, "I was just getting chilly..."

"Peter", I asked, stepping in, "how would John MacEnroe handle this situation? Go to your Shadow for some coaching."

After about a nanosecond, Peter stood up, faced the group and, with great intensity, *announced*, "OK, guys! Listen up! I'm f - - - -g freezing my a-- off and I'm going to turn down the air conditioner! If anybody's got a problem with that, see me after the session!"

The smile on his face was deep and wide as he finished. “Man, that felt good!” he said, grinning at us all. Everyone cheered and slapped him on the back. You would have thought he had won the lottery.

Actually, he had won a lot more than that.

In his role as Executive Director and Chief Fundraiser for a statewide Scholarship Foundation, Peter had to speak with very rich and important people, like heads of corporations, government officials, community leaders, asking them for money to support kids and their families for college scholarships. After his ‘John MacEnroe’ breakthrough, he revealed to us that stacks of telephone slips sat on his desk for weeks waiting for him to get past his fear of speaking to someone that ‘big.’ He admitted feeling almost nauseated as he sat pondering having to call these people to ask for their money, putting off making calls as long as possible.

All of us in the group were stunned. Here was a man who had undergone and passed the US Navy’s SEAL Program, the toughest, most harrowing psychological and physical testing in the world—training that only 1 in 100 come through successfully. SEALs have to confront armed and angry enemies on land, sea and in the air. Imagine someone trained to sneak through the jungle after bad guys with a knife in his teeth being afraid of making a few phone calls! But that’s exactly where Peter was. That’s how powerful his Somebody Training and Operating System’s Autopilot had become for him. Until his LDI, being in the jungle was about the only place Peter had ‘permission’ to access his Shadow.

In his reluctance to ever again having to be that combat veteran with a knife in his teeth, Peter had ‘thrown the baby out with the bath water’. Because of his Terror of being Abandoned (what his Game-of-Life Strategy told him would happen if he were ever to speak out with his full power), he had lost the capacity to simply be clear and direct. In the process he re-discovered a ‘John MacEnroe’ alive and well inside him, the very same kind of determination, stubbornness and courage that had enabled him to survive SEAL training and transcend daily bouts of gut-wrenching fear in fighting his way through treacherous kill zones. That same powerful, sometimes ‘selfish’, set of characteristics was exactly what he needed—again, from time-to-time—to experience real purpose, power and peace.

On his return home, Peter reported to us that every time he had a tough phone call to make, he thought to himself, “Now, how would John MacEnroe handle this situation?” He then would take a breath, step into his MacEnroe Shadow Character, and *make the call*, usually with true delight and optimism. He told us that since that breakthrough, he has begun to actually *look forward to these calls* and has found people eager to help his cause.

The Shadow knows...

HOW TO GET STARTED

Now that you see how your Shadow *Character* has value for you it's time to get specific 'lessons' based on the words you used to describe your Shadow layer when you 'peeled *the Onion*'. ([See page 91.](#))

STEP 1: LIST THE THREE 'WORST' QUALITIES IN YOUR SHADOW CHARACTER

These are my three for Donald Trump:

- **Cold/Cruel**
- **Bigoted**
- **Arrogant**

STEP 2: LOOK FOR THE 'SHADOW STRETCH'

Take each one and ask yourself, “What is the crucial, transformational “Stretch’ or ‘under-developed muscle’ buried in this (unacceptable) behavior, something I actually *need* to become a more-complete person at home and/or at work?”

Here's what happened when I took a good, hard look at each of my three worst 'Trump' characteristics and turned them into a 'Stretch' or potential 'muscle-that-needs-developing':



Cold and Cruel turns into *being willing to exercise my natural authority to go after what is important without stopping myself, or 'holding back', out of fear that what happens might make things difficult for someone else.*

Taking this on means I need to press hard into the creation of my new company, even if it means a few friends or colleagues decide not to 'play' with me anymore. I also need to start charging for Certification in our Facilitation-in-Development Process, even if a result is that some may not be able to afford it, even with scholarships. In my personal life, I need to put my own needs on the table when they arise instead of 'protecting' my partner from them (which is actually the attempt to protect myself from risk).



Bigoted turns into *taking a stand: letting myself have strong opinions or positions about things I believe in rather than keeping quiet about my core values to avoid awkward moments from upsetting others.*

If I take this one on, it means that at times when a large issue is 'up', like *racism* and *gender issues* are at the writing of this book, I will not shy away from engaging someone who disagrees. It means being willing to *be bigoted toward bigoted people*. It means being much more transparent about my core beliefs, even at the possible 'cost' of losing a friendship or a client. *It means taking a stand.*



Arrogant turns into claiming what is rightfully mine and standing fully in—and owning proudly—what I have accomplished.

Taking on this Shadow Characteristic means not letting my Operating System’s deep programming about humility stop me from ‘harvesting the fruit from the seeds I have sewn’, allowing myself to feel proud of what I have created or invented, and caring for the credit and legal rights of my intellectual property, like The Five Questions. It means giving myself the right to have what I have—and the credit for creating it.

Here are a few more examples to give you a sense of how to turn a ‘bad’ descriptor from your Shadow into a potentially ‘good’ (and missing) attribute. It starts at the left with a ‘Deadly No-No’ and works its way back across to become a ‘Crucial Stretch’ on the right.

No-No’s	→	Stretches
self-absorbed	→	put my needs first
arrogant	→	stand in my power
helpless, dependent	→	ask for help
lost	→	discover new territory
cruel, hard	→	tell you what to do
fanatic	→	stand firmly in my truth
weak, confused	→	let you lead / shine



John explains the Stretches Worksheet in more detail.



Now it's your turn! What are YOUR most-important Stretches 'buried' in your Shadow?

No-No's	→	Stretches
	→	
	→	
	→	
	→	
	→	
	→	
	→	

You have now identified two powerful and life-shaping internal realities, your **Persona** and your **Shadow**. They appear to be exact opposites and, left alone, would probably go to war with each other. How can they co-exist, much less work together on your behalf? Becoming wiser-at-work depends on mastering this capacity.

For this we need a beautiful concept from long-time friend, colleague—and LDI Graduate—**Dr Barry Johnson**. It's called Polarity Thinking...

POLARITY THINKING

Barry Johnson has developed a deceptively-simple-but-profound model that shows you how to work creatively with these kinds of apparent internal opposites. In his new book, ***AND: Making a Difference by Leveraging Polarity, Paradox or Dilemma***, Barry says, “A lot of what we consider problems-to-be-solved can never be solved because they are not problems that should *ever* be solved, nor EITHER/OR situations. They are actually polarities that need to be managed over time—or even better, *embraced*—and are therefore BOTH/AND situations.”

Years ago when Barry and his wife, Dana, did the LDI, I saw immediately that Polarity Thinking principles, even though usually applied to larger systems, would be useful as an *intra-personal* tool for discovering how to work with the Persona and Shadow in a way that multiplied the benefits of both ‘poles’. Without this map and guidance, we could be left trying to fly on one wing—which explains why many of us go in circles, repeating old patterns and wondering why we are not getting where we want to go!

AN EXAMPLE: PARENTING

If I ask you, “How should you treat your children, with unconditional love or love-with-limits?” The right answer is “Yes” because you can see immediately that as soon as you choose one, the other option does not go away, but becomes even more important. That’s how you can tell when something is a polarity: it contains ‘inter-dependent opposites’. And they are everywhere.

As humans, we are programmed to *compare*, usually with a *preference*. We compare ourselves to others; we compare things we are thinking about buying; we compare religions and political positions. We compare everything, all the time, and sooner or later come to *prefer* one over the other, seeing one as relatively ‘good’ and the other as relatively ‘bad’, or at least ‘not-as-good’.

Here is a list. See if you don't automatically prefer one over the other:

'Good/Better'	'Bad/Worse'
Success	Failure
Lean	Fat
Rich	Poor
Spontaneous	Controlled
Making the sale	Not making the sale
Winning the argument	Losing the argument
Empowered teams	Top-down management
Quality	Cost
Change	Stability
Taking care of oneself	Taking care of others
Loving unconditionally	Loving within limits
Neat	Messy
Quiet	Loud
Fast	Deliberate
My Persona	My Shadow

You get the idea.

Virtually everything in life lives as a potential *position*, with its opposite on the other end of what is actually a *continuum*. We keep trying to manage our lives so we only experience things we hold as being on the 'good' side of the polarity and avoid those on the 'bad' or 'wrong' end.

Life keeps reminding us that we can't live in *half* a world. To be alive means living with access to both sides of every polarity.

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

To paraphrase the words of the biblical poem in 'Ecclesiastes', written over 2,500 years ago—and a more recent adaptation by Pete Seeger, recorded by The Byrds in the 1968 song, 'Turn, Turn, Turn':

To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:

A time to be born; a time to die;
A time to plant; a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill; a time to heal;
A time to break down; a time to build up;
A time to weep; a time to laugh;
A time to mourn; a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones; a time to gather stones together;
A time to embrace; a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to gain; a time to lose;
A time to keep; a time to cast away;
A time to rend; a time to sew;
A time to keep silence; a time to speak;
A time to love; a time to hate;
A time of war; a time of peace.

Based on what has been developed above we could add a few more contemporary verses, using Barry Johnson's simple addition 'AND', the key principle in Polarity Thinking:

For everything there is a 'time':

A time to lead AND a time to follow;
A time to express your feelings AND a time to refrain from expressing;
A time to *yield* power AND a time to *wield* power;
A time to talk AND a time to listen;
A time to be quiet AND a time to be loud.

A time to be neat AND a time to be messy.
A time for my Persona AND a time for (a Stretch from) my Shadow.

Our root problem in life, it seems, does not lie with the items in the 'negative' column, like failure, fat, or loud, but rather in *labeling the two columns in the first place*. Both columns have a crucial role to play in life. The ones we hold as 'bad' are, at times, even essential to our development into the human being we are capable of being—if we can generate a neutral spirit of inquiry from which to explore them. 'Losing the sale' could become a valuable life experience. So could 'failing to get the project in on time', or 'taking care of myself', or 'letting someone else get the credit'.

As my doctor, Bill Peters, used to tell me, "Getting sick is your body's way of trying to get your attention, John. Death is just the ultimate in feedback!" When we can suspend judgment, at least for a moment, we can see the *downside* of the 'positive' phenomenon and the *upside* of the 'negative' one. We might prefer to be *rich*, but the experience of being *poor* could be a powerful wake-up call to an even richer way of living or to appreciate what you already have.

ARE THE MAASAI 'POOR'?



On a trip to Kenya to live and work side-by-side with the Maasai community for a week, I was riding in a Land Rover with Kakuta, a Warrior/Elder who had become my friend. As we drove through the sprawling city of Nairobi, the driver pointed to a brown smear of cardboard and tin shacks on the side of a mountain and told us, "The estimate is that there are 500,000 people living there!" As we drove past, Kakuta sat with his hand on his chin staring out the window. He turned to me and said, "I feel so sorry for those people, John. How would you know where your home was? And they are so poor..."

Later, as I recounted the moment to my colleagues, Lynnea Brinkerhoff and Chris Henderson, they pointed out the amazing thing about Kakuta's statement. Here sat a man who was probably *wearing everything he owned*, looking at the people in that slum and seeing their poverty. He was seeing a great truth, of course. *Kakuta had nothing, and yet had everything he needed*. He was 'rich' in the things that make for a good life:

- He knew who he was.
- He lived in a community that cared about him.
- He lived in peace with Creator (the Maasai name for God)
- He lived in harmony with the earth and its plants and animals.
- He had an extended family and a Band of Brothers who would lay down their lives for him.
- He was genuinely happy.

It occurred to us that Kakuta had what most of our clients sometimes only dream of having in their lives. (That said, we have done what we could to help our Maasai friends have more of what they *do* need, like advanced education, access to medical care and training for work that contributes to the world.)

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS, WHO KNOWS?



Many years ago, as this apocryphal story goes, there was a village in a barren land where survival was a full-time job. Without horses to work the land and do heavy tasks, people would not last long. One day, a family in the village left the gate open and their old horse was able to hobble off into the wilderness. When they heard about what had happened, all the villagers came rushing to the family's place, saying, "What a terrible thing! It's a tragedy..." The family had a grandmother, a wise old crone, who looked at the grieving neighbors and said, "Good news, bad news, who knows?"

The villagers shook their heads and wandered back to their homes muttering about how the old woman had 'lost her marbles' (or whatever it was people back then in that part of the world would have muttered).



Several days later, however, their horse came trotting over the hill—with three wild horses in tow! The news spread rapidly and soon all the villagers were again standing around the family's gate saying things like, "How did you know it was going to be so wonderful?! Now you have four horses; you're the richest family in our village!" To which grandma responded, "Good news, bad news, who knows?"

Again the villagers returned to their homes grumbling at the strange attitude of the old woman.

The next day, as the family's teenage son was out trying to break one of the wild horses, he was thrown and broke his hip in several places, crippling him for life. As word got around, the villagers came trooping around again, saying, "You were right, old woman! It was a tragedy that you got those horses. Now your grandson has been crippled for life. Awful, just awful..." Again the old woman said, somewhat predictably at this point, "Good news, bad news, who knows?"

By this time the villagers were almost getting used to her strange response, but it didn't stop them from wondering again whether she was really 'all there.'

Some time later a regional warlord came through the village drafting every able-bodied young man to go and fight in a battle from which few would return. He took every single young man in the village—except for the grandson with the broken hip. At this the villagers swarmed back, shouting, "You were right! It was a good thing that your grandson broke his hip! At least now you have him around to help. What a wonderful thing!" Again, the wise old grandma said, "Good news, bad news, who knows?"

When does this story end? Right... It *never* ends. We are inclined, as humans, to decide immediately whether some event is good news or bad news, long before we have the perspective that comes with hindsight. Is this thing that is happening 'good news' or 'bad news'? The larger truth is: 'Time will tell'. That wise old crone had something we all need to develop: a way of seeing or 'holding' events in a kind of neutral, spirit-of-inquiry mode long enough for both the upside and the downside of the polarity to manifest.

WHAT STOPS US FROM LEARNING: COMING TO CONCLUSIONS

You might wonder what is wrong with the built-in penchant for making instant judgments. You do it all the time. It's a crucial skill! But the instant you come to a conclusion about something—or someone—*learning stops*. You become unable to see anything different from your judgment. In fact, the stronger your emotional reaction, the more distorted your perception. Falling in love with someone is just as much about this phenomenon as having an instant dislike for them. As soon as we make the judgment—'good news' or 'bad news'—we lose everything else about that person or situation that doesn't fit our assessment.

As you saw in working with your Shadow Character, there is a way to take even the worst experience of your life and find eventual upsides, and vice versa. When you can generate a genuine 'spirit of inquiry' regarding what happens to you, every experience becomes an opportunity for growth and development.

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE FROM YOUR PAST?

Think of an experience that occurred earlier in your life—one at work or at home—which, at the time, you would just as soon have avoided. Perhaps it was a divorce, or a bankruptcy, or getting fired, something 'bad' or even tragic. Now, temporarily *suspend the judgment* you have about that moment, with its accompanying anger or pain or shame—or even *wrongness*, and look at it as a potentially life-enhancing event. How has that experience contributed positively to your becoming who you are today? What are some long-term upsides or hidden benefits you can now realize were embedded in that 'negative' moment or experience?

IF POP HAD STOPPED DRINKING...



If my father had stopped drinking when I was nine or ten years old, I would have been the happiest kid in the world, for myself, for my Mom, but mostly for Pop. If that life-sapping, self-esteem-eroding problem of his had gone away back then, what joy, what relief!

And, most probably, I would *not* be in this line of work, nor writing this book for you. Can you see that it was my ‘failure’ (to transform my Pop’s life) that has moved me to transform every life I can get my hands on?! That’s one kind of good news coming out of the bad news of the alcoholic classroom I called home for 17 years.

There’s another beneficial lesson in growing up in Pop’s alcoholic world. Anyone who has lived in a relationship with someone addicted to drugs or alcohol knows what it takes to survive. The skills and attributes that were sharpened on the whetstone of that frightening childhood experience have stood me in good stead ever since. For instance, I learned how to read between the lines of what people were saying in order to figure out what was really going on—a great asset as a therapist, change consultant and leadership development coach. I used to get up from breakfast, hop on my bike and, on the way to school, be thinking, “It’s going to be rough tonight.”

That kind of intuition was a survival skill to sense when a storm was coming so I could ‘batten down the hatches’ and prepare for heavy weather—something which enables me today to discern what people are feeling, sometimes even before they know it themselves. In the absence of a lot of positive reinforcement or emotional support, I developed the capacity to fend for myself, to be my own source of ‘juice’ for life.

All of that—my desire to be a force for positive change in people’s lives and the skills required to be effective in this kind of deep work—came directly out of my family being *exactly the way it was*. Good news, bad news, who knows? As a young boy whose gifts and direction in life were being hammered out daily on that anvil, I was not able to see and embrace the polarities present. That didn’t happen until later. Much later.

INTEGRATING THE PERSONA-SHADOW POLARITY

To explore deeper the potential *upside* of a Shadow characteristic that you have pushed aside or resisted—as well as seeing the potential *downside* of the Persona you are so attached to—let's go to Barry Johnson's 'Infinite Energy Cycle'. This shows how two apparent opposites can be seen as necessary 'energy centers' that flow back-and-forth in an infinity-like loop, rather than drain our energy as a war with a winner and a loser.

Seen this way, polarities are both unavoidable and unsolvable. *In fact, you do not want a polarity to go away!* An Infinite Energy Cycle built around a polarity represents a reality of life that must remain alive and constantly moving. These Polarity Cycles have been in our lives since birth and all of us have learned through experience and intuition to manage and flow with many of them fairly well. Maybe you know how to both *plan* AND *take action*. To be *clear* AND *flexible*. To *encourage individual initiative* AND *empower team synergy*. How to *rest* AND *work*.

Much of the time, however, we end up getting 'positional' and 'stuck' on only one side of a polarity, breaking the natural flow of energy around the infinity loop. We create a *static* 'either-or' situation, which, when deeply-seen, is actually a flowing 'both-and' situation:

- How can we reward teams AND individual performers?
- How can I attend to my needs AND my family's needs?
- How can we have top-down decision-making AND bottom-up decision-making?
- How can we create change AND maintain some stability?
- How do I pursue future career development AND focus on where I am right now?

You know you're in a polarity-to-be-managed when one position 'wins', but the other pole or option does not go away, but becomes even more important. For instance, when you decide to make a change, the need for stability is still present. Or vice versa. That's because a polarity represents two on-going, interdependent variables that need each other and that, over time will each have their 'moment'.



'JUST ENOUGH' RESISTANCE

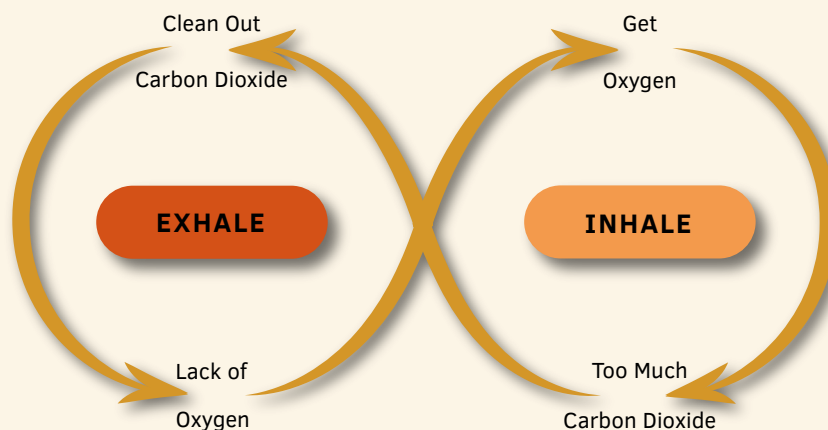
Here's another analogy: When lumberjacks are using a two-person cross-buck saw, the cut comes on the draw. For Joe to get his maximum cut, Sue, on the other end, must maintain a certain amount of tension on the saw, and vice versa. Each must let the other person *have* their moment to cut, but *resist* just a little, otherwise the other person won't be able to cut at all. If one of the people and their position 'loses' or is not there, the 'winner' who is trying to cut will maybe get a single cut, or more likely, the saw will wobble and freeze up completely.

The application to leadership and personal-development work that I saw in Barry's model is this: Polarities not only exist between people or between points of view in organizations, but *inside*

individuals as well. The Persona/Shadow work you have been exploring should now be starting to come together and make some sense. Can you see how they represent an Internal Polarity-to-be-Managed?

BREATHING: A LIFE-SAVING POLARITY

Barry likes to use the example of breathing to show how natural polarities occur in life.



Inhaling and Exhaling are both essential for life. Fortunately for us, breathing was not left up to our thinking brain. If we had to *think* about breathing, we'd all be dead, *not* because we would forget to breathe—although that may be a possibility—but because if our minds were involved at all, we would develop a preference for one pole! “I’m an Inhaler, what are you?” We would be trying to live by experiencing only our preferred position, and within a few minutes we’d be gone.

- Inhaling not only has an *upside*—getting life-enhancing oxygen—but also a *downside*—the build-up of deadly carbon dioxide.
- You cannot get the upside—oxygen—without also getting the downside—the build-up of CO₂. This is very important: you get oxygen, you also get CO₂. They come together.
- The same goes, in reverse, for exhaling: you clear the CO₂; you need oxygen.

- The body doesn't prefer one over the other. That's why we're still alive. It has sensing mechanisms throughout the body—in every cell, actually—that monitor and trigger when it is time to move to the other position.
- As long as we remain healthy, this process has become an effortless and conflict-free experience.

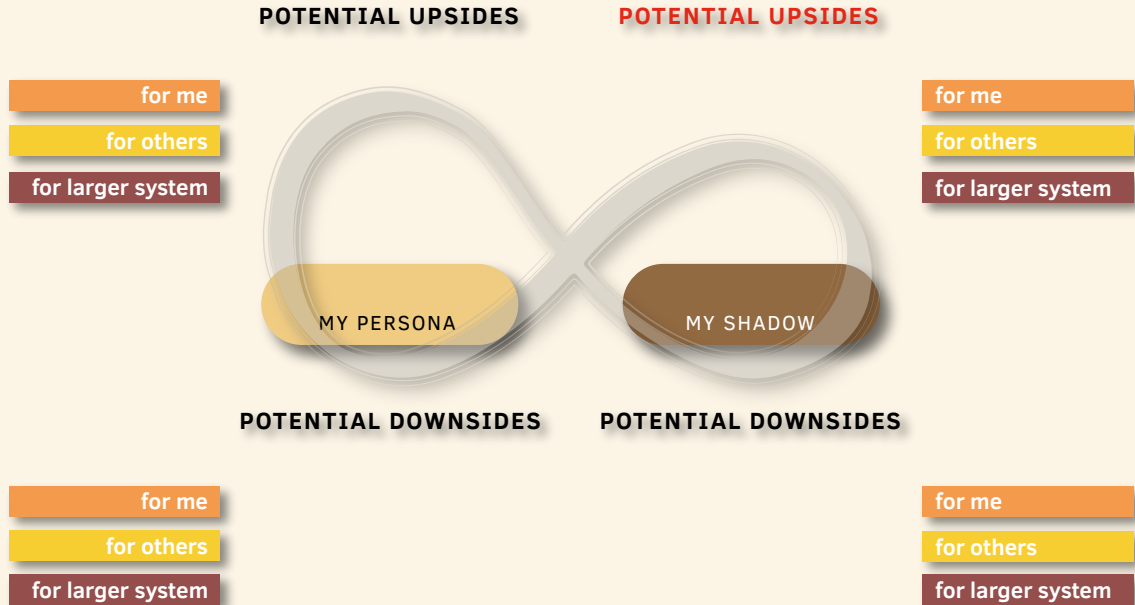
PERSONA & SHADOW: ANOTHER NATURAL POLARITY

If this physical example seems simplistic, let's look at the Persona and Shadow as *polarities begging to be understood and integrated*.

When the Persona's downside begins to show up (which is inevitable on Autopilot), the mind thinks, "Maybe I should do something different; this isn't really working. Maybe I should go to the other side and experiment with a little bit of the best of my Shadow." Instantly the Autopilot alarm goes off, "Bong, Bong, Bong, Dive, Dive, Dive! For Pete's sake, don't even *think* about going over to the Shadow! You *know* what will happen if you do: you'll get dumped, reviled, replaced, or dismissed and you'll make a lot of people angry or _____ (fill in your own Terror). Just try harder to make your Persona work!" So you go back to pumping up your Persona even more, hoping for a breakthrough, which rarely comes. But what you desperately need is often only available *in the upside of the Shadow pole*.

It takes some work, but when you stretch into your Shadow and your soul begins to experience the benefits, you become more complete, more whole, more powerful and more at peace.

MAPPING YOUR INNER POLARITY



POTENTIAL *UPSIDES* OF YOUR PERSONA

SELF: This one should be easy! Right away you can fill in the first line (potential benefit to myself) with your ADDICTION. Being in your Persona raises the chances considerably that you will experience what you are 'addicted to' more often.

OTHERS: When you are in your Persona, what are some of the good things that tend to happen to the people around you? What do *they* get out of being around you?

SYSTEM: Take the 'circle' out one more level. What benefits might come to the relationship, or the team, or the project, or the company, or the _____, when you are in your Persona.

POTENTIAL DOWNSIDES OF YOUR PERSONA

Remember, there is nothing wrong with your Persona. It has gotten you to where you are! The downside comes from *having to* be your Persona. Being kind and giving is beautiful. Until it isn't. Or until you get fed up with *having to* be so kind and giving all the friggin' time! So, on these, think about what the potential downsides are if someone has to be _____ (fill in your Persona Character) *all the time*.

SELF: This one is also easy! Virtually everyone we have ever done this exercise with realizes that 'burn-out' or 'exhaustion' is a well-known downside of their Persona—regardless of who their Persona is! But what are a few more?

OTHERS: When you are in your Persona, what are some of the 'bad' things that can happen to the people around you? Quite often, a strong or gifted Persona has the potential to *disempower* others. I mean, how many Super Heroes can there be in one room at the same time? "One tiger per mountain", as the saying goes.

SYSTEM: Take the 'circle' out one more level. What 'bad things' might come to the relationship, or the team, or the project, or the company, or the _____, when you are *always* in your Persona?

POTENTIAL DOWNSIDES OF YOUR SHADOW

Let's keep moving in a counter-clockwise circle. This one is usually very easy to fill out.

SELF: This one is also 'baked in'! For virtually everyone their TERROR goes here. In fact, it is the programmed-in fear of this happening that has kept you out of your Shadow your whole life. But what are a few more potential downsides for *you*?

OTHERS: When you are in your Shadow, what are some of the 'bad' things that can happen to the people around you? (It is often the opposite of something in the Upside of your Persona quadrant.)

SYSTEM: Take the 'circle' out one more level. What 'bad things' might come to the relationship, or the team, or the project, or the company, or the _____, if you fall into your Shadow?

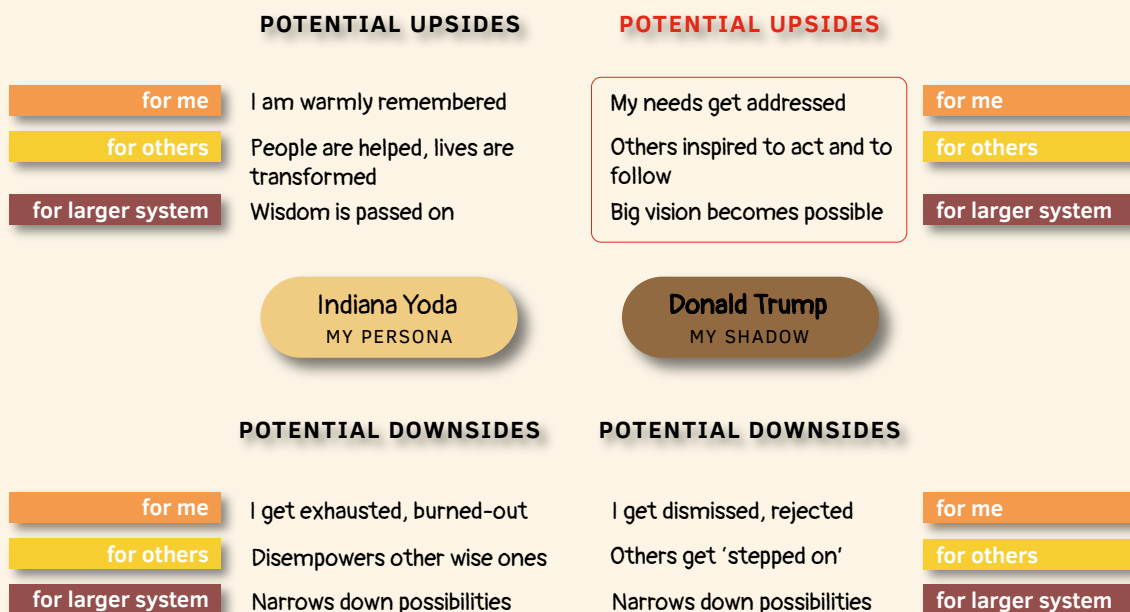
POTENTIAL UPSIDES OF YOUR SHADOW

SELF: This one is usually the hardest because it is the one least ‘visited’. But you have filled in some Stretches and learned what your Shadow Character has to teach you, so maybe you can fill in a few benefits that could come to you.

OTHERS: When you are in your Shadow, what are some of the good things that might start to happen to the people around you? What could *they* get out of being around you in the best of your Shadow? (A clue: it might be the opposite of what is over there in the downside of your Persona...)

SYSTEM: Take the ‘circle’ out one more level. What benefits might come to the relationship, or the team, or the project, or the company, or the _____, when you are in your Shadow. Again, look at the System downsides of your Persona and see if some good stuff doesn’t show up for you.

Here’s what my own internal Polarity Map looks like:



As you can see, my Polarity Map shows clearly the upsides and downsides in my showing up as ‘Indiana Yoda’, a wonderful Persona, but it also shows how problems start to happen when I *have to be him all the time*. In those moments when I am ‘on automatic’ and my Operating System is in control, I am focusing on helping *others* and the world by being wise and brave—and not remembering my needs or the needs of the larger situation.

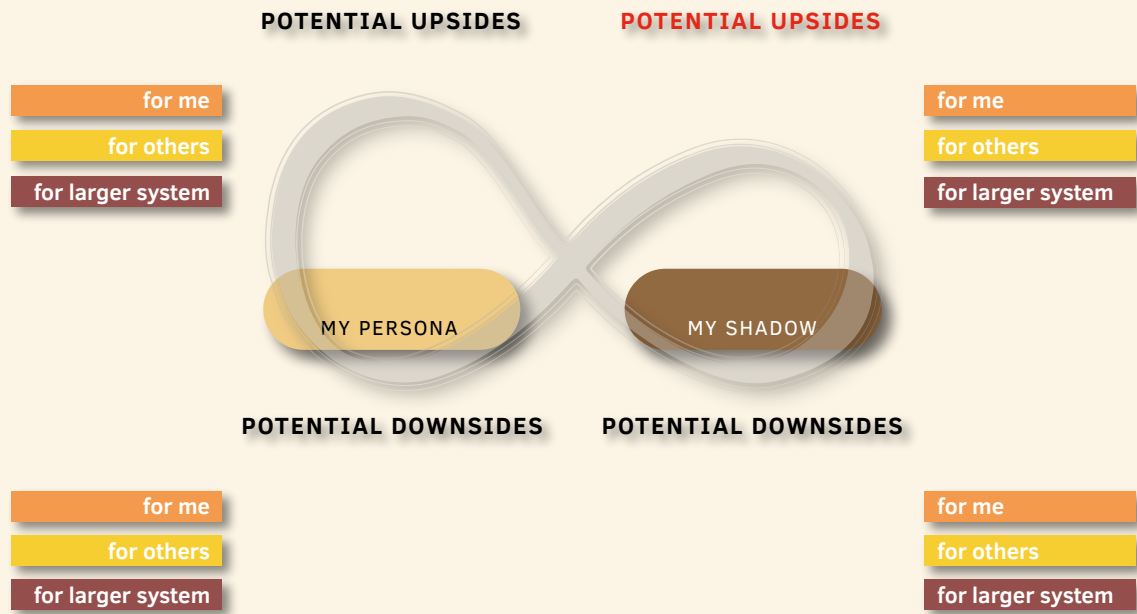
But the hardest area of the Polarity Map for most people is the *upside of the Shadow Character*. You will see what I mean in a moment when you draw *your* Polarity Map!

Here are a few of the potential benefits embedded in my Shadow as I search for the-best-of-Trump:

- Stand fully in my power and authority
- Guard what is mine
- Speak forcefully about my mission and objectives—tell you what I want
- Wandering, ‘lost’ into unknown, uncharted territories, making new discoveries



Now is a good time to draw your own Polarity Map, with at least *something* in each of the four quadrants.



THE INFINITE ENERGY CIRCLE

Every human being has an internal and archetypal polarity *flow* that begs to be embraced: the Persona and the Shadow, the 'good stuff' and the "I never-want-to-be-like-*that* stuff." When we are on Autopilot and unaware of these two characters battling away inside, we end up at the effect of the 'war'. Although we are automatically trying off-and-on all day to 'pump' up our Persona to get little 'hits' of our Addiction and doing everything we can to avoid even a 'hint' of our Terror, we end up experiencing mostly the downside of our Persona and terrified to go into our Shadow and *its* downside. This pattern has become our 'life'.

But once we become aware of this reality, we are able to break the default pattern and reconnect with the flowing and natural Infinite Energy Circle, allowing *both* the Persona and the Shadow to 'have their moments in the sun'. In the Polarity Map below, see how this can happen as I am able to tap into the Gifts in my Persona and the Stretches in my Shadow, each when it is 'time' for them.

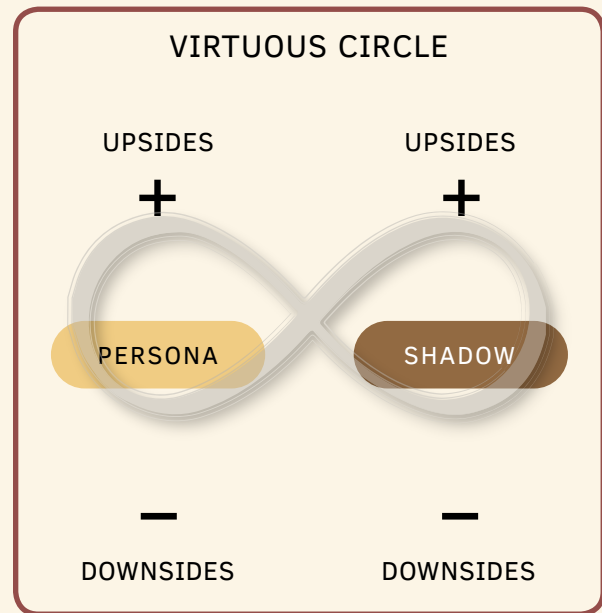
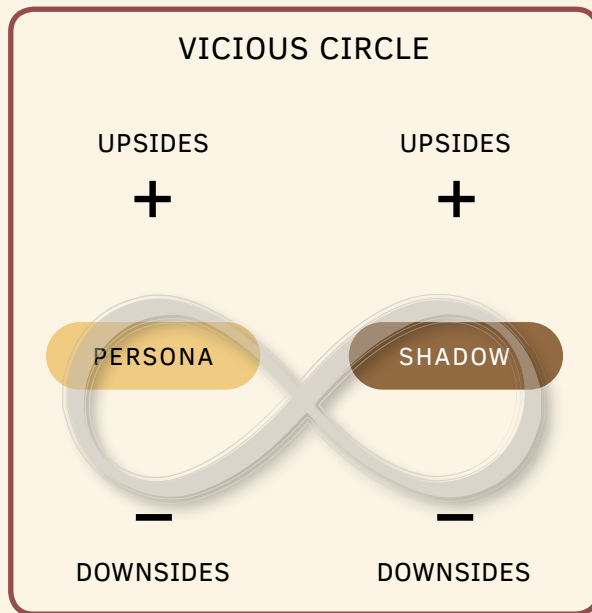
'VICIOUS' OR 'VIRTUOUS' CIRCLES?

The presence of these inner polarities is not negotiable. You are born—you develop polarities. And sooner or later you start to prefer one pole over the other, such as “I will always be ‘kind, nice and caring’ and never be ‘hard, tough or mean’”. Eventually these harden into ‘macro-characters’, your Persona and Shadow, which ‘dance’ back and forth inside your head and heart in a loop. One of them—usually your Persona—dominates The Dance.

The question is: at what *height* is your ‘dance’ happening?

In refusing to step into your Shadow—out of fear of its Downside—you pump harder on your Persona. The result is you sink deeper and deeper into *a dance between the Downsides* of both your Persona and your Shadow. Barry calls this the ‘Vicious Circle’.

But... It is possible to create a ‘Virtuous Circle’ by developing the courage to step into the Shadow, specifically into the Stretches you have discovered. There is still a moving back and forth as the life situation dictates, but the dance is happening *between the two Upsides* rather *between the two Downsides*!



Vicious Circle or Virtuous Circle? Which dance do you prefer? You choose!

THE GAME-OF-LIFE STRATEGY (OR 'CON')

So, what's been running *you* at home and at work? The answer is your Autopilot, controlled by your internal Operating System, which was programmed early in your life to make sure you always stayed safe and looked good by consistently applying something we call the 'Con', or less embarrassingly, the 'Game-of-Life Strategy'.

Personally, I like calling what we do 'our Con'. You know what a 'con' is: like being approached by someone with a proposition that sounds plausible on the surface, but you have an uneasy feeling that they may be 'running a con' on you. The term comes from the English word 'confidence'. Someone is presenting themselves to you in way that will hopefully gain your confidence, thus allowing them to get something from you without you knowing what their secret objective. Isn't that exactly what we are doing off and on every day: trying to get people to see us in a certain (favorable) way so as to up the chances that we will 'score' hits of our Addiction and avoid our Terror? It's painful, but I think it's accurate.

Over the years my Facilitators-in-Development have objected to this 'negative' term, so rather than replacing it, I agreed to add a more 'neutral' term if it would help people accept the reality of the (usually) unconscious 'game' we are playing. Thus: The 'Game-of-Life Strategy'. Also accurate but it is also less painful to admit!

So here is my own default 'Con' or 'Game-of-Life Strategy', created for me by my Operating System over the years:

HELLO

I am John , but I have been presenting myself to you as Indiana Yoda , who is brave , resourceful and wise , and working hard to keep you from seeing me as Donald Trump , who is cruel , power-hungry and stupid , so you will warmly remember me and not ignore or forget me.



What is *your* default Game-of-Life Strategy ('Con')?

When you have written yours down, read it out loud to someone close to you. *Make sure to also read out loud that sentence at the end in italics.* For many participants in the LDI, saying those words is a moving experience.)

HELLO

I am _____, but I have been presenting myself
MY NAME
to you as _____, who is _____, _____
MY PERSONA CHARACTER
and _____, and working hard to keep you
from seeing me as _____, who is _____,
MY NOT/SHADOW CHARACTER
_____ and _____, so you will _____ me
MY ADDICTION/NEED
and not _____ me.
MY TERROR/HOT BUTTON



"This has been my 'Con' until now. I hereby its original positive role in my life, release its hold in me, and open to the possibility of living into the larger, freer being that I am"

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

These things will not be easy—but they are important, even crucial to your ongoing development into the human being you are capable of being. Why is it so hard? Because, like music playing in the grocery store, our old Somebody Training tapes are still in the machine and running all day long. But once we are aware of them, we can catch ourselves in the old act and consciously substitute one of the new, still-being-developed skills or qualities.

When I saw the truth of this some years ago I realized that, when I was unconscious and on Autopilot, I was all the time trying to 'matter', to 'help' (read *impress*) people with my transformational

wisdom so they would remember me. It was a powerful and embarrassing insight. And it was also very upsetting because I felt the truth of it and knew I had to get beyond this 'game' to what *else* my life might be about. In a conversation with a good friend and Coach, Dixon de Lena, he suggested that I put my life *in service of something more-worthy of who I am*. In that moment, I knew I had to discover—or actually re-discover—something that got revealed in **Question #4: What CALLS Me?**

QUESTION #4:

What Calls Me?



LIVING A PURPOSE WORTHY OF WHO I AM

After taking on **Question #3: What has been RUNNING me?** perhaps you can now see how you have been living your life guided by an 'Autopilot', programmed years ago by your Operating System, employing a (mostly) unconscious Game-of-Life-Strategy designed to get regular 'hits' of what your Somebody Training said you needed (your Addiction), and avoid any hint of what that training told you would be almost deadly (your Terror), using a default approach that was intended to keep you safe and looking good.

The question is: *If that is not what you are on the planet for, then why are you here?* To go with Dixon's question: *What could your life be about (or this meeting or this interaction or this project) that is more worthy of who you are?* When you get beyond, or beneath, all that Automatic Living programmed into you, what are you putting yourself—the wonderful attributes from your Persona and the powerful Stretches in your Shadow—in the service of?

In short, **What CALLS you?**

THE 'CALL' FROM OUTSIDE

The more obvious response to this question has to do with what calls you from *outside*, from the world. In fact, the concept of being 'called' is at the root of our word 'vocation' (from the Latin, *vocare*—to call or speak out), and is usually associated with people in religious roles. In the past, those who heard and responded to 'the call' were known as 'ecclesiastical' (from the Greek, *ekleseia*—the called-out ones). Like today's volunteer fire fighters, when the divine siren went off, they were the ones who heard it and went *toward* the challenge or threat. Looked at in this vein, the question would be: What calls out to you from the world? What is a need that exists 'out there' that grabs you and won't let you go? What situation in Life are you perfectly-designed to address?

Frederick Beutner's words make a great transition here:

The place Life calls you to is the place where your deep gladness meets the world's deepest hunger.

Let's first explore your 'deep gladness'—or what calls you from inside.

THE CALL FROM *INSIDE*

As important as the world's needs are, taking on Question 4 is not initially about what calls you from outside, or about what job or task should you should set yourself to. Questions like, "What would be the best place for me to 'aim' myself and my gifts?" or "Should I be doing what I am doing now?" are crucial to ask yourself, but they come later. Other questions need to come first, like:

- What *inside me* calls out to be expressed into the world?
- What gifts/charisms and values in me simply *must* be manifest in whatever work I do?
- What is my soul here to learn and to contribute?

Before you decide what 'job' you should take on out there in the world, you must take on the inner work of reconnecting with your own soul and its essence. '**Job**', by the way, comes from the Old English word *gobbe*, or 'lump', referring to how laborers got paid back then—by how many lumps of whatever they were hauling or shoveling. '**Work**' on the other hand, comes from the Greek word *erg*, which, if I remember my high school physics, is a measure of how much force it takes to move one gram one centimeter. **WORK is energy-with-a-vector, purposeful energy being exerted in a specific direction.**

If you only search for the job 'out there' and fail to base it on the work that is most truly about you 'in here', no matter how important the external task you take on, eventually you—and that task—will founder or fail.

What you DO on the *outside* must ultimately be connected deeply and directly with who you ARE on the *inside*.

The rest of nature understands this. An acorn would never try to become a pine tree; it has to become an oak tree. It must grow into what it is already. I am not implying, as some would argue, that there is a divine plan that you have to fit into. If that were the case, then this whole book and the notion of doing *any* inner work would be rendered useless. Put the book down and simply keep doing what you're doing—and hope the plan is in place. That kind of fatalism is not what this is about.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHARISMS?

What I *am* suggesting is that each of us has inside a tendency or urge to manifest something out there in the world that is connected with who and what is deep within us. Throughout history that urge has been the focus of attention for profound thinkers and spiritual teachers. We say special people are 'charismatic'. (From the Greek *xáris*, or 'gift'.) Originally, a charism was a divinely-given ability to know or do things. The truth is that we are *all* 'gifted', each in our own way. No one is left out. The question isn't: Am I gifted or not? but rather: *What are those gifts that make me who I am?*

Artists understand this charism principle. Throughout history they have been the ones among us who realize their charism and allow it to express itself in their work. They will tell you, in fact, that they feel *compelled* to express that creative urge or knowing, turning it into something that can be seen or heard in the physical world. My daughter, Emma, simply *must* dance.

If you look back over the various jobs you have had, you may be able to see the footprint of *your* charisms, your core gifts, your essence, or soul's qualities. Perhaps you can see the inner theme that has woven itself through what you have been doing on the outside all along.

A PERSONAL EXAMPLE

In my life, I have had many different ‘jobs,’ shown here in chronological order, starting with the first work I had in my teen years:

- YMCA Camp Counselor and Waterfront Director
- Amateur/professional magician, mostly birthdays and business clubs like Rotary and Kiwanis
- American Athletic Union (AAU) Swim Team Coach
- Combat Officer, USS Eaton (DD-510), US Navy
- Lutheran Minister/University Chaplain/Gestalt and Family Therapist
- Core Faculty of a college graduate program in applied behavioral science
- Leadership and Executive Development Coach
- Organizational Change and Conflict Consultant, seminar leader, and author

Can you see any *themes* here? On the surface, these eight jobs appear to be quite different and unrelated, but when I look into them, I see a *pattern*. I get a sense of my charism(s) at work in each of them. But it took a wake-up call of major proportions to make that clear.

AN UNAVOIDABLE MESSAGE: IN CASE YOU MISSED IT, JOHN...



One afternoon, when I was about to finish my four years of service in the U.S. Navy and was unsure about what came next, I remember going Off Watch and heading to my stateroom in After Officers’ Country. Gently lulled by the rolling of the sea, which was as smooth as glass that day, I sat down alone at my little pull-down desk, took out a clean pad of yellow, lined paper, grabbed a ball-point pen, and began to think about what I ought to do with my life after the Navy. On one side of the paper I made a list of all the things I could think of that I might *like* to do. As I recall, I wrote down things like:

- Boy Scout executive (As an Eagle Scout, Order of the Arrow, and Senior Patrol Leader of Troop 700, this one made sense.)

- YMCA youth worker or camp director (I had been a Counselor, Assistant Program Director, and Waterfront Director for many summers at Camp Richmond.)
- Social Worker (An aunt, Harriet Anne, had been one in Pennsylvania and it sounded like I could do some good in that role.)
- Doctor (A cousin was a surgeon, and the practice of medicine intrigued me.)
- Teacher (Homer Bast, my dear friend and Roanoke College Faculty Advisor, had been an inspiration to me, and I often pictured myself in front of a class, teaching something like history or philosophy.)
- Minister/Pastor (With five generations in the gene pool on my father's side serving as Lutheran Ministers, this one had to be on the list.)

Then I made a list down the other side of the paper (I can't believe I was such a Virgo about this) of things I would *never* do, like:

- CPA or bookkeeper (It was a Herculean effort just to balance my checkbook.)
- Salesman, e.g. real estate, automobiles, 'things'
- Career US Naval Officer (My Captain, Pehr Pehrsson, had urged me to stay in and 'go for Admiral', but that path just didn't feel 'right' to me.)
- Any role that required me to do the same thing over and over every day, or
- Any job that was focused primarily on making money.

I stared at that piece of paper for a long time and *nothing came to me*. I remember feeling discouraged and lost. After about an hour of internal wrestling, a question formed, not so much in my mind as in my heart, in my gut. In retrospect, it now appears to have been a kind of prayer: *What should I do with my life? Where should I 'aim' my charisms?*

What happened next can only be described as a moment of divine inspiration, what a Zen or yoga master would call an enlightenment experience, or a 'theophany', to use biblical language.

A *voice* came to me, as clear as a bell, "John. ... (long pause) Be with people at the level of their deepest need."

I remember asking reflexively in Navy Air Controller lingo, "Say again, over..."

The voice obliged, ***“John, be with people at the level of their deepest need.”***

Wishing the voice could have been a little more specific, I immediately realized that what I got was all I was going to get—there weren’t going to be any more details. The rest was up to me to figure out. I wrote it down as fast as I could, lest I forget it.

What that voice *did* was to tell me—or remind me—what my charisma was. What the ‘acorn’ inside me was all actually about. It didn’t say anything about the oak tree—the *result* of my charisma, the outside manifestation, or the *job*; it just put me in touch with the acorn, the inner essence, my *work*. That is, apparently, enough. When I look back at each of the *jobs* I have had in my life, that acorn of inner *work* has permeated the way I approached the outer work. In each of them, I was intending to be of service to the people around me. It wouldn’t matter what logo was on the paycheck, the John J. Scherer IV ‘acorn’ or ‘charisma’ that I brought would be the same: *Be with people at the level of their deepest need.*

Even as a Combat Officer on a US Navy destroyer! One afternoon the ship’s Executive Officer, LCDR Bob Clark, stopped me in passing on the starboard side of the main deck and, smiling, asked me, “Mr. Scherer, what are you running here, a ship of war or a psychiatric clinic?” I remember wagging the fingers of my extended right hand and saying, “Well, XO, it depends on when you ask.” Even there, in that hard environment where life was literally on the line every day, someone else had detected my soul’s theme, my acorn, my charisma, my work.

A ‘POLAROID MOMENT’: LOVE AND TRUTH



Many years later, during the first afternoon of a two-day Leadership Development training session in Boston for a group of mid-level managers from Polaroid, one of the participants stopped me, almost in mid-sentence.

“John, what are you *really* doing here with us? I mean, all you consultants have the same little diagrams and buzz words; we hear them over and over; but there’s something *different* about this stuff you’re doing with us, and I just can’t put my finger on it. What’s going on here?!”

I noticed other heads nodding in agreement as he spoke. So, like a good consultant (when in doubt, gather data), I asked people to say what was going on for them.

“Man, oh man. I feel like I’m at church camp!” one participant said. There was laughter around the room. “No!” she went on, “I mean I haven’t felt this alive and good and hopeful about my life in a l-o-n-g time. Not since church camp!”

“Well, I agree,” a man chimed in. “This feels like a spiritual development seminar to me. Let’s GO! I’m loving it!”

“Okay, I’ll keep this feedback going,” someone else chimed in. “John, you’re showing us a bunch of really useful and interesting stuff, but there is some kind of deeper dimension to what is happening here—more than just typical leadership models and theories. You seem to be touching us at another, I’ll call it spiritual, level.”

Now you need to understand that I had never used the word ‘spiritual’ or even had that notion anywhere in my intention for this seminar. I had been presenting straightforward leadership and management concepts and models, like the Life Cycle of Organizations, Three Kinds of Change, Dealing with Resistance, and The Waterline. Stuff like that. Not an overtly spiritual concept in *any* of it! Puzzled, but intrigued, I thanked them and picked up my magic marker to continue.

“Wait a minute, John!” the first guy stopped me. “You still haven’t answered my question: What *are* you doing here with us?!”

Something ‘went deep’ in me, and I chose not to rattle off some glib, clever retort—which I was certainly capable of. Instead, I chose to drop into that inner place where I go when meditating and see what ‘came’. I told myself that I would say—without editing—whatever rose to the surface of my mind.

“Let me think about that for a moment,” I recall saying, and I just stood still in front of them, waiting for what would come. When it came a few seconds later, I spoke it into the room, feeling amazed and excited by what it had turned out to be:

'I am here to love you and be a channel for the truth.'

Whoa! It hit me like a ton of bricks...

It must have hit everyone else, too, because the room got v-e-r-y still...

You could have heard a pin drop...

No one moved...

There was a kind of crackling clearness in the air, like after a rainstorm with lightning.

Still no one moved...

I didn't know what to do...

The stillness went on for quite a while...

I didn't want to break the moment and disrupt whatever was moving in us by saying anything, so I simply stood quietly—and reverently—in the powerful experience enveloping all of us.

After what seemed like forever, not knowing what else to do, I said quietly, "Perhaps we should take a short break."

Still no one moved. Then, very slowly, almost reluctantly, people began to quietly get up and walk out into the hall. Even during the break, while people got juice or coffee, there was little or no speaking. One manager came up to me and whispered, "John, what in the world was *that*?" I didn't know what to say to her. As I recall, I shrugged and said something like, "I don't know, but it was really something, wasn't it?"

In retrospect, I would call that moment another 'theophany', an experience of divine energy breaking through the hold of the mind to touch us with a provocative truth, or 'knowing'.

Maybe Life provided it to help *me* come home to myself...

WHAT CALLS YOU?

You, too, have had such moments, whether or not you have been aware of them.

It happens in a less dramatic way *every time your charism is at work*, when your soul's essence is being expressed into life. It happens when you are **being** yourself, all out, and not just **doing** what your programming tells you to do.

People we call 'charismatic' are simply those whose soul or essence or charism or work is being expressed in the job they are doing. So, since *you* have been gifted with charism, too, you—and everyone else—are 'charismatic'. All you need to do is discover what your charisms are and begin allowing them to express themselves in your work.

DIXON'S LIFE-TRANSFORMING QUESTION



This last question (What would be a purpose worthy of who you are?) is one that transformed my life—and started me on the path that led to the FIVE QUESTIONS—and eventually to this book.

In 1982, the organization effectiveness survey business that I had started with two colleagues went 'belly up'. One partner went Chapter 7 and declared personal bankruptcy, and the other partner essentially 'bailed out' and left town. Both their choices were actually fine with me—I understood why they needed to do what they did, but it also meant that I was left 'holding the bag' containing about \$250,000 in unpaid bills and other obligations, mostly to good friends and trusting family members who had invested in our venture. Based on advice from my business and financial advisors and the encouragement of my wife, as well as my own commitment to get this 'money karma' cleaned up once and for all, we decided to stick it out and dig our way out of debt.

To help with this embarrassing and, for me, shameful situation, I called in a favor from a colleague, Dixon de Leña, at that time a Seattle-based breakthrough thinking consultant. He flew over to Spokane where I was living, and at the end of a day of intense personal and spiritual probing, asked me, "John, what's been driving you? What has been

your reason for living, your no-kidding purpose?” Something in the way he asked me led me to go deep inside before answering.

Looking back, I realize that instead of having my mind respond with something that would put a positive spin on the situation, thus salvaging some vestige of self-protection or innocence, I asked my soul for the truth, no matter how embarrassing, and for the courage to put it out there and ‘let the chips fall where they may’. After what seemed like an eternity, the truth came to me:

“My reason for living recently? What’s been driving me? No kidding? I’m here to get out of debt and make it through the next month,” I blurted, feeling both surprised and relieved at the answer. In fact, as I spoke that authentic truth to Dixon, a clear sense of calm and deep peace came over me. One of Jesus’ sayings came to mind: “The truth will set you free.” This truth sure did. I felt free—not from the debt, which still had to be repaid—but free from the fear of failure and shame that had been my constant companion for such a long time.

“Thanks, John, for your honesty”, Dixon said.

Then he asked me the question that started changing my life. **“Is that a purpose worthy of who you are?”** Are you on this planet to get out of debt and make it through the next month? Or could there be more to your being here than that?”

Dixon’s question, like all life-transforming questions, stunned me to such an extent that I didn’t know what to say, but I found myself thinking: “Yeah, *right*... I have been put on this earth with the mission of getting out of debt and making it through the next month... Really?! No... I don’t think so!”

After a moment, Dixon stepped into the silence: “What about this phrase in your letterhead, John, *transforming the world at work*? Could *that* be what you are up to underneath all that concern about debt and reputation?”

“Naahh”, I said, “that’s just a marketing phrase I made up in the shower one day.”

“Okay”, Dixon smiled. “When you figure out what you are truly up to, call me and we’ll go forward from there.”

He left for Seattle, leaving me in a grateful but confused state of inquiry.

As you will see, this is precisely the state that heralds personal transformation. Several months went by as I chewed on his question. What *was* a purpose worthy of who I am? It took three months of thinking, musing, internal thrashing, and living-in-the-question. When the deeper truth emerged, it was another surprise. As is often the case, the answer was sitting right in front of me. I called Dixon.

"Hey, Dix, this is John. I think I've got it!"

"OK, I'll bite." I could hear the smile in his voice. "What *are* you really up to underneath all the stuff about survival and reputation?"

"What I'm really up to is *transforming the world at work*. Turns out that phrase was coming from a more profound place than I realized. Whenever I think about it, my soul hums like a guitar string."

"Congratulations, John! You have finally figured out what anyone who has known you for five minutes sees immediately! You may have thought you were all about getting out of debt and making it through the next month, but those of us who know you, know better. Now let's begin to build that new enterprise you have been wanting to create. But it has to be built, not on fear and façade, but on Truth."

'IT IS TOO LIGHT A THING THAT YOU DO...'



About the same time as my conversation with Dixon, I was preparing for a sermon at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Spokane where I was invited to speak from time to time. In our tradition, the preacher begins their sermon-preparation by looking into three stories from the Bible that are assigned for that Sunday. One of them that week turned out to be from one of the stories about the prophet, Isaiah. In this particular segment, Isaiah had been busy being a messenger to the Hebrew people, but not getting a very positive reception. He was feeling low (today we would probably say he was depressed) and complained to his God. The answer that came to Isaiah nailed me to the wall:

"It is too light a thing that you do, Isaiah, just going to the tribes of Jacob to restore the survivors of Israel. I want you to be a light to *all* the nations, so that my healing love will reach to the ends of the earth." (translation mine) – Isaiah 49:6

The message: "Isaiah, I'm sorry you're so depressed because people have not been responding like you want, not coming to your pronouncements and not giving you positive feedback, but what you have been doing—just speaking my love to *your* kind of people—is not 'weighty' enough. You need to expand and deepen your concept of what you are about. I want you to start reaching out to *everyone on the earth, especially those who are different from you.*"

I get this translation because in the original language, the word 'light' used here is the opposite of the Hebrew word *kavod*, which means 'weight' or 'heavy' or 'impactful'. Isaiah is being chastised for playing too small, too safe, in doing what contained the least risk, or was the most familiar. *He is not having the impact he yearns for because he is not being all of who he is capable of being.*

As usual, at that point in my sermon-preparation, I asked myself, "What is the lesson for *you* in this story, John?" The answer came immediately: "This does not mean becoming an overextended, stressed-out, Type A, do-gooder, but, Brother John, it is too light a thing you are doing. You need to step back and take a hard look at what you have been up to lately in your life and see whether it is 'heavy' enough, impactful enough. Look and

see whether where you are aiming all your gifts is worthy of who you are. What are you putting those talents and gifts in the service of? It is way less than what you are capable of...”

Ouch.

When I truly let this in, it meant that I needed to stop thinking it was enough to put my gifts to work getting people to sign up for seminars, or to generate enough consulting projects to make payroll each month. I could imagine a divine voice saying, “No! Those are just ‘table stakes’! You are not here to put butts in chairs and make payroll! You are here to contribute to the transformation of the world at work, and the unleashing of the human spirit. Get after *that*, John Scherer! That’s far ‘heavier’ for you—and a far more meaningful reason to be alive.”

‘LIGHTENING THE LOAD’

The first year after my near-bankruptcy and Dixon’s coaching, our taxable income was \$24,000, with around \$9,000 going to Minneapolis for child-support and \$12,000 for the mortgage. We jettisoned everything but the barest essentials. We cancelled the cable TV, the newspaper, all our magazines. We sold a car and most of the living room furniture. We even sold some of my old magic tricks to a collector. Catharine spent a lot of time on the phone (which we kept as a link to the outside world) talking to people we owed money to. I don’t know how she did it! But we hunkered down with our infant son, Asa, and I set out to create a new consulting firm, with a mission of *transforming the world at work*.

Thanks to the generosity of several well-established friends and colleagues in the field, Ron Lippitt, Herb Shepard and Jack Sherwood, consulting and speaking projects started to come in. Good work, you could say, the kind that meant transforming the world at work. The next year our income doubled, then doubled again the next year, and again the next, and so on until the growing little firm was generating close to \$800,000 a year.

That's not the point, though... In spite of what some motivational speakers and TV evangelists want us to believe, it doesn't always happen that way. Your income doesn't always go up when you wake up and step into what calls you. There have been several lean years since then, too.

So what then *is* the reward or pay-off for waking up and stepping into what calls you? And the answer is—you ready?—the reward, the pay-off, is **waking up and stepping into what calls you.**

That's the payoff. What could be more meaningful than doing work that makes your heart sing, putting into action that which you ARE. Of course, it's risky and requires an act of faith. Fears of failure are natural and predictable: "What if no one is interested in what I am doing with this insight? How will I/we eat?!"

But consider the alternative: your Con/Game-of-Life Strategy, being On Automatic—going around all day trying to be something you think will 'sell' and getting little hits of what you are addicted to while avoiding your terror. That's what most people are doing. And it works—kind-of. On the surface. For a while. Until the rot sets in. Then 'something happens.' Maybe a heart attack, or a merger that lays you off, or a family crisis, or you get depressed, and you are forced to stop and 'take stock.' When that happens, you have to examine carefully the fundamental 'game' you have been playing.

FIVE MINUTES TO BREAK THE CYCLE

To bring this home, do this simple exercise: jot down your responses to this question

If you were living 'the perfect life' 10 years from now, *what would be present?*

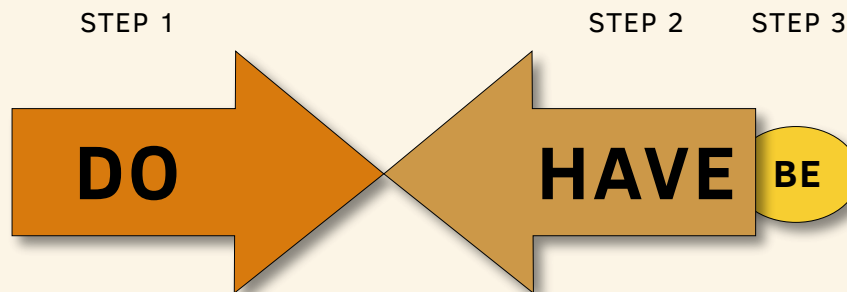
Seriously, take five minutes and do it now before reading on...

Over the years I have done this exercise with thousands of men and women around the world. During your five minutes, what percentage of time were you thinking about what you imagine yourself

DOING in 10 years? How much was it about what you imagine HAVING? And how much was it about what you will BE? Which of these three (DOING, HAVING, BEING) would you imagine gets the *least* attention during the five minutes? Right: BEING. Most people speak a lot about what they hope to be DOING (good work, having fun on weekends, loving their children, etc.), as well as what they hope to HAVE (a boat, a life partner who loves them, a house in the country, a job that they love, etc.)—but very few speak about what they hope to BE in ten years, very little about that state of peace or fulfillment or security.

People's tendency to not think about their BEING is ironic, because it's the BEING that's the goal for all the DOING and HAVING! That ultimate state of BEING is the reason for everything, the ultimate purpose or objective of all the time and effort.

If you look closely, here's what it probably looks like. It's a well-used default strategy that I call the 'Deferred Life Plan':



You probably know 'The Deferred Life Plan' well, but let me lay it out for you. It starts at the left and runs like this:

- You are supposed to DO whatever you have to do, sacrifice your health, your family, your sanity, your friendships, and put it all at risk so that one day you can –
- HAVE what you need to have. When you have enough of whatever that is (money, fame, success, Prince/Princess Charming), you can then get to –
- BE whatever it is that you are after in life (happy, secure, at peace, fulfilled).

You can see why I call this the *Deferred Life Plan*. The rules of the game dictate that you don't get to truly *live* until later on, *after* certain things happen, but, like life insurance, you have to die—or almost die—to win. You have to postpone—and earn—that state you are yearning for: peace of mind, security, or deep fulfillment. One day, in the future, when you have accumulated enough _____ (fill in the blank), *then* you can relax and live.

Since so many people around the world are applying this approach, it must be a very successful way to live. In fact, we have found only one small problem with it: It doesn't work.

Sorry. It would be so cool if it did. Then, all we would have to do is work hard, accumulate stuff, and *shazzzzam*, we'd be 'there.' It does work for a moment or two, like just after you make the sale, or get the promotion, or find Prince/Princess Charming. But then what happens? You realize that you need *more* to hold on to that transitory but marvelous state of BEING you treasure so highly. The basic flaw in the formula is that if you make your state of being—the goal of the whole thing—contingent on *anything*, it becomes impossible to have that state of being for more than a few moments. Until the mind tells you that you need to go out and DO some more, so you can HAVE a little more, and get back some of that feeling of BEING secure/at peace/fulfilled/happy.

The reason you can never 'win' using the Deferred Life Plan is that the plan itself is fundamentally flawed in at least two ways:

- First, the *goal* of the game—to do whatever it takes to create a feeling of security: personally, spiritually, financially, and socially—points you in the wrong direction. You end up doing things that give you a temporary 'hit' of what you are after, but that disappear almost immediately and you need another 'fix' of recognition, money, toys, or victory.
- The second flaw is in the *principle* of the plan: *repress now—relax later*. Work hard now, suppress your needs of body, mind, and spirit, focus on looking good and getting ahead, and then one day you'll be able to relax and take care of your Self. The downside, which is not even in the small print, is: *Nobody ever wins the Default Game*. No matter how well you do, it will never be enough. The anxiety never really goes away. Trying to be a winner, you repress the Now, but the Later—when you are supposed to be able to relax—never arrives to stay. Ironically, you end up like the guy in Jesus' story who "gained the whole world (you could say invested himself completely in the Deferred Life Plan) but lost his soul."

DR. JOHN: LIVE YOUR LIFE NOW...



A participant at one of our LDIs, Dr. John, a middle-aged Medical Director of a well-known insurance company, was struggling with this delayed-life issue. “You want to know how I make it through each day with all the sh--t that goes on in my job? I just hunker down, work as hard as I can—twelve to fourteen hours a day—and remind myself that one day it will be better. One day I will be able to relax. I’ve got a mortgage to pay, several cars to maintain, kids to put through school. I can’t stop now. I’ve got to keep running flat out, like the hamster inside the wheel. But one day, one day, I’ll retire. Just a few more years! *Then* I’ll be able to have a life!”

On hearing this, Joe, one of the other participants, became activated.

First, some background: Joe had, for many of his teenage years, been a ‘runner’ for the Mafia, which evolved into his becoming a heavy heroin user (and dealer) on the streets of Cleveland. He still carried the rugged good looks and engaging street patois that had served him so well for so long in that other world. Now, clean for twelve years and a successful entrepreneur, he had become a personal savior to hundreds of addicted men and women he had led to sobriety.

He got up, walked over to stand in front of Dr. John, fixed him with a powerful stare and—with a voice straight out of *The Sopranos*—and cleaned up significantly for this book—said, “Man, you got da needle in your arm as bad as any friggin’ junkie lyin’ in a doorway. You think you gonna wait for six years and den you can get your friggin’ life back? Man, you dyin’ right now, only you can’t see it! You a dead man walkin. If you ain’t got a life *right now*, dude, in dis moment, you ain’t *never* gonna have a friggin’ life!”

Ever so slowly, as he stared into Joe’s intense eyes, Dr. John’s countenance softened from the grim mask and furrowed brow that was his ‘game face.’ Tears began to run silently down his cheeks. After a few moments, he said, “You’re right, Joe. You’re right... Thanks, man.” They hugged, the dam broke, and John began to sob. Minutes later, as he came out of his deep, cleansing emotions, he looked up at the group, “Hey, guys. I’m a *medical doctor*, for Pete’s sake. I know what’s happening to me. My cardiologist said last month that

the way things are going I might not live to see my retirement. He said I'm killing myself. I guess that strategy isn't working." (Gentle chuckles rippled around the room.)

To finish the story, Dr. John went back to his insurance company, having made a commitment to find a way to take his life back—before he retired. Among the most significant things he did: he threw away all his (unread) medical journals, which had been hanging over his head like a Damocletian sword since he had left his practice to become a medical administrator.

"I've been feeling guilty for years about not keeping up with my profession. Now I'm admitting the truth: I'm *not* a practicing doctor any longer; I'm a medical manager, an executive. That's not only enough, it's more than enough. It's great!"

He started going home at 5:30 pm instead of 7:30 or 8:00. He began to take regular walks with his wife and just hang out with his family. He softened—a little bit—when it came to pushing people for superhuman results. A few months after his LDI he shared with me what he said was The Bottom Line for him: "I have started actually *enjoying* going to work again, and my people are reporting that they do, too. I think this insight has added years—and deep enjoyment—to my life. Thank you."

Dr. John, like many of us, had turned his job into a life-*consuming* project, hoping it would turn out to be a life-*giving* project. It wasn't working. Ironically, like so many of us, he was sacrificing himself on the altar of his job and praying that it would not kill him.

THEY TOLD US WRONG...

The Deferred Life strategy is by far the most popular one we find.

You may have a version of it going on in your own mind and life, but you need to understand that it is probably doomed to failure. All the hard work, all the effort you are investing is on-top-of something that is 'off', something which is usually being ignored. Here's the hard truth you probably know already: more-of-the-same-only-different is not going to get you where you want to go. The strategy: Work harder at **A** (the job), so I can get lots of **B** (what you believe you want and need), and that will

get me **C** (a sense of fulfillment and security)' just doesn't work. With that model, you can rarely if ever get past **B**.

As you'll see in a minute, you need to bring **C** to **A** and de-emphasize **B**.

'STUFF'...

One key element in the Deferred Life Plan is accumulating 'stuff' to buffer yourself from the possibility of bad things happening to you, and as a substitute for that state of peace you are wanting to experience. Throwing yourself into your job now for a personal security and fulfillment later—is usually conscious. Surrounding yourself with 'stuff' in the process is usually unconscious. You don't think of it as collecting stuff, you think of it as 'having the necessities of life.' You are then able to busy yourself in taking care of your stuff. You count your stuff. You track how your stuff is doing. You polish and clean your stuff. All the while, secretly hoping having enough stuff will bring you the sense of security you seek.

DOUG: "WHAT IS 'ENOUGH'?"



One senior executive, Doug, a real leader and a great guy with a net worth of a little over \$2,000,000 at the time, told me at his EDI (the private version of the LDI), "I just need to put a little more away, then I can relax." I asked him to name an exact dollar figure which, if put away, would allow him to relax. He got out his calculator, doodled for a few minutes on a piece of paper, then looked up and said, with an amazed look, "John, I don't think there is *any* number that will be enough. It'll *never* be enough. I'll always need or want more!"

With this realization he went home resolving to find a way to enjoy what he had while he had it, rather than strain for what he did not have. He discovered the root meaning of the word 'en-joy' which is to 'insert joy' or 'bring joy' or 'put joy *into* something', not

hope you will find it there. One day he said, “John, it’s so clear: the joy we seek comes from inside us, not out there in the stuff or the circumstances surrounding us.”

THE WHOLE-LIFE-NOW PLAN

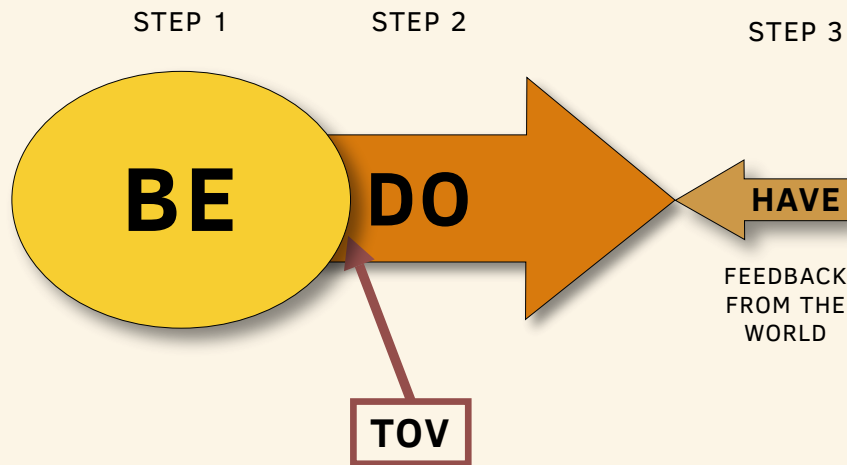
In taking on **Question #4: What CALLS me?** I am proposing a radical shift. We are talking about a way that turns the ‘DO so-as-to-HAVE... which one-day-gets-me-to-BE’ model on its head. It’s like what you do when you turn a sock inside out (which, interestingly, is the root meaning of the Aramaic word for ‘repent’). Everything changes—significantly. What used to be down is now up, what used to make sense doesn’t anymore, what it was all about is now an interesting but trivial afterthought. What I am suggesting is that you start over, *reversing the formula for success*. It will feel like going backward—or so your Autopilot would have you believe—but if you do, an entirely new world of possibilities will open up for you.

‘No one can go back and create a completely new *beginning*, but anyone can start from now and create a completely new *ending*.’

– Carl Bard

This Whole-Life-Now Plan means starting with who you ARE and letting what you DO flow from that place, reducing the importance of what you get from the world. I call it ‘going for TOV...’

GOING FOR TOV



THE CREATION STORY



Going back to my roots again, if you take a look at a different part of the Genesis Creation Story you will see that there is an example there of the BE → DO → HAVE process I am proposing. (I'll be translating from the original language—and taking some literary license, but we have to do that to get the essence of any ancient material.) At one point the story goes something like this: “Then the Creator created the oceans, looked, and saw that they were good.” Now the word translated there as ‘good’ is **TOV** in the original language. Actually, ‘good’ is a somewhat misleading and inadequate translation for the concept inherent in the word **TOV**.

A much more powerful translation would go like this: “Then the Lord created the oceans, looked, and said, ‘Oh, yeah! *That’s* what I’m talking about! *That’s* what I had in mind! Oooh, man, it feels good to have done that! Those oceans are a piece of who I am

out there in the world where you can see it. You want to learn something about *me*? Look at my *oceans*. That's TOV. That's a piece of 'me' made manifest!"

TOV is 'The Real You', made manifest in the world.

TOV is something that happens when one of your charisms, something from down deep, close to your essence, coming out of your soul or spirit or creative core, gets expressed.

TOV is what happens when something you create—a moment with a colleague or friend, a phone call, an interaction, a project, a budget, a meeting—reflects the highest and best of who you *are*. It's not about looking good, or even about the quality or perfection of what you have created. It's knowing that the act of bringing it into existence came from the core of who you are. TOV is what happens when you unleash and fully express your charisma, the best and deepest of who you are, out there into the world.

WHAT IS YOUR 'PIANO'?



One day I walked in the back door of the house and heard my son Asa playing the piano in the living room. Now, I know I'm his dad, but to say "Asa was playing the piano" would be like saying "Shakespeare was doing some writing". A naturally gifted musician, Asa was playing one of his favorite pieces, Rachmaninov's energetic and powerful Prelude in D Minor. As I stood listening quietly in the back hall, I could picture him on the other side of the wall, sitting at the grand piano, which took up most of the living room, his fingers flying over the keyboard.

The whole house was reverberating.

Then something dawned on me. I realized that the house was not reverberating with the piano; it wasn't even reverberating with Rachmaninov. The house was reverberating with *Asa*. That piano, as grand as it was, would just sit there, and that Rachmaninov

piece would just be a few sheets of music with dots and lines on paper, until Asa sat down, brought all of who he IS to the moment, and poured his soul into that keyboard. Sitting at that piano, Asa was not so much *doing* anything as he was simply fully *being himself on that keyboard*, which meant that what happened—his *doing*—was a manifestation, an expression of who he *is*.

Similarly, my daughter Emma is a dancer, along with several other kinds of self-expression. When she dances, she is not trying to impress anyone; she is not dancing to get compliments or positive feedback. She dances because she's Emma—and Emma dances. The dancing is just a manifestation of who she is. Asa plays piano. Emma dances. My older son, Jay, plays rock guitar and my middle son, David (Agape) Scherer, is a hip-hop musician committed to racial-and-gender-equality activism. They each simply fully express who they are; and what happens next—what they get from the world as a result, like feedback—is almost an afterthought.

The whole thing gets turned around into: BE → DO → HAVE.

What if you began to see your job as simply your 'instrument', and your job description as your 'score', both waiting for you to step in and bring them to life by putting who you are into them. Once again, letting what you DO be an expression of the best of who you ARE.

'CHANGING YOUR MAJOR'



It was Fall, 1957, and I was a seventeen-year-old senior at Thomas Jefferson High School in Richmond, VA. On October 4th, the Russians launched Sputnik, that tiny silver ball that was the first human-made object to circumnavigate the earth in space—and the Space Race was on. As a senior, it was time to figure out what to do after high school. Heck, I didn't know! Didn't even know how to start figuring it out.

As I recall, no one at home or at school asked me what I wanted to do, or what subjects I really enjoyed. My high school guidance counselors gave me aptitude tests and vocational interest assessments and seemed thrilled at the results. "Johnny, you blew the

top off the scores on those visual tests, the verbal tests and the logic tests, plus you show a remarkable aptitude for the physical sciences, something America needs right now. The Russians are beating us in the Space Race, and you would make a good *engineer*. Why don't you give that a try when you go to college?"

"Sure, why not?" I said, not having a better idea, and off to Roanoke College I went, *enrolled as an Engineering student*. Fortunately, Roanoke is a liberal arts school—and a really good one, too, by the way. For that reason, when I started in September 1958, I was taking, along with my Engineering and Math classes, courses like World Civilization, Psychology and Philosophy.

One day about half-way through the first semester, I remember realizing that, while I enjoyed my Engineering Drawing and Physics classes, I *really* enjoyed my World Civilizations, Psychology and Philosophy classes. Couldn't wait to get to them. Loved the reading each night. Although there wasn't much of free time as a result of my being on the Swim Team and the Honor Council, all my conversations in the Hub were not about the hard sciences but about the *social* sciences. In those classes, it felt like I already knew the material. It was as if all the lectures, the reading, the bull sessions, were giving me labels for things that were already there, inside me, waiting for me to discover them. In History, taught by Homer Bast, the best teacher I ever had, I would read a chapter *once* and all the dates, who did what to whom, and why, were all embedded in my mind.

So, one day I walked into Dean of Students, Don Sutton's, office and said I wanted to change my major. Being a wise reader of students' inner worlds, he pushed back to make sure I was serious, and then said, "Of course, Mr. Scherer", and made the necessary changes in my schedule for the next semester. Four years later, I had earned enough credits to claim both History and Philosophy as majors—with a minor in Psychology. Thank you, Dean Sutton!

Sometimes you do need to 'change your major'

Looking back on that seemingly simple decision—to change my academic major—it strikes me as being something that all human beings must confront at some point in their lives:

- Am I on the right track?
- Is this the work my *soul* wants me to be doing?
- Is it TOV?

HOW TO TELL WHEN IT'S TOV

How can you tell whether what you are learning or doing or thinking about doing is 'right' for you? Try these simple tests:

- When you think about doing _____, or are actually doing it, do you find yourself getting excited?
- Does your eye seek out books and magazines and journals about _____ online or in a bookstore?
- When you read a magazine or journal in _____ (a field or area), are you eager to get into it?
- When you read about it, or attend a workshop about it, or get into a conversation with an expert on _____, do you find it really easy to remember what was said? Does it 'stick' with you with little or no effort?
- When there is hard work involved in doing or studying _____, do you experience it as fulfilling and even enjoyable?
- Do you find yourself looking for opportunities to talk about _____ with your friends and/or family members?

Several years ago, in response to my question about which book I ought to write, a literary agent told me, "John, write your book on the subject you would be willing to talk about every day for the next three years and not get bored." And *Five Questions* (the prequel to *Facing the Tiger*), came immediately to my mind!

What would *you* be excited to learn about, talk about, maybe even teach about, for the next few years—and not get bored? Your thoughtful response to THAT question will take you close to the *creative core* of what you could to be doing with your life. The answer is usually something that can be started right where you are, *in that same job, with those same people*. Sometimes you might need to ‘change your major’, but often it’s about what you re-discover *inside yourself* that puts you in the right place, doing the right thing, not about changing your external circumstances.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE TOV STATE

When you are in your TOV, you are usually:

- Physically balanced and stable
- Breathing deeply from the belly
- Relaxed, calm, and focused
- Aware of what is happening, in you and around you
- Appreciative of yourself, others and the situation
- Aware of and feeling your emotions—and learning from them
- Compassionate and connected
- Able to receive and give sincere acknowledgement
- Energized by a greater purpose
- Passionate, yet unattached to the outcome
- Experiencing joy

You are in *TOV* when you bring a sense of joy, peace, security, and accomplishment to your actions, so that what you DO is an expression or manifestation of who you ARE. The world will give you feedback, and it will be interesting, even meaningful, but not addictive—not the main reason for what you are doing.

When in doubt, *go for TOV*.



If you found yourself intrigued or touched by the BE-DO-HAVE concept, we believe you would get a lot out of watching this short-but-powerful video by **Alan Watts** called ***'Life is NOT a Journey'***.

THE 'DRAGON LADY' MEETS THE 'GRANDMA'



During a senior leadership team workshop a few years ago, there was an amazing example of this. The organization was headed up by an Executive Director—we'll call her Claudia—or 'The Dragon Lady', as she was called not-so-affectionately, behind her back. In interviews with her direct reports, they used words like these to describe her: tough, unyielding, abrupt, direct to the point of meanness sometimes, she ruled her staff with an iron hand, driving them hard to be the best, rarely handing out kudos or words of encouragement.

At the point in the workshop when we were going into the BE → DO → HAVE model she stopped me and said, "OK, John, enough of this airy-fairy @\$%! We've got work to do around this place! We haven't got time for all this touchy-feely crap." (Claudia had a vocabulary that would have made some of my buddies in the Navy blush, so I've cleaned it up for the book.)

"Claudia", I said, "let me ask you a question: If someone gave you a million dollars and you didn't have to do this work, what would you do with yourself?"

She thought for a moment and said, "Well, I don't see what that's got to do with the leadership development work we're doing here, but I guess if I didn't have this role I would go home and play with my grandkids."

"OK. Just stay with me for a minute", I said. "Tell us what playing with your grandkids looks like. Give us the video replay of a day of being with them. Start before they come in the door. What do you do? Oh, and would someone in the group start to write down what Claudia says on the flip chart? Thanks."

"First I get the house ready."

"What do you mean?" I ask.

"Well, I make sure the house is full of things they like to do, that there is nutritious food for them, and learning-type games, and that it's safe. And, of course, I have to get myself ready."

"How do you get *yourself* ready—and *why*?"

"Hey, being a grandma is important work! You have to be mentally and emotionally ready. I mean they have needs—each one is different, and I want to make sure I can be there for them."

"What does *that* mean?"

"It means I want to be the kind of grandma that they deserve. I don't want to miss a single chance to help them if they need me." (Remember, all this is getting written down on the flip chart.)

"OK, they're coming to your front door—what do you do now?"

"I open the door and welcome them as warmly as I can. For the little ones, I get down on my knees to greet them at their own level. I give each one a big hug and tell each one how happy I am to see them." (She starts to get emotional at this point.)

"Yes. I can picture you doing that! Then what do you do all day with them?"

"Mainly, I make sure they have whatever they need, food, toys, tools. I look for those magic moments when I might teach them something, or if they need help with an art project or whatever, I offer to give them a hand. When they get bored, I help them think of other ideas of what they could do. The day flies by, actually, and I am really sorry to see them go."

"How does the day end?"

"Their mom or dad comes to the door, but I hold each one real close (she cries a little as she says this), tell them what a joy it was to be with them for the day, and say I can't wait till they come back."

"Not exactly like work, huh?," I said.

She chuckles through her tears. "Not exactly."

“Isn’t it a shame that work is so different... But maybe not, Claudia. Would someone read off the newsprint what she said? Now, as you hear each one, Claudia, I want you to see whether there is anything from how you are with your grandchildren that might translate into you as the leader of this organization.”

One of the VPs begins to read what she has written:

•

BEFORE THEY COME, I:
GET MYSELF PREPARED,
I MAKE SURE THE HOUSE IS READY, THAT THEY
HAVE EVERYTHING THEY NEED - TO LEARN, GET
ENOUGH REST AND HAVE FUN.

WHEN THEY ARRIVE:
I GREET THEM WARMLY AND INDIVIDUALLY
AT THE DOOR - ON THEIR LEVEL.

DURING THE DAY:
I LOOK FOR 'TEACHING MOMENTS' WHEN
THEY/WE CAN LEARN SOMETHING.
I MAKE SURE THEY ARE SAFE, TAKING THEIR
REST, AND HAVE WHAT THEY NEED.
IF THEY GET BORED, I HELP THEM FIND
SOMETHING INTERESTING TO DO.
I FOCUS ON LEARNING AND DISCOVERING NEW
THINGS - WITH THEM.

AT THE END OF THE DAY:
I TELL THEM HOW WONDERFUL IT WAS TO BE
WITH THEM - AND THAT I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE
THEM AGAIN.

'BRINGING GRANDMA TO WORK'

Claudia stared at the newsprint for what seemed like a long time. Several of the VPs were visibly moved, too, by the implications of what they saw on the easel. After a while Claudia said quietly, "I think what you're telling me, John, is that I could bring The Grandmother to work..." Long pause. (Her managers were silently mouthing: "Yes! Yes! Please!")

"Wow, what a concept. I never would have thought..."

"Yes, Claudia. What if you have just re-defined what it might mean to be the Executive Director of this organization? What if this is your new job description? What if you came to work with the same frame of mind as the one you just described to us? What if your role as ED was to ..." and I asked her to read off the newsprint again.

Claudia sat, stunned. "Oh, my goodness." She was speechless. Again, after a long while of staring at the flipchart she mused quietly, "Well, team, I guess I've got some work to do. If I have been too hard or insensitive to you all, I apologize. I thought I had to be tough to motivate you. I thought if I were soft and weak, people would walk all over me. I can only imagine what it's been like for you. I know I'm known as 'The Dragon Lady' to you." (Some team members shifted uneasily in their seats.) "After this little exercise, I can see why! Okay, let's see if you can help me bring The Grandma to work. Thanks, John, for this experience. I can see it now: I could be more effective if I just practice being who I am down deep inside—a grandma—and let what I do as leader flow from her."

There is always a person inside the *position*.
What comes to work every day is you-as-a-person.
Your position is waiting for you there...

– Art McNeil

A lightness came over her face and she beamed at her team. "This just might even be fun!" A few months later, she and her team reported major positive shifts in Claudia's leadership style—and in the team's effectiveness. When I walked in one day a month later and said hello to the receptionist,

she leaned a little closer across the desk, smiled a big smile and whispered, “John, Grandma’s in the building!”

WRITING BEAUTIFUL CODE



During a consulting project with a small-but-rapidly-growing technology firm, I had an experience about how important it is to have a clear and compelling sense of *purpose*. Your WHY as Simon Sinek puts it.

As I was sitting with some of the programmers one morning, ‘looking over their shoulders’, I asked them if they would be willing to tell me what they were doing and what it meant to them. Since they utilized a concept called ‘paired programming’, there were two of them working on the same code.

“What are you doing?”

‘We’re writing code.’

“Cool! Can you help a total non-coding idiot understand *any* of what this entails?”

(They did their best to explain how those rows and rows of numbers and symbols result in interactive textbooks for teachers and their students.)

“Tell me what brings you joy as you sit here doing this day-after-day?”

‘Writing beautiful code...’

“That’s your ‘pay-off’; that’s your main motivator: writing beautiful code? It’s not the money?”

“Nope... The money’s nice, but beautiful code is all I need.”

Then the other guy spoke up:

“Well, there is this *other* motivator...”

“What’s that?”

“The code we write here gets sent to a publishing house—one of the biggest producers of text-books for teachers and students in the world—and then those books get shipped off to classrooms all over the world to be used in educating students about life and how to grow up. If I ever wonder about what we are doing, I think about all those students and teachers, waiting for us to finish this line of code...”

THE SWEET SPOT

What 'calls you' is different from what '*pulls*' on you.

There are three aspects or domains in life that make demands on us all day long—and rightfully

so:

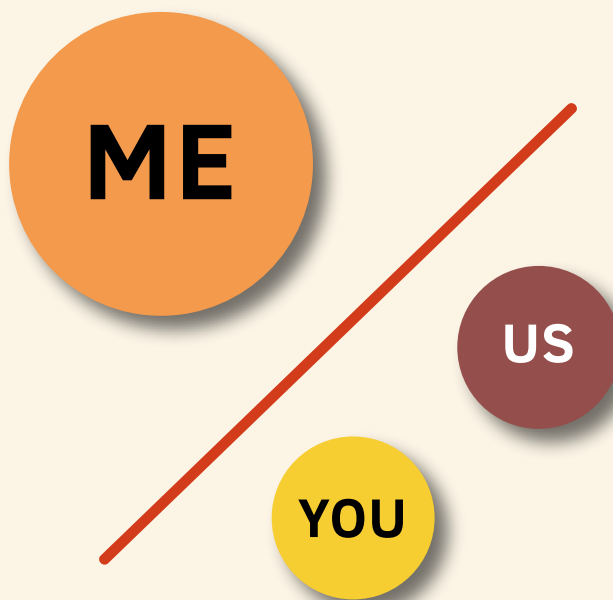
- Self—what *I* need in a given situation **(ME)**
- Others—what *those around me* need **(YOU)**
- Larger Context—like the team or the mission or the relationship—needs **(US)**



For instance, in a relationship, there is what *you* need or want, what your *partner* needs or wants, and then there is what your *relationship* needs or wants. In a work setting, there is what *you* need (say in a meeting or decision-making process), what your *colleagues* who are involved need, and what the *project, team, organization* or *customer* needs. How you move among these pulls has a lot to do with your effectiveness and fulfillment.

The result is that, off and on during the day, one of these three pulls ‘wins’ the battle for your attention, and you ‘lean’ in that direction, paying attention to *that* one more than the other two. This is not a bad thing, it’s a human thing—and often makes for wise leadership. But when we make attending to the same ‘pull’ a *default* at the *expense* of the other two, bad things can start to happen: your default ‘pull’ can become a ‘trap’. It can ensnare you, and make it hard or impossible for you to do what is called for in the situation.

THE NARCISSISTIC TRAP (‘ME, ME AND ONLY ME’)



As with each of the three traps, there is an upside, otherwise no one would do them!

The Upsides of the Narcissistic Default

- You tend to look good—unless people get too close.
- Your own needs are more likely to get met, or at least addressed.
- It can give you the illusion of control and freedom.

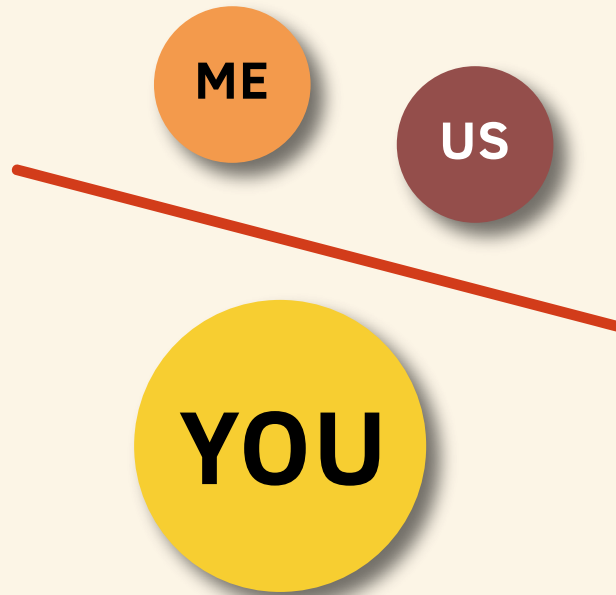
But, if you attend only and always attend to what *you* need, you can lose touch with *other people* and with the *larger context*. “Someone all wrapped up in himself”, as my Grandmother Scherer used to say, “makes a very small package.” Maybe you’ve heard the saying: “*If you want to go FAST, go alone. If you want to go FAR, go together*”. If you are trapped in the Narcissistic habit, operating alone, you can get a lot done and become successful, but there are major downsides.

Remember the story of Narcissus? He was a good-looking warrior who was so self-absorbed that he sat for hours by the water, looking at his reflection and marveling at how handsome he was. One day as he leaned over to get an even closer look, he fell in, and, weighed down by his heavy armor, drowned.

The Potential Long-term Downsides of the Narcissistic Habit

- Eventually people will no longer trust you—or want to work with you.
- Your decisions, since they all come from the mind of the same person (you), will not always be as wise as ones made with input from others.
- At some point you will encounter a situation where Life is calling on you to give up something you are desperate to hold on to (like credit for success, turf, staff, etc). If you can’t let others ‘win’ or ‘shine’, you will fall down the ladder of success.

THE MARTYR TRAP ('YOU, YOU AND ONLY YOU')



If, on the other hand, you always and only attend to what *other* people need to the exclusion of what *you* need and what the larger *context* is calling for, you become mired in the Martyr Trap. Maybe you know this one. I do. My Somebody Training and Autopilot tells me not to be selfish or self-centered, to always put other people first. “Forget your own needs, John. You’ll survive. Make do with what is there. And don’t worry about what the larger context is calling for. The most important thing for you is meet the other person’s needs.”

If you are in a relationship with a Martyr and you ask them, “Where would you like to go to dinner tonight?”, what will the Martyr partner say? “Wherever *you* want to go, dear; that’s where I want to go.” The embedded message is “My needs don’t matter” or “My job is to meet the needs of the people in my team.” The Martyr is so tuned into other people’s worlds that they often have no awareness of their own needs or the needs of the larger context—like the team or project or mission of the organization.

Martyrs come in for a lot of jokes, but there could well be one down there inside you if your Somebody Training taught you to put other people first.

In the workplace, certain *departments* tend to form themselves around this stance, units who have the assignment to support everyone else. HR can fall into this trap. “We’re here to take care of *you*.” There is a lot to be said for that approach.

The *Upsides* of the Martyr ‘Default’

- Taking care of others is socially acceptable and sometimes rewarded in teams and organizations.
- You look like you care.
- There can be great satisfaction in seeing other people benefit from your effort to contribute to their wellbeing.

The Potential Long-term *Downsides* of the Martyr ‘Default’

- If you fail to care for yourself, you are likely to collapse, and then not be able to care for anyone.
- If you fail to consider the Mission or Context or Cause, you may do things that are not appropriate.

After a while, the people around you can lose respect for you, will want you to ‘get real’ and to want something for *yourself*. Nobody can live every moment for everyone else. Even Jesus and Buddha, each of whom has been seen as ‘a man for others’, took time to recharge and renew themselves.

‘PUT YOUR OWN OXYGEN MASK ON FIRST...’

If you get on an airplane, just before you take off, a flight attendant will say something like this (I think it’s the United Airlines version): “In the unlikely event of a loss of cabin pressure, an oxygen mask will drop from the compartment above you. Pull the mask down and place it firmly over your mouth and nose, securing the strap behind your head. Even though the bag is not inflating, oxygen is flowing. If you are traveling with a small child or someone who needs help (here’s the clincher) *secure your own mask before rendering assistance*.” Duhhh. If you are gasping for air, how can you help anyone else?

MOTHER TERESA TOOK BREAKS



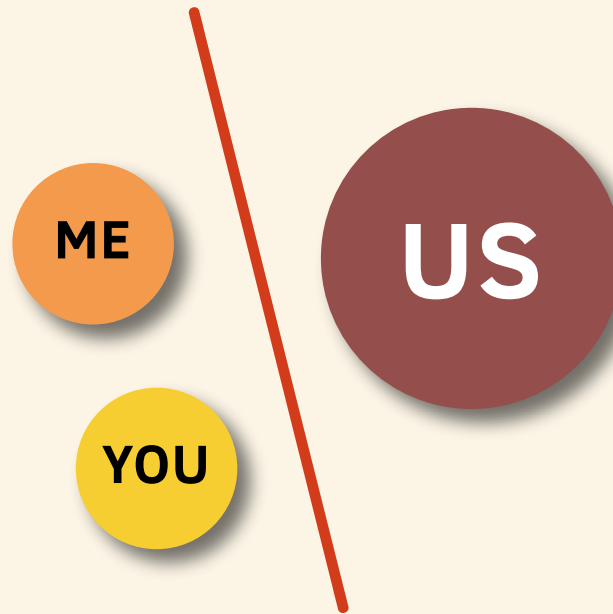
As I heard it, a magazine reporter was visiting with Mother Teresa at her Missionaries of Charity center in Calcutta, India, shortly before she died. It was around 7:00 PM and the two of them were talking quietly when one of the Sisters came in and said, with some urgency, “Mother Teresa, come quickly! We are having trouble at the gate!” The two of them—Mother Teresa and the magazine reporter—got up and went to the gate where hundreds of people on the street were pushing to get into the Center for help. Joining the several Sisters who were doing their best to shut and lock the huge door, with Mother Teresa herself leaning into it, they managed to push against the sea of humanity and lock the gate.

As they walked back across the courtyard to continue their conversation, the reporter, incredulous, said, “Mother Teresa! I can’t believe I saw what just happened! I thought you were here to *help* those people, not toss them out on the street!”

“My good sir”, she replied, “If my Sisters and I don’t close that gate every evening to come inside for our own rest, prayer and spiritual sustenance, this place would close in three days.”

If you are out of balance on this one, you will end up not only unable to help anyone else, but potentially angry at the ones you care about. Well-meaning, self-sacrificing clergy, nurses, therapists and social workers can easily find themselves resenting their members, patients, and clients. In the workplace, it is not unusual for the ‘service’ departments (like HR) to feel unappreciated and ticked off at the other departments they are supposed to be supporting. There has to be a creative tension between meeting your own needs and helping meet the needs of others. (Think of it as another important Polarity-to-be-managed.)

THE TRUE BELIEVER/FANATIC TRAP ('THE PROJECT, THE MISSION, THE RELATIONSHIP')



There is another default that can trip you up and even bring you down: putting the Mission, 'the Cause', the Larger Context, ahead of everything else all the time, disregarding your own needs and the needs of others. As someone who served in the military, I know this principle, and there were times when everything—including the safety of myself and my people—came second to completing the mission. We have all had experiences where we worked hard to complete a project, putting everything else aside. Sometimes when the task simply must be finished and you put it first, "It's a good thing", as Martha Stewart would say. Those moments are actually exhilarating, but to do that *all* the time, sacrificing your own well-being and that of others—now that's another matter altogether.

True Believers (we also call them Fanatics) come in all kinds. Every successful entrepreneur has had to be a fanatic about her or his idea, especially in the beginning. It's all about the Mission. When the public approves of their idea, we applaud their dedication, and call them great leaders and 'social

innovators'. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Sojourner Truth, Steve Jobs, and Nelson Mandela are a few who come to mind. When we *don't* approve of their position, we call them 'fanatics', and Osama bin Laden, Hitler, Stalin and a host of dictators come to mind.

The *Upsides* of the True Believer/Fanatic 'Default'

- Every important cause or movement has a 'first wave' willing to sacrifice themselves 'on the beaches' for the principle they believe in so strongly, like the people we mentioned before, who gave their lives to start social movements or businesses throughout history.
- True Believers and Fanatics tend to get a lot done, attract followers, and have great impact.
- There can be great satisfaction—and even great lasting value—in making a large difference in the world.

The Potential Long-term *Downsides* of the True Believer/Fanatic 'Default'

- Fanatics have few-if-any real friends, only potential converts-to-the-cause.
- The phrase 'Burned-out-and-Exhausted-Workaholic' comes to mind.
- At some point, other people need to make their *own* connection to the cause to move forward and expand the base for impact. They can't just always follow you.
- It is very difficult for the True Believer to avoid over-identifying the success of the movement with their *own* success. Many causes are done-in by the ego and/or the human foibles of the True Believer who started it off.

A 'FANATIC' IN ACTION



Several years ago a good friend called and said she wanted to come over to talk about something. This in itself was a little strange because Angie was the kind of friend who just came in the back door and said, "Hey! I'm here! I'm making myself a cup of tea!"

When she came over this time, she said, "I'd like to speak with you in the living room, if I may." Again, a little strange.

We went in and sat down.

She pulled out a briefcase (another strange thing) and, looking at me deeply, said, “John, what could you do if you had more money in your life?”

I recall being a little surprised and saying something like, “Angie, you know money isn’t what drives me. I like having it because it allows me to do some things I might not do otherwise, but it doesn’t motivate me at all.”

“Yes, but think about what you could do if you had more money!”

“Angie, you’re not hearing me. It’s not the way I think. You know that.”

“Yes, but think about what you could do if you had more money, John!”

Then ‘the shoe dropped’ and it dawned on me what this was about. “Oh, I get it, Angie! We’re in a multi-level marketing conversation, aren’t we? Just tell me what the product is—I’m sure it’s a good one—and I’ll probably buy some, but I don’t want to be a Distributor.”

“Yes, we’ll get to that, but think about what you could do if you had more money!” Geez, it was like a friggin’ broken record. (Which I understand is one of the techniques taught for these situations.)

“Angie!” I said, starting to get irritated, “I want to be your *friend*. I do not want to be in your ‘*downline*!’”

“Yes, but John, think about what you could do if you had more money!”

“Angie, you are not hearing me! Stop ‘The Pitch’ you came here to make and just listen to me, your friend! I am *not* interested! Just stop!”

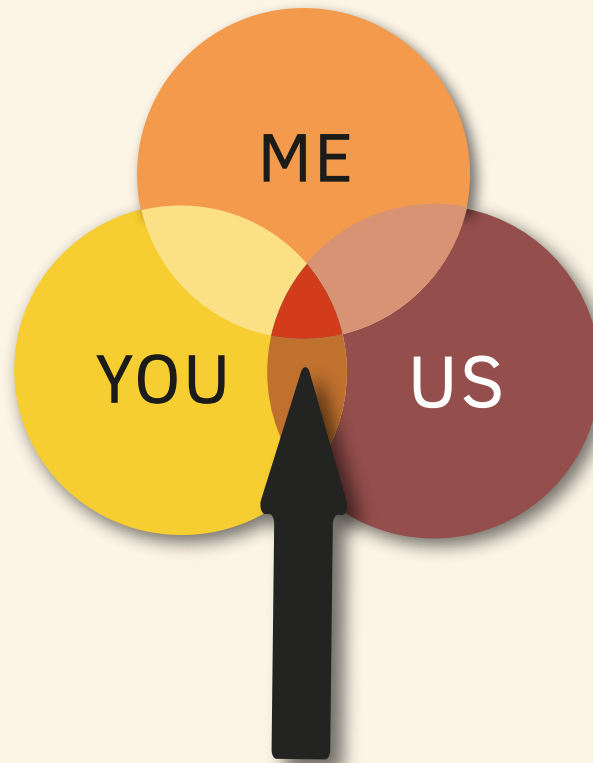
“OK, John, but let me leave these cassettes with you.”

“Angie, do not leave those cassettes with me. Give them to somebody who is going to listen to them.”

Closing her briefcase and starting for the door, she lobbed one last shot over her shoulder on the way out: “OK, but think about what you could do if you had more money!”

What do you think happened to our friendship? Right. It’s gone, replaced by her cause, her Mission, her ‘thing’. If she walked up to *you* right now, she would not be seeing *you*; she would be seeing a *potential distributor* in her ‘game.’ Remember the concept in **Question #2: What Am I BRINGING?** *Where you are coming from—what your deepest agenda is—determines where you end up.*

WHERE THEY ALL MATTER: THE SWEET SPOT



THE SWEET SPOT

What you need is a way to access and take into account all three ‘pulls’ *at the same time* and do it in a way that not only does not ‘cost’ you energy—or synergy, but actually *increases* it. We call it the ‘Sweet Spot’, and if you have ever played a sport with a bat, racquet, or club—or even your foot—you know what I am talking about. Hit a tennis ball in the exact center of your racquet—called ‘the sweet spot’—and you will have tremendous power, accuracy and pace, with a minimum of effort. Even as

a soccer player, I recall that great feeling of really thumping the ball with just the right spot on my instep.

What if there was a way to live and work all day, every day, in such a place? Actually, it *is* possible, even simple. You are in the Sweet Spot when you are fully engaged in that School of Life ‘assignment’, when you are putting your charisma to work in:

- an act of complete and joyful self-expression—regardless of the outcome or response from the world (that **nurtures** YOU),
- which **contributes** to the highest and best what the OTHERS involved need, and
- is **in alignment with** what the CONTEXT is calling for.

GETTING INTO THE SWEET SPOT ‘ZONE’

The Sweet Spot can be recognized by a sense of maximum effectiveness and deep fulfillment, even joy, regardless of the effort required. Have you ever been on the job and worked really hard all day, yet gone home *tired-but-energized*? Sure you have. Ever done next-to-nothing all day long and gone home *exhausted*? Sure you have. I think what is happening in both those instances has to do with how much you were working within The Sweet Spot. Once again, it means stepping into *this* moment, *this* conversation, *this* phone call, *this* meeting, looking for how to attend to the needs of all three: Yourself, Others, and The Larger Context.

You may have known engineers, hairdressers, nurses, teachers, parents, executives, bus drivers, car salesmen, maybe even trash collectors who seem to know this Sweet Spot space. When all three ‘pulls’ are being addressed, even to some extent, you are in the Sweet Spot. Athletes, singers, dancers, runners, and artists call it being in ‘The Zone’.

WHAT IS LIFE CALLING FOR?

Considering all three of these ‘pulls’ *at the same time* means asking yourself:

‘In this moment, what is *Life* calling for?’

Life: that largest of contexts. The one that surrounds *everything* in the equation, your Game Strategy, your ‘stuff’, the other person’s ‘stuff’, the circumstances, all the reasons it probably won’t work or will be difficult or will make you look bad, the relationship, even the Mission or Project or Context itself. **Life** encompasses *all of that*. Everything that is important in that moment gets enfolded, embraced, in what **Life** itself needs from you in this moment.

The Sweet Spot. The Zone. Responding to what **Life** is calling for. These are just different words for the same phenomenon, three motivations for doing things in the world.

But what is the *source* of that behavior? Where is that behavior coming from? Is it simply a technique you have discovered that often ‘works’ and that you are trying again? Or is it flowing from the core of who you are? That place your soul yearns to be in all day, every day. That place that lives in the center of who you are, that place you are in the process of coming home to... We are again talking about *TOV*, the ultimate Source of true purpose, power and peace.

WHEN THE SWEET SPOT MEETS TOV

So, in summary, The Sweet Spot is doing something that is **nourishing** and benefitting you, **contributing** to the others involved, while being **in alignment** with the larger cause or context. *TOV, on the other hand, describes where what you are ‘doing’ comes from.*

If you are ready to discover—or re-connect with—that powerful and life-transforming ‘call’ from inside, here are a few questions that can take you where your charisma is waiting, embedded in your *TOV* ‘state’, for a chance to be brought to life:

Introduced briefly before, these are so important we invite you to go a little deeper.

WHAT CALLS ME?

- What are the bone-deep talents, gifts, tendencies and/or skills in me that ‘make my heart sing’ when I do them?

- What am I really good at that I never had to learn—I just always seem to have had the ability? (Thank you, David [Agape] Scherer, for this one...)

- What would I almost do for nothing because it brought me so much joy?

- What do I get ‘lost’ in when I do it, losing track of time?

- What would the people who know me best say I am naturally good at?

- What's so easy for me that I can't figure out why other people think it's a big deal?

- What daydreams about what to do with my life keep floating through my mind—and have not gone away?

- What do I do that *gives me energy* when I do it?

- What were some of the things I wanted to 'be' when I grew up?

- What would be a purpose worthy of who I am?

The bigger question is, now that you have become re-acquainted with all this great stuff *inside* you, what are you going to DO with it? Where are you going to 'aim' your Self and all its charisms?

WHAT CALLS YOU FROM OUTSIDE

Now that you have discerned what is moving inside you that demands to be expressed, it's time to revisit the *external* aspect of what calls you. Ask yourself these questions:

- If you just walked into a room, without having to think about it, without your having to DO anything, *what impact* would you hope your simple presence would have on people around you?
- What work or *initiative* would you set yourself to if you knew it would not fail?
- My favorite: What *need in the world* are you perfectly 'designed' to address?
- This one is from my friend and colleague, Dwight Frindt: "What is something you want to see happening in the world three generations from now because you had been alive—and yet no one knows you had anything to do with it?"

Dwight's question introduces a crucial aspect to the whole process of unleashing yourself: *Why* are you doing whatever you are doing? Are you hoping or angling to get something out of it? Probably. Don't forget your Game Strategy.

There has to be something larger than *that* to get you outside of yourself so that you can bring more of your true self to what you are doing. Interestingly, that's the root meaning of our word 'ecstasy', which means literally 'to stand outside yourself'. When you are in The Sweet Spot and going for TOV,

you can experience a kind of ecstasy, a joy or ‘flow state,’ a sense of excitement about being on your authentic and creative ‘edge.’

What could be large enough to call you out of your Operating System’s Default Game Strategy and into that space of joyful self-expression? How about something so important to Life that you would want to see happen, even if no one ever knew you were involved. Now, that would be worth going for, wouldn’t it? This means seeing beyond the specific task that is engaging your energy in the moment to the larger intention that has gripped your soul.

The premise of this book: You don’t need to *change* yourself. You need to *come home* to yourself—and this changes everything. As an example of what I mean, here is a true story about what happened to me over the course of a dark night at sea during the first year of my service on the US Navy destroyer, USS EATON (DD-510).



Video: *The Phantom – The Night that Changed my Life*

(Adapted from *Work and the Human Spirit*, with Larry Shook, 1993, and *Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work*, 1996)

THE PHANTOM: A NIGHT THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING



When I was a young man I had a terrifying experience of self-discovery. I wouldn’t wish the trauma on anyone. But the gift of the discovery itself, if it were mine to give, I would give to everyone I could.

Here’s the background. Sometime in my pre-teen years, I became a *stutterer*, someone who stops themselves from speaking certain sounds, locking down the voice-box as if someone ‘pulled the plug’. Stutterers never start a sentence without worrying about which words are ‘coming up’. Even if they make it through a sentence without stuttering, they are thinking, “Whew... Made it through again...” The stutterer’s mind is constantly

scanning ahead for what is about to be said, searching for alternative ways of getting through words that have the dreaded sounds in them. For some stutterers it is the 'sibilant' sound like the S in 'safety' or the soft C in 'celery'. Others jam up on the M sound, staggering over a word like 'make' or 'me'. For some it's the H sound, like 'Harry'. My hard sounds were what are called the 'attacking' sounds, like P, T, D, K or the hard C.

So, of course, in its infinite wisdom, the U.S. Navy made me an Air Controller!

That's the person who spends hours every day at sea on the radio vectoring fast-moving high-performance jets toward the bad guys and guiding helicopters in their search for enemy submarines. Along with that assignment, I was also the Shore Fire Control Part Officer, who goes ashore with the Marines and gets on the radio to call in naval gunfire or close air support. If you believe in that sort of thing, you might say God has a sense of humor...

In the winter of 1963 I was sent from Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, to a Norfolk, Virginia-based destroyer, USS EATON (DD-510). The assignment had a terrible beginning: the death of our President Kennedy.

Just two days before setting out on my first Mediterranean cruise I found myself standing at rigid attention with my shipmates, sailors young and old, on EATON's deck. Tears were streaming down our cheeks as a 21-gun salute boomed over Norfolk Bay. With the nation grieving its fallen president, we put to sea on November 25, 1963, part of a huge carrier group of 15 ships, steaming east across the Atlantic.

A day or two out of Norfolk an 'angry' hurricane started to follow us. We turned right to let the bad weather pass. The hurricane turned with us. By degrees we kept turning right, seeking a course that would place us perpendicular to the storm's path. But like a predator stalking, the wind tracked us, then pounced, and for three days it mauled us.

We were taking the sea on the port bow. It was like an endless roller coaster ride with the ship plunging down the backside of 20-to-50 foot deep swells, the bow burying itself in the trough at the bottom, green water crashing over the forward gun Mount 51, the Weapon Alpha above that, and occasionally even over the Bridge some 38 feet above the ocean. Each time, as we tipped over the crest of a wave, the screws would scream and grind in the air and, as they once again 'caught' the water, we would begin to race down

the backside of that swell, plunging into the next trough. (If you have read the book or seen the movie 'The Perfect Storm' or more recently 'Greyhound' you have an idea of what I am describing here.)

That night, as the very Junior Officer on the Bridge Watch, I was assigned the task of standing by the Inclinator (a hanging needle attached to the bulkhead behind the Helmsman's station), and told to call out our degrees-of-roll to the Captain or the Officer of the Deck as we careened over and down each swell. The 'redline' on EATON'S Inclinator was 41⁰. This is the theoretical limit of roll, where the 'righting arm'—the ship's built-in tendency to right itself—suddenly (and usually) disastrously *flips*, creating a situation in Physics where the tendency to roll over is accelerated, capsizing the vessel and exploding her boilers. On one roll we started heeling over to port (left), and, as I called out the numbers, we moved rapidly through 20⁰, then 25⁰, 30⁰, and 40⁰. We held our breath, and the 'Old Salts' (the most experienced sailors) yelled out to brace ourselves as I shouted out "44 degrees, Sir!"

We were rolling over into the Red Zone and headed for certain disaster as we slid down the side of this particularly large wave. Everyone on The Bridge was knocked off their feet, myself included, and slammed over onto the port side bulkhead, which had almost become the deck beneath our feet. I remember thinking, "It has been a short—but good-life..." and prepared to pitch over into oblivion. "That water is going to be frigid and the rest of the fleet CANNOT stop to look for survivors" I thought, "They are fighting for their lives, too. This could be 'it'..."

But it was not to be.

We were saved from capsizing by the capricious harmonics of the sea that sent an oddly shallow trough to meet our port bow on the way down the backside of the wave and it smacked us upright again at the last right moment. Shaken but grateful to be alive, we resumed our Base Course and continued pounding our way to Europe.

For three days I never saw a straight line of my own urine—or shower water. For three days I vomited. Vomited until the yellow bile of my stomach lining started coming up. Between watches a kindly Steward named James met me in Forward Officer's Country (where our bunks were), made sure I got into my 'rack', and spoon-fed me chicken

bullion and crackers to prevent potentially dangerous—even deadly—dehydration. The hurricane finally released us on November 30. We licked our wounds for a day and made repairs.

A few days later is when the F-4 Phantom jet went in...

I had intended to offer the Navy my services as the pilot of just such an airplane. But when my left eye went 20/40 my senior year in college, my dreams of being a Naval aviator ended. At Officer Candidate School someone suggested I could still fly by becoming the 'GIB' or Guy-in-Back, actually called the 'RIO' or Radar Intercept Officer in Navy fighter aircraft. I rejected the idea when I learned that the RIO handles a lot of the radio communication. "Not gonna happen..." was my first thought, so I decided to 'hide out' on a destroyer where, I hoped, I wouldn't have to talk too much, at least not when the chips were down.

But as with *any* job on a US Navy Destroyer, 'hiding out' is not in the cards. So that is how 'green' Ensign Scherer, just two months out of Air Control training—and even greener-at-the gills after the hurricane tried to kill him and everyone on board—came to be standing the Combat Watch in the middle of the night when a voice as deep as God's came over the Combat Information (CI) Net.

"Hermit, this is Climax Himself, over..."

Now 'Hermit' was EATON's radio Call Sign, and I recall a quiet sigh of relief when I first reported aboard and discovered that our Call Sign was something I could pronounce! But we had just been assigned to serve as 'Plane Guard' for USS ENTERPRISE (CVA-65), the flagship of our little convoy—and the largest warship in the world—whose Call Sign turned out to be 'Climax'. OMG! I had to use every trick I had mastered over the years to hide my stuttering when saying 'Climax' over the radio. My usual trick was to say 'Ummm' or 'and' or cough slightly to get air moving over my vocal chords before taking on a tough word—like 'Climax'. That particular sound choked in my throat every time I had to say it!

That night, when the voice said 'this is Climax Himself', he was letting me know, in a kind of informal Navy code, that I was speaking with the Commanding Officer of ENTERPRISE, someone that green Ensigns like me had been trained to hold with respect

usually set aside for divine figures. So, Captain Vincent de Poix (everyone in the fleet knew his name) was standing there across the water in ENTERPRISE'S Combat Information Center (CIC) with four gold stripes on his sleeves, 'scrambled eggs' on the brim of his cap, and a rack of Service Ribbons, talking with recently-commissioned Ensign John J. Scherer IV, the stutterer, who had one tiny bronze bar on his collar and a name tag...

Climax Himself: "Hermit, we just lost a Foxtrot 4 out your way, last-known posit: grid coordinates Charlie Echo 25, Bravo Golf 49. I hereby designate you Sierra Alpha Romeo. Go find our two guys, Hermit, and keep me posted this net, over!"

Translation: "One of our F-4 Phantom jets has crashed-landed in the ocean somewhere near your position and you are deputized on the spot as responsible for setting up and implementing the Search and Rescue (SAR) operation involving all the aircraft we are about to send your way." Somehow, through no fault of my own, this stutterer had the watch and took the call.

Normally, just thinking about trying to say a word like 'Climax' would have caused an invisible fist to close on my throat. So here was an unlucky situation for everyone concerned—not least of all the two guys out there in the water—first, because I was a 'verbal cripple'; and second, because, fresh out of Air Control School, I had never controlled a live airplane and a pilot—other than in training simulations.

Nevertheless, I wake up both the Captain and the XO (Executive officer) to give them the news of our/my assignment as S.A.R. The team in Combat scurries into their positions, I pick up a grease pencil, don my headphones, wrap my legs around the radar console.

And here they come...

At first glance at the scope, I realize that it has suddenly become a snow storm of radar 'blips' as Climax launches every aircraft she has available for the search. I frantically grab the ATP-1A (the handbook that explains how to set up things like an Expanding Square Air Search), and draw a rough set of grease pencil lines on my radar screen. Then I start: "Any Climax aircraft, this is Hermit. I say again, any Climax aircraft, this is Hermit, over..."

And out of the inky night the voices start coming back. "Ah, Roger, Hermit, this is Climax two-three. I have Climax two-four and two-five in tow, request instructions, over..."

And a confident voice inside me, a voice I had never heard, said something like, “Roger, Climax two-three, make a standard right turn for I.D.,” and then a moment later, “OK, I’ve got you, two-three. Steer one-eight-five, descend to two thousand feet. DATUM (the last known position of the ditched aircraft) is at your one o’clock, twenty five miles.”

It started just like that and went on for hours and hours.

When we graduated from Air Control School they told us we would never be expected to control more than three or four aircraft at a time. Makes a lot of sense when you realize that these folks are often zipping along at from 600 to 1,000 miles an hour. But suddenly I had 10-15 planes on my screen, all headed directly toward the center of my radar scope! I had to remember that the two-zero sequence aircraft were F-8 Crusaders, that the three-zeros were A-4D Skyhawks, the four-zeros were F-4 Phantoms, the five-zeros were slower propeller-driven S2F Trackers, and the triple-number aircraft were slower but more maneuverable helicopters with even longer ‘loiter’ times that could stay in the search pattern at virtual sea level.

They all moved at different speeds, and I had to stack them accordingly—and keep *them* from colliding. In my mind—and on my scope—I had to fashion them into a giant 3-dimensional constantly-moving ‘mobile’ with a thousand feet of vertical separation and two thousand feet of horizontal separation between the moving parts, and I had to manipulate that mobile over the ocean in squares that expanded outward from the Datum we had. And I had to keep talking, always talking, to ‘Climax’ aircraft and their no-non-sense pilots searching for two of their own.

Several hours into the ordeal, in a moment of relative quiet, I had an extraordinary awareness: throughout the whole process, not only had I *not stuttered*, but I hadn’t even *thought* about it! Never in my life had it occurred to me that John Jacob Scherer IV was anything other than a stutterer trying to cover his inadequacy from those around him. But what was dominating my consciousness—my total focus—in that moment, was ***the two guys in the water***. A voice inside whispered, “John Scherer, get the @#\$% over yourself! There are two guys out there in the water counting on you. This is no time for your neurotic, stuttering bulls - - t! Now get back on that radio and find those two guys!”

I will never forget the feeling of exhilaration that swept over me with that thought.

In the end, at about sunup, we found and retrieved pieces of the RIO's ejection seat and helmet, but nothing else, not even his body. It was very sad, and the silence in Combat was palpable.

Then, an hour or so later, one of the helos called in excitedly, "Hermit, this is Climax 253, we got him! We got him! We got him!" The pilot, a Lieutenant Commander, had been found! Everyone in CIC began slapping me and the rest of the team on the back, cheering in a way that only a bunch of people who have been pressed together by a life-and-death situation can. The Captain and XO came down to CIC, congratulated me and the team, then went up to the bridge as we sped toward the rescue site to render assistance if needed.

A few minutes later 'Climax Himself', Captain de Poix, contacted us again on the CI Net with a message of consolation on our not being able to rescue the RIO, and of gratitude for finding his pilot: "Bravo Zulu ('Well Done' in Navy speak), Hermit. We know you did your best."

At some point I got a call from our own Captain on the 1MC: "Mr. Scherer, lay to the bridge! Some guy out here wants to talk with you..."

I'm thinking, *"Jeez... I'm friggin' exhausted... Can a guy get a little rest?!"*

Then my exhausted mind says, *"John, this is the Captain calling! Get yourself together and get your you-know-what up to the Bridge!"*

I grab my cap and head out to the Starboard wing of the Bridge. The scene that transpired next I will never forget as long as I live. Every man on the ship was 'lining the rail', cheering and watching what was happening in the water some 50 meters away. The helo's Rescue Swimmer is in the water, helping the Phantom pilot, a Lieutenant Commander (three ranks above me), get into the sling as the two of them rise and fall in the gentle swells, surrounded by the yellow/green of the shark-repellant/rescue 'beacon' the pilot had released into the water to help locate him.

Then, finally ready, the pilot is being hoisted from the water. Somehow through the Rescue Swimmer he had contacted our bridge to ask about the SAR Air Controller. The Captain says to me, “Mr. Scherer, he wants to see you”, and, looking out at the pilot, points to me, standing beside him. The pilot is now four or five feet out of the water, being hoisted to the helo above him. He looks right at me—and salutes. You have to know how extraordinary this is: Senior Officers simply do not salute *anyone* junior. This is a violation of Navy Protocol. I look him in the eye and salute him back. He smiles and waves with his free arm. Everyone is cheering even harder to see him lifted out of the sea toward the hovering chopper.

Quickly, I excuse myself from the Captain, and walk quietly over to the port wing of the Bridge, back to the Signal Flag bags—and begin to weep. Believe me, they were tears of joy. And something else I cannot begin to explain even all these years after. I do recall, however, thinking to myself, *“I want to be THAT guy, the calm, confident young man who was on that radio, guiding the rescue operation, who never stuttered and never even thought about it! The guy who was more concerned and focused on ‘the two guys in the water’ than on his own ‘story’ about not being good enough. Maybe that’s who lives inside me now, I thought, and maybe it’s who has been in there all along..”*

That is where the experience of ‘coming home to yourself’ came from.

Today, years later, in our leadership development and organizational change work, we suggest that people look for ‘the two guys in the water’ and navigate off of that. “What is something deeply important—something you need to do or create—that has the potential to call you out of your old story or ‘stuff’ and into the extraordinary man/woman/team/company/family who has been waiting inside to be discovered and unleashed? Get started on being *that* and watch what happens in your life.”

In my case, I never stuttered again—or worried about it.

Looking back on what happened, I might have helped find *his* Phantom, but what that pilot didn’t know was that he and his desperate situation had also helped me find *mine*... He had introduced me to the presence and the power of having a ‘Greater Purpose’, capable of giving birth to transformation.

YOUR 'GPS' OR GREATER PURPOSE STATEMENT

Maybe you are ready to create your 'GPS' (Greater Purpose Statement), a special navigation aid for guiding the unfolding of your life and work from this point on.

I like the name 'GPS' because it reminds us of the Global Positioning System, that network of satellites that enable us to find ourselves anywhere on the earth. Your GPS in this context does the same thing. Using it on a regular basis, you can *find yourself* when you are confused or are not sure what to do, or when you are facing a crisis and need a clear sense of direction, like when you are facing a 'tiger'. Think of your GPS as helping you 'aim yourself', focusing *all* your gifts—your Persona's natural Charisms AND your new-found Stretches embedded in your Shadow—in a direction that is in the service of what Life is calling for.

What are you 'aiming' for?

ELI'S TAE KWAN DO METAPHOR: 'AIM BEYOND THE BOARD'



One of my good friends, Eli Davis, is a Black Belt in Tae Kwan Do, and a graduate of the LDI. We were talking recently about this concept of 'focus.' "Wherever you put your focus, John, that's where your energy will STOP," he explained to me. "For instance, in attempting to break a board with your hand, if you focus on the *board*, your strike will come to a screeching stop when it hits the surface of the board. More than likely, your hand will either bounce off, or become injured from the impact. *To break the board, you need to focus on something beyond the board.* The breaking of the board then becomes just something that happens on the way through to your ultimate focus. This is what you would call a Greater Purpose, John."

Let's work with a real, present example: What is my writing this book really about? What is the purpose of this book? Could it be to:

- Become a household name in Poland or Central/Eastern Europe or the world? (Really, John?)
- To make a lot of money? (Very few books actually do.)
- To measure up to the standard my grandfather set? (That was then, this is now. He would probably be proud of me *without* a book.)
- To finally be able to relax about how I lived my life? (That either happens daily or it doesn't happen at all.)

None of these makes my heart sing. What if this book were just Eli's Tae Kwan Do 'board' that I encountered on the way through to my *real* or *greater* focus or intention?

JIM BERGQUIST'S WISDOM: THE 'SO-THAT' QUESTION



That's what I realized in a conversation with Jim Bergquist, another friend and colleague on this path of life-transforming work. (Jim happens to be the consultant who helped the famous Fish Market in Seattle discover *its* true gift to the world: How to make work FUN.)

Here's how my interaction with him unfolded...

"Jim, I'm feeling blocked in writing my book. It's almost done, but I have a feeling something is not quite right with where I am coming from, and I want it to come from the truest place possible in me."

"Thanks for asking, John. Says something about the integrity you want to have in your book-writing process. This won't take long. Maybe five minutes."

"Great, Jim! I'm ready."

"OK... What do you want for your book?" he started out.

"Well, I would want people all over the world to be reading it."

“Done!” Jim announced. “Let’s say your book has taken off like a rocket. It’s an international best-seller. Oprah held it up one day on her show, and the rest has been history, as they say. Literally millions of people all around the world are reading your book, and using it in their lives, just as you imagined. Got that? Wonderful! Okay, what would that make possible?”

I thought for a moment, and said, “Well, I guess then people around the world couldn’t wait to get to work every morning. They’d be thinking, ‘Man, what a day it’s going to be today on the job! I even hope my ‘Tiger’—that jerk in Marketing—talks behind my back again, because I learned so much last time from how we handled the experience. You know what? I can feel myself getting wiser-at-work, a better person today precisely because of all the stuff that happens on the job. My organization is also a better place—we are making the kind of contribution to the world that we are capable of making.’ Like that,” I said.

“Okay, John, let’s say *all that* is happening. Now what would *that* make possible?” (I knew that was coming...)

A little longer pause this time. “Well, I guess we would have people and organizations all over the world being what they were capable of being. They would be living into the greater purpose that lay behind their creation in the first place.”

“Okay, then what would *that* make possible, John?”

After some thought, I said, “Well, then I think we’d start to have more of a world that worked for everybody.”

“Bingo! I think you’re there, John! You are writing this book, not to get rich or famous, not even to have millions of people reading it, but in the service of creating a world that works for everybody. Write your book from *that* place.”

Isn’t that amazing? By responding several times to the same little question—‘What would *that* make possible?’ you, too, can find your work taken beyond the little, ego-driven, fear-based purpose that has probably been your default Game Strategy up to now. You can find yourself and your life placed in the context of something truly worth being up to in the world. Jim’s intervention—what we now call ‘The So-That Inquiry’—was something I had done with hundreds of executives and their

people for years but had not thought to apply to myself! Isn't that the way it is? We discover that what we *thought we needed* to hear or see has *been inside us all along*. We just needed to be reminded of it—or awakened to it—or more accurately, 'come home' to it. (Thank you, Jim...)

I hope this book is doing that for you.

OUR DEFAULT 'TRANCE' STATE

Occasionally, our LDI participants will say that the GPS-development process feels like being a kind of 'trance'. This is actually backward. What we have come to know as our 'normal' waking state is actually much more like a trance (who our Operating System *says* we are), and the centered place from which the GPS emerges seems more connected with reality (who we *really* are).

As I hope you now see, we usually walk around in a 'default state', trapped in the patterns programmed by our Operating System, running our Game-of-Life Strategy. We perform our 'act' to get people to believe us (or trust us, or follow us, or respect us, etc.), without acknowledging what our hidden agenda is about. To make this 'program' work, we bring to bear all the amazing Persona-based skills and characteristics and qualities we have developed over the years (our charisms) and put them in the service of our default game: looking good and staying safe. For 99% percent of the world's population, this is totally automatic and unconscious.

If that's not being in a trance, I don't know what is!

And our Strategy works—sort of—so we stick with it, settling for the benefits it brings us, even if those benefits don't have much joy or fulfillment or even effectiveness connected to them. Every now and then we get a 'hit' of the thing we're addicted to e.g. being Adored or Remembered or Respected (fill in your own Addiction here) and we temporarily stave off the thing we're terrified of e.g. Being Discarded or Not Mattering or Betrayed (fill in your own Terror here), but neither one goes away for long. This means we rarely have moments of lasting fulfillment and satisfaction, and are less effective than we could be. This is because what we are doing is completely self-centered.

WAKING UP

Once we have the awareness—and then the courage—to wake from this trance, we can recognize its emptiness and begin looking for another, more useful, more authentic reason for being here. The Inquiry: “If I’m not here (on the planet) to _____ (e.g. mine: to impress people so they will warmly remember me and not forget me), then why am I here?”

Frame the question now for yourself: “If I am not here to _____, then why am I here?”

That question and the inquiry it stimulates can lead to a profound internal dialogue and deep conversations with trusted friends, partners, and colleagues. The irony is that to accelerate your waking process you need to *go into a deeper kind of state*. To simplify things, I have condensed the soul-searching inquiry required into a series of questions. In this experience many people are able to bypass their ‘normal’ patterned way of thinking and find themselves closer to another, deeper place where another, greater purpose lives (and has resided for many years, waiting to be re-discovered). What calls you is *underneath*—or *beyond*—your Game Strategy and its automatic patterns of thought.

The greater purpose that emerges may not be about the specific *job* you should be doing. That’s what we call ‘the brown end of the pipe’. The GPS that emerges from this process describes a state of mind—or a state of being—which is much ‘larger’ than you would have ever thought of from your normal mode of thinking.



Going on this *audio* guided imagery, called ‘The GPS Journey’, will prepare you for creating your GPS. Click, relax and listen.

Now that you have ‘gone deep’ into that place from which a Greater Purpose can originate, let’s set about creating one for you now. First, a few real examples of GPSs.

A FEW GPS SAMPLE

To give you an idea of what GPSs look like, here are a few examples. They come from actual LDIs, created by Facilitators with a small group of fellow Participants, and from EDIs, the solo program, where the GPS is created by a Facilitator with the person alone.



KRZYSZTOF: A 45-YEAR-OLD MANAGER

Confident and fully present, as I promote myself, let you in, and stand in my truth (*all Stretches*), my principled and strategic thinking (*Charisms*) guide us to real interactions, and connect us to each other, creating organizations that get things done (*So That*).



DAVID: ENTREPRENEUR AND EVENT PRODUCER

Whether I am ON (*Charism*) or STILL (*Stretch*), my authentic presence awakens the human spirit (*So That*).

A short and sweet GPS. David came across as a positive, motivational, upbeat guy, interested in who he was with, but it occasionally seemed forced, like an act, like he was trying to 'come across as if

he cared'. The Stretch for him was to let go of having to be ON, and practice dropping into the stillness of his authentic presence. 'Awakening the human spirit' was his So That.

He says this: "One big 'Aha!' for me at my LDI was realizing how much of the time I was 'onstage', trying to get people to notice me. What a relief to re-discover that my just being in the room has a positive impact on people at a deep level. I knew this in my head—like an idea—but it didn't really live in me. Now when I catch myself being 'on' and 'pumping my Persona', I take a complete breath, say my GPS to myself, and relax. One outcome is that as I have less need to be the center of attention, other people have a greater chance to bring their unique gifts to the agenda. We're getting a richer product out of our meetings with more input from more people!"

Sometimes a GPS turns out to be VERY short:



JERRY: MIDDLE MANAGER

I am enough.

After hours of deep work, this simple phrase profoundly moved him, allowing him to cease his struggle to 'matter' and no longer try so hard to be significant to everyone he met.



STEVE: CONSULTANT

Present and at peace, as I accept myself and others exactly the way we are, we become whole. When I am ‘just myself’, my passionate energy and gentle heart help us come into the fullness of our being. My flaws reveal my true gifts.



CHUCK: MORTGAGE LENDER

Held in the palm of God’s hand, living deeply, yet care-free, my tough love, self-confidence and spiritual vitality deepens our faith and heals us all. I am your kindred spirit.

Even though the LDI is not intended to be a religious experience, a number of GPSs contain spiritual phrases—a testimony, I believe, to what lives down there deep inside each of us when we can peel away the layers and get into the core of who we are.



AGATA: ENTREPRENEUR AND BUSINESS OWNER

Passionate and courageous creator, I am a pioneering mission carrier, committed to personal transformation. Clear and decisive about what I want, my independent spirit preserves the vision through the mundane. I am a true star among the stars. *(This last is a Stretch—and a So That—as she always wondered whether she belonged in the ranks of successful business leaders.)*



JESSICA: THERAPIST AND LIFE COACH

Standing in my power, I deliver God's dream. Radiantly gifted, passionate and perceptive, I allow my spirit to move me. My lyrical grace and loving touch enlivens us all to joyfully be who we are. I am a light-giving life.



JACOB: FIRE CHIEF

Careful, caring, and calm, I am a powerful, protective and fully-present teacher and man-of-integrity (*Charisms*). Spontaneous and unpredictable, as I take center stage and stand in the fullness of who I am, I surrender my shield, letting more of you 'in' and more of me 'out' (*all Stretches*) Infusing my leadership with love, my simple presence and huge heart ignites leadership, eases fear and suffering, minimizing danger while defending and preserving life (*So That*).



CATHLEEN: AWARDED SCHOOL TEACHER

Generous, positive, and profoundly in-touch, I am an un-stoppable yet compassionate, creative and mission-driven visionary.

Putting my needs first and fully expressing what I feel empowers me to be the fragile Woman, delicate Child and vulnerable Goddess that I am.

Guarding my boundaries, as I trust you to handle all of me, my simple presence awakens our awareness of beauty and joy, launches an explosion of kindness and respect and opens the space for Agape (and keeps my stomach healthy. . .)

I am enough - a treasure to be found and loved.



DAN: BUSINESS EXECUTIVE

Caring, calm and confident, I am a quick-thinking, empowering and inspirational Presence. Easy-going yet powerful, observant yet spontaneous, as I boldly take the next step, trust my heart and let its energy move me, I become 'the eye of the hurricane' where my strength, courage and Inner Voice whisper MY truth that transforms me and everyone I touch.

Choosing joy over duty, risk over certainty and pleasing myself over pleasing you, we all 'get over ourselves', relieving our pain and releasing us from the inner prison of fear and failure.

Screw it! Just do it!



DOROTA: PSYCHOLOGIST AND TRAINER

Inspirational, insightful and playfully-intuitive, I am a sensitive spark that ignites self-awareness, courage and compassion in everyone I touch. Open-hearted, trusting and at peace, as I stop 'pumping' and fearlessly-relax into my natural beauty, accepting us exactly the way we are, I soar free in this moment, where my soul creates the space for Love and Life to 'fill the room'.

I simply AM with you. . .

MY CURRENT GPS



I NOW PUT MYSELF IN THE SERVICE OF MY GREATER PURPOSE, WHICH IS (MY GPS):

Just me. Timeless, confident and at home, I am a deep yet light-hearted life-toucher and a beautiful, magical man. As I pursue with abandon what pleases me, my simple presence breaks trances, illuminates the path, and unleashes us all into New Life. I am a spiritual warrior, an intuitive and passionate force, unleashing the human spirit at work around the world—starting with my own.

F - - k it! Let's unleash the human spirit!

- 'Timeless, confident and at home' are Stretches for me.
- 'Deep, yet light-hearted' feels like a more-natural charism of who I am.
- Seeing myself as a 'beautiful, magical man' is lovely—and touching—but also a huge Stretch at the same time.
- 'I pursue with abandon what pleases me' is one of the biggest Stretches I can imagine for myself.
- 'My simple presence' is a powerful Stretch, calling me to not have to be Indiana Yoda to save every situation, which allows others to shine—and find their own way 'home'.
- 'Breaks trances and illuminates the path' are the result of my simply being present—and is my TOV.

- ‘Awakens us to New Life’ is my life-long mission, my So That.
- ‘F - - k it! Let’s unleash the human spirit!’ while slightly embarrassing (my Grandmother would for sure not approve), it reveals the passion and urgency in me for what needs to be done.

INGREDIENTS IN YOUR GPS

Your GPS will contain at least three crucial elements:

- **Charisms:** What you are good at, the bone-deep skills and qualities that just show up whenever you are, that require no thinking or intention on your part. (If you drew your ‘Onion’, these are your favorite words from your Persona list.) Anyone who is around you ‘gets’ these qualities or skills or characteristics. You ‘walk into a room’—these come along with you. Isn’t that fascinating: Buried in what you have been *trying* to be are your charisms, what you *simply are* underneath all the effort and ‘pumping’!
- **Shadow Stretches:** What you know you need to practice, those ways-of-being from your Shadow that you must to step into if you are to continue to develop more fully into all of who you are. This also includes what you need to learn from your Shadow Icon. (Take a look at the Shadow Stretches you just named and/or worked on.)
- **What becomes possible? The ‘So That’:** The kind of effect or impact you would love to have in the world—or on those who interact with you: What you would want to see happen in any situation in which you found yourself. The ‘So That’: What does your being alive and on the earth make possible?

STEP 1: SELECT 3-5 CHARISMS

Go to your **Persona** from ‘The Onion’ ([page 91 click here](#)) and select the most important qualities or characteristics for you, the *last ones* you would ever want to lose:

My bone-deep, natural 'CHARISMS' (gifts):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

STEP 2: SELECT 3-5 STRETCHES

Go to your **Shadow Stretches** ([page 125](#)) and select the most important ones, maybe the most difficult or challenging but also the ones you know in your 'heart-of-hearts' you need to begin to practice:

Important STRETCHES for me:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

STEP 3: PONDER THESE GPS 'SO-THAT' QUESTIONS

Pick a few of the questions from below and mull them over. Take your time. It could take days, or weeks, or even years—but it's life-transforming work. It could be the next step in 'coming home to yourself' and becoming wiser-at-work, which is the aim of this book. Make the questions you select into a kind of mantra or prayer and bring them to your consciousness off and on during the day. Make them into graphics you put on the fridge or on your desk where you can see them. Talk about them—and what is coming up in you—with a few trusted family members, friends and/or colleagues. Remember what I said in the Introduction: *Your mind will generate answers to whatever questions you bring to it, so bring good ones!*

1. What are you meant to *do* here on the earth?
2. What do you long for/yearn for—for yourself?
3. What brings you tears of joy?
4. What world condition(s) do you yearn to see changed?
5. What are you passionate about?
6. If you had three days left to live, what would you do?
7. What are the happiest (TOV) moments for you?

These are my own personal responses here as an illustration of how it works—and a possible inspiration.

1. What are you meant to do here on the earth?

- Be with people at the level of their deepest need
- Love people and be a channel for the truth
- Unleash the human spirit—especially at work
- Put all of who I am in the service of awakening people to their truest potential—and continue to develop myself in the process
- 'Transform the world at work™' (my mission statement for over 30 years)
- 'Help real people deal with real issues in real time' (the tagline for Scherer Leadership Center, suggested by colleague, Amy Barnes)
- Assist people in becoming wiser-at-work

2. What do you long for/yearn for—for yourself?

- A sense of freedom to be exactly—and all of—who I am
- An experience of belonging, of being ‘at home’ where I live
- A loving life partner who yearns for me and accepts me just as I am
- Life work that demands all of who I am, and keeps me on the edge of my confidence and competence

3. What brings you tears of joy?

- Acts of courageous risk-taking and sacrifice (e.g. Jesus, The Buddha, or Frodo in Lord of the Rings, The Song of Roland, the Thai Navy SEALs who rescued those soccer players and their Coach, or peaceful protesters in the recent Black Lives Matter protests)
- True love expressed-and-received
- Being in the presence of someone’s personal breakthrough (this happens a lot)
- Beautiful, powerful, moving music
- Experiencing true ‘greatness’ as in the funeral services for Aretha Franklin and John McCain

4. What world condition(s) do you yearn to see changed?

- Fear-based hatred and systemic racism and gender-based oppression
- Greed and ego-based leadership and management
- Toxic workplaces where human beings are reduced to frightened, numb, or angry cogs in a machine
- The human reluctance to embrace polarities
- The arrogance that leads us to impose someone’s ‘way’ on others
- The raping and destruction of our planet

5. What are you passionate about?

- Personal/spiritual development, especially in leadership
- Life-long learning
- Sharing practical personal development principles
- Helping people create ‘impossible possibilities’

6. If you had three days left to live, what would you do?

- Write as much as I could on the next book
- Video a few webinars on things that were important to me
- Be with family and loved ones, or, if I couldn't, look through photos and videos (or Zoom with them, which is the case as I write this now...)
- Call and say 'Thank you' to those I love and those who have loved or cared about me
- Make love
- Walk by the water and feel waves lapping around my ankles
- Learn a new song on my guitar, like maybe 'The Load-Out/Stay' by Jackson Browne
- Take a run, do my yoga, sing, dance, meditate, cook a special meal and rub the feet of my beloved

7. What are the happiest (TOV) moments for you?

- When I am doing The Great Work with a colleague that I love and respect
- Watching someone—or a relationship—break through to a new self-understanding
- Watching truly great comedy
- Seeing a leadership team discover and practice authenticity, purposeful action, and going for TOV as a human system

SO THAT

Look at what you wrote in the boxes above and select the most important phrases, the ones you know in your 'heart-of-hearts' are what your life truly is all about going forward:

My SO THAT:

(What is the situation/problem/need that calls me and that I am perfectly designed to address—the impact I would like to have in life?)

STEP 4: WRITING YOUR GREATER PURPOSE STATEMENT (GPS)

Now you are ready to transform those images into a concise, useful, powerful—and hopefully poetic—navigation tool, your GPS.



**I NOW PUT MYSELF IN THE SERVICE
OF MY GREATER PURPOSE, WHICH IS (MY GPS):**

_____, _____ and _____,
CHARISM CHARISM CHARISM

I am a _____. As I _____,
METAPHOR STRETCH

_____ and _____, my _____
STRETCH STRETCH

_____.
MY MAJOR CHARISM A POWERFUL VERB SO THAT



**I NOW PUT MYSELF IN THE SERVICE
OF MY GREATER PURPOSE, WHICH IS (MY GPS):**

PERSONAL GPS COACHING SUPPORT



In our opinion, the best way to create a powerful and life-enhancing GPS is to participate in the [LDI](#) or the [EDI](#). If when you are ready, click here for a link to the website where schedules and details can be found.

Now that you have some clarity about what's been running you—about who you are underneath all that 'stuff' and why you are here—the final question is, **What will UNLEASH Me?**

Question #5:

What will UNLEASH me?



UNLEASHED: FROM WHAT? TO WHAT? FOR WHAT?

FROM WHAT? *AUTOMATIC* LIVING

I hope by now you can see that we all need to be unleashed—or released—FROM our ‘little self’, the one that worries all the time, tries hard to impress people, and to keep up the illusion of safety and control. The self that is driven by our Operating System, with its automatic, default, Game-of-Life Strategy that has us ‘pumping’ our Persona and trying to hide our Shadow in order to get ‘hits’ of what we are Addicted to and avoid any hint of our Terror, all the while thinking (and acting) as if that is who we really ARE.

THAT self is the one we need to be unleashed *from*...

TO WHAT? *AUTHENTIC* LIVING

It may be time to come home to your *huge* Self, the one with a Greater Purpose, the one described in The Introduction ‘that truly lives and loves and knows why it’s here and can’t wait for the next sunrise. The one that yearns to encounter the next challenging person or experience, because of what will be learned in that fire. Your true Self, your higher or deeper Self. The one that has not given in to the default trances of this world and its concepts about life.’

Perhaps you now see the possibility of using what happens all day every day in your living and working to step into that freer, less-anxious, more confident and expanded Self, integrating the charisms in your Persona with the best of your Shadow ‘Stretches’ and committing to continuous deep development and maximum contribution to others and to Life itself.

THAT self is the one we need to be unleashed *into*...

FOR WHAT? (YOUR SO-THAT)

But why?

What is the reason or the reward for waking up and stepping into what calls you? The reward is... Ready? Remember?

The reward is *waking up and stepping into what calls you*. That's the payoff! What could be more motivating than living a life that has meaning and doing work that makes your heart sing, putting into action all of who you ARE. Living like this from moment-to-moment, 'the real you' (Authentic) shows up in the service of a Greater Purpose, something larger than your (old) self-concept. Something that is 'just right' for your (new) more Authentic Self that joyfully applies your Persona Charisms and courageously steps into your Shadow Stretches. Something that takes you 'home' again and again to that 'Golden Center' (your soul's 'fingerprint' at the core of the Mandala), the eye of the hurricane, the source of real impact, the manifestation of your TOV.

THAT is the best *reason* for being unleashed...

TURNING MOMENTS *IN* LIFE INTO LESSONS *FOR* LIFE

You are now ready to turn every difficult moment, situation or person into a potentially life-transforming 'lesson'. After reading *Facing the Tiger*, we hope you realize that everything you need for this is 'in you'. All you need to do is put what you have now and what you *are already* into 'practice'.

It's the same when improving your ability in a sport or musical instrument or *any* new activity or capability. It takes practice. Every day. In this way every interaction or challenging situation can become a 'classroom' for your deep development, a 'dojo' where you practice and work on mastering your craft (being your Self).

We have laid out a *process* to help you begin to consciously practice turning 'tigers' into learning and development for yourself—and sometimes for those around you.

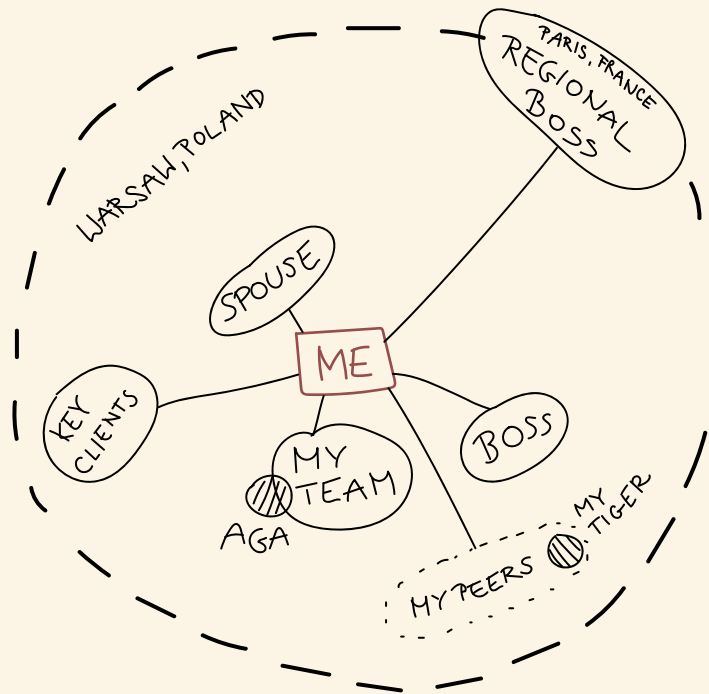
You could take on each of the following steps 'in order', or, if you want to proceed more slowly, take on one or two, see what happens, and then go to the next step. We do recommend starting at

the beginning, but this process is actually holographic, which means you could start *anywhere* and experience insight. Your objective ought to be to learn something significant—about yourself, about the other people involved, and about Life.

MY BACK-HOME WORLD ('MAP')

Remember the Somebody Training Map that showed who was around in our first 5-6 years? That was *then*. This map describes the people and groups who are in your world *right now*.

My Back-Home Map (a generic version, based on LDI/EDI graduates—yours will be different):



Circles: What kinds of 'characters' will you draw on YOUR map?

- Spouse/partner
- 'tiger'

- Children (if present)
- My work team (Direct Reports)
- Boss
- My peers at work
- In-laws?
- Best friend
- Neighbors
- 'Circle of culture' – at work, my local zeitgeist and wider region/country

WHO IS ON YOUR BACK-HOME MAP?



Picture the key people and groups who are around you right now. Just as before, think about who you interact with and how significant each relationship is to you and your life. Make sure your 'tiger' is somewhere on this map! If the way you are now seeing your 'tiger' has changed, indicate your new perception in where you locate them on this map.

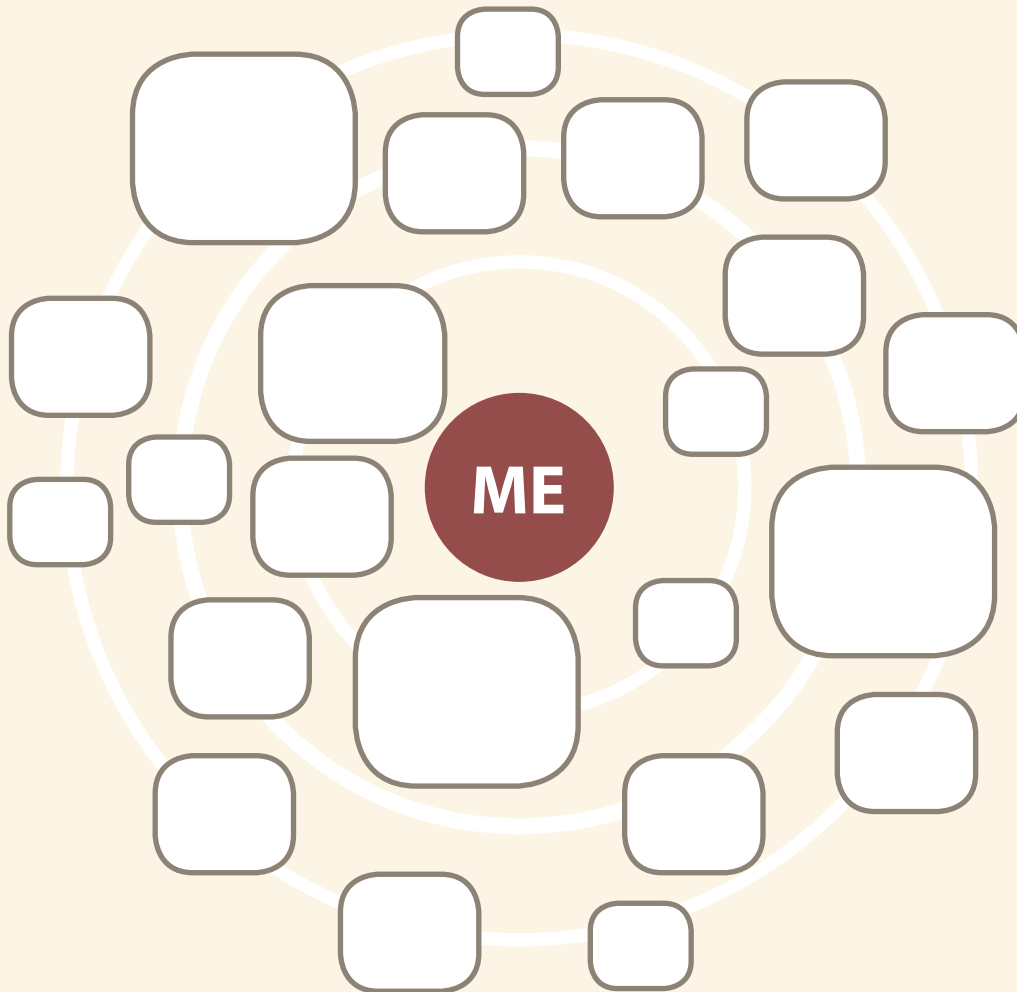
MY BACK-HOME RELATIONSHIPS MAP

All the people waiting for me.

Larger the square = more importance (quality)

Closer = more interactions (quantity)

Quality of relationship 1 (low) to 5 (high)



SHIFTING MY STATE FROM AUTOMATIC TO AUTHENTIC

You now possess everything you need to make the shift between 'Automatic' and 'Authentic':

1. You know when you have a 'tiger' to face.
2. You know what you are bringing to that encounter.
3. You have a handle on your Somebody Training and your Operating System's Default Game-of-Life Strategy.
4. You know what has been running you when you have been on Automatic—your Addiction and your Terror.
5. You now have Stretches from your Shadow that can take you to the next level of purpose, power and peace.
6. Finally, you have your GPS with powerful phrases to help you get back on track.

GETTING STARTED

What you need now is a *method*, a 'path' to take you where you want to go next with all this. Remember your Default Game is always running: now... now... now...

So, you need to 'catch yourself in the act', gently and gracefully stepping away from your *Automatic* state and into your *Authentic* state by focusing on your GPS and your Shadow Stretches. We call this process 'State-Shifting'.

Let me walk you through my own State-Shifting process to give you an idea of how it works.

AUTOMATIC LIVING

**I'M PRESENTING MYSELF AS
(MY PERSONA)**

Indiana Yoda

WHO IS (MY PERSONA GIFTS)

Bright, Quick, Insightful,
Intuitive, Courageous, Warm,
Caring, Spirited, Vital, Ageless,
Clever, Fun, Real, Generous,
Charming, Deep yet
Light-Hearted, Strong,
Inspirational and Joyful

**AND TRYING HARD NOT TO BE SEEN
AS (MY SHADOW)**

Donald Trump

WHO IS (MY SHADOW WORDS)

Arrogant, Self-Righteous,
Power-Hungry, Self-Absorbed,
Cold, Cruel, Weak, Dependent,
Needy, Lost, Destructive,
Stingy, Out-of-it, a User and a
Loser

But it's all in a service of my hidden agenda,
which is to

**SCORE FREQUENT 'HITS' OF BEING
(MY ADDICTION)**

Warmly remembered

**AND AVOID ANY 'HINTS' OF BEING
(MY TERROR)**

Forgotten

**TO SUCCEED AT WALKING AROUND AS MY PERSONA (Indiana Yoda) I NEED
TO HAVE IN MY 'SCRIPT':**

People who need insight, guidance or to be 'moved to action', 'bright students or Jedhi Knights' who look to me for wisdom. A quest for something important that has been 'lost'. Opportunities to demonstrate my exceptional gifts, like risky/challenging situations to be overcome with my cleverness and/or almost magical spiritual powers. What I need personally: a combination of solitude (cave) and adventurous opportunities to teach/guide (steady flow of people in need).

THE GOAL: Looking Good and Staying Safe

THE METHOD: Manipulating Self, Others & Life

AUTHENTIC LIVING AND BEING

In the Authentic state, you are bringing *all* of who you ARE to everything you DO. When you make this shift, all the highly-developed skills and qualities in your *Persona* ‘come along’. And—this is amazing—you also bring along everything that is worthwhile from your *Shadow* in the form of Stretches! At first, you may feel a little strange, a little vulnerable, a little raw or awkward or ‘unpolished’. This is a good thing. It means you are no longer trapped inside the comfortable illusion of your Operating System and its clever manipulations. It means that something brand new is possible—not more of the same.

It all comes together in your GPS.
Let's come back to my example:

AUTHENTIC LIVING

I NOW PUT MYSELF IN THE SERVICE OF MY GREATER PURPOSE, WHICH IS (MY GPS):

Just me. Timeless, confident and at home, I am a deep yet light-hearted life-toucher and a beautiful, magical man. As I pursue with abandon what pleases me, my simple presence breaks trances, illuminates the path, and unleashes us all into New Life. I am a spiritual warrior, an intuitive and passionate force, unleashing the human spirit at work around the world—starting with my own.

F - - k it! Let's unleash the human spirit!

As I make this shift, I bring:

MY GIFTS/CHARISMS

Bright, Insightful, Empathic,
Intuitive, Compassionate,
Courageous, Generous, Warm,
Genuinely-Caring, Spirited,
Practical, Vital, Alive, Ageless,
Clever, Fun, Authentic/Real,
Charming, Deep-Light-Hearted,
Strong

AND

MY SHADOW STRETCHES (THE BEST 'TRUMP')

- Express my upsets
- Guard what is 'mine'
- Go hard for my objectives
- Pursue what pleases me
- Nurture my body,
mind & spirit
- Empower YOU to shine

Even though I still run the risk of being:

Warmly remembered

AND

Forgotten

But who cares?!

THE GOAL: Natural Effectiveness

THE METHOD: BEING All of Who I Am (TOV)

YOUR 'DEFAULT' STATE?

You may not be able to recognize it right away, but you have a familiar 'state' associated with your Automatic Game Strategy, your default 'Act'.

- Do you know someone who seems to be carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders?
- Or anyone who looks like they always have to be right and in control?
- Or someone who looks 'on guard', expecting to be attacked at any time?

Your body also has a 'default state'. It may be too subtle for you to notice, but I guarantee, it's there, and some people close to you know what it looks like. Something in your tone of voice, a gesture, the way you carry your head, or walk. Look closely and you may see clues of this embedded in your body. Your automatic, default ways of being has a certain 'look', *physically*, especially in your face and shoulders, and even *emotionally*, usually manifesting in predictable feelings being expressed.

Ask someone who knows you well to 'mirror you' and/or tell you what they notice when you're just being 'normal', and be prepared to be surprised. But that familiar internal state—that cluster of physical, emotional and psychological elements—can and will *shift* as you become more adept at 'catching yourself' in your Operating System's Persona-Pumping Act and *consciously move into your GPS and your Stretches*.

While in your Act, you may begin to be aware of how you are angling for your Addiction, setting people up to give you what you think you need. You may catch yourself subtly manipulating people, putting all your amazing Persona gifts in the service of looking good and staying safe by doing your best to avoid your Terror.

When you gently pull away from your Act/Game Strategy and put all your Persona gifts—and your Shadow Stretches—in the service of your GPS, a very different state shows up. In the EDI or LDI, we can see it the moment it happens. Someone's face will soften, or they will sit straighter in their chair, or their voice will change. It's truly amazing to see. Often everyone in the room will notice. It's not just that the person is having a different *thought*, they are in a completely different *state*.

‘SHIFTING MY STATE’

So how *do* you go from Automatic to Authentic?

Actually, this is nothing new. You do it all the time, going through *many* states off and on during the day, usually without realizing you are doing it. Happy, sad, confident, scared, angry, pushy, retiring, vulnerable, conscious, unconscious, etc. Every one of those states has a certain physical, emotional and psychological ‘shape’ to them.

Let me illustrate this with an exercise developed by my friend and colleague, Ted Buffington:

Step 1: Get into a physical position of feeling completely dejected, lost, depressed. (Think of a situation where you are completely hopeless and helpless.) Got it? Hold that posture, including an exaggerated facial expression, for 30 seconds.

Step 2: Without changing your physical stance, *try to feel empowered, relaxed and/or confident*. Tough, isn’t it? It is virtually impossible.

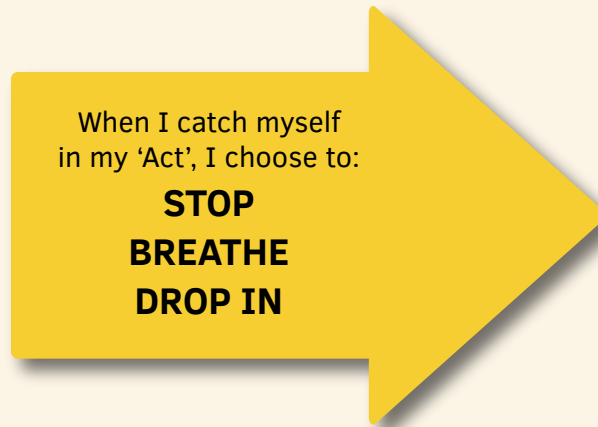
Step 3: Now, reverse it. Imagine that you have just won the Gold Medal in an Olympic event, doing something better or faster than anyone in the world. Now imagine that you are up on the victors’ stand, basking in the cheers of the crowd, proud of what you have accomplished for your country and for yourself. Your national anthem starts to play. Picture yourself there. Get into the physical stance you would be in. Just put this book down and stand the way you’d be standing, feeling the way you’d be feeling. What would be going on in your body (hands, feet, back, chest, belly, legs, especially your face)?

Step 4: Okay, got that? Now, without changing anything in your body, *try to feel depressed*. It can’t be done. You will have to shift *something* in your physical stance to get into that depressed mood.

Notice that I did not have to coach you HOW to get yourself into either of those states. *You knew how already*. And notice how relatively easy it was to shift your state.

MAKING THE SHIFT

Now picture yourself moving from left to right, from Automatic to Authentic. I like to think of it as an arrow like this:



STOP, BREATHE, DROP IN

To snap out of the trance of your normal way of operating—your default 'Act'—you need to create a little break in the flow of what is happening, and the *breath* is one of the best tools for managing your consciousness that we have available to us. My spiritual development coach taught me, "The breath is the leash (or the reins) for the mind." Since the state you are in is a result of the pattern of old and out-of-date thoughts, you need to wedge out a space in your mind for any new thought pattern to have a chance.

It's pretty simple, actually. Athletes, singers, actors, martial artists, public speakers, actually anyone facing difficult situations—even you—can learn to do this. It results in amazingly powerful, yet completely relaxed *focus*, making you more ready for whatever is in front of you.

Here is a simple one-breath 'centering' process:

- Look off into the middle distance.
- Soften your gaze. (Don't focus on anything.)
- Exhale completely, squeezing out all the stale air.
- Inhale slowly and deeply, filling your entire lung capacity.
- Gently hold the breath for a count of five.
- While you are holding, bring to your mind a phrase from your GPS, or a Stretch you intend to practice immediately, or your So That.
- Gently exhale, and, if you are free to do so, do it with a deep sigh or a gentle sound.
- Do whatever come next from this rejuvenated place.

Notice that when you make this shift from Automatic to Authentic, you get to bring along everything that is worthwhile from your default 'Act'! All those highly-developed skills and techniques that are present in your Persona come along. That means using what your Shadow Character has to teach you, as well as consciously practicing the Stretches you identified before.

As I said at the beginning of this book, you do not have to *change yourself* or become like someone *else*—you need to *come home to yourself*, become your true Self even more fully. You need to bring all of who you ARE, The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, to everything you DO.

'CREEPING AWARENESS'

Sometimes people report developing the capacity to catch themselves in the act, but then they beat up on themselves: "Oh, no! I did it again!"

You are shifting a lifetime of habitual patterns, but if you stay with it, you can start to experience what I call 'Creeping Awareness'. At first, you might catch yourself sometime *after* an event or 'moment.' It could be the next day—or even the next week: "I sure was on Automatic in *that* interaction/meeting!" You would be able now, I am sure, to look back over your life and find hundreds or even

thousands of moments where you were operating on Automatic. That's catching yourself in the act *after the fact*, an important first step

The next time, though, you may catch yourself *immediately afterward*. You say or do something and immediately catch the faint 'aroma' of your Old Game at work. When that happens, you could actually say something like this to the other person, "I didn't like where I was coming from just then, and I'd really like to receive what you are telling me. Could we start this conversation again?" or words to that effect. Just stop, take a breath, and re-frame the conversation.

Then, as you practice, you can start to catch yourself *in the moment itself*. "I'm 'hooked' again, Sarah, and we need to start over. Can we?"

Finally, you can get to the point where you sense the urge to respond to someone from your Old Game *before it happens*. That's the next step—catching yourself *having the impulse* and dropping into your GPS and/or your Shadow Stretches as you engage the other person, shifting from Automatic to Authentic *right there and then, in your intention, before you speak*.

The Advanced Graduation Level happens when you realize that it has been some time since you ever *had* that impulse. Remember John Morrow's story? It seems to have simply gone away. It can come back—welcome to the human race—but it is 'long gone' and the situation has to be pretty bad for you to fall back into that old default pattern.

The bottom line: People who are mastering Authentic Living simply 'catch themselves in the act' faster and get off it sooner—and with little or no self-blame.

STATE-SHIFTING: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

You have already seen both the *left* side of the diagram (the *Automatic* way of being) and the *right* side (the *Authentic* way of being).



Go here for a video from John on how to shift your state.



Now it's time to put these together and you have what we call 'the-whole-book-on-a-page'! Or you could see it as 'the-whole-ME-on-a-page'.

AUTOMATIC (UNCONSCIOUS)

I'M PRESENTING MYSELF AS

AND HOPING TO BE SEEN AS

TRYING NOT TO BE SEEN AS

AND TRYING NOT TO BE

When I catch myself
in my 'Act', I choose to:

**STOP
BREATHE
DROP IN**

AUTHENTIC (CONSCIOUS)

STEPPING CONSCIOUSLY INTO MY GREATER PURPOSE:

But it's all in the service of my hidden agenda: to

SCORE 'HITS' OF BEING

MY ADDICTION

AND AVOID ANY 'HINTS'
OF BEING

MY TERROR

TO SUCCEED AT STAYING COMFORTABLE IN MY PERSONA
ROLE (_____), I NEED TO HAVE
ON MY 'STAGE':

As I make this shift, I bring:

FROM MY PERSONA:

MY SHADOW STRETCHES:

Even though I might still be:

MY ADDICTION

MY TERROR

Or:

But who cares?!

THE GOAL: Looking Good and Staying Safe
THE METHOD: Manipulating Self, Others & Life

THE GOAL: Natural Effectiveness
THE METHOD: BEING All of Who I Am (TOV)

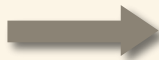
PUTTING MY SHADOW TO WORK

When you STOP, BREATHE and DROP IN, moving from Automatic to Authentic, all you need to do is shift your focus from your Terror and Addiction to your GPS and Shadow Stretches. But, as they stand now, your Stretches may be interesting but might not yet be *useful*. Let's fix that...

Below are two filled-in Shadow Stretch *Worksheets*—one from *work* and one from *home*—designed to help you convert a specific Stretch into specific *new behaviors* that you can do whenever needed.

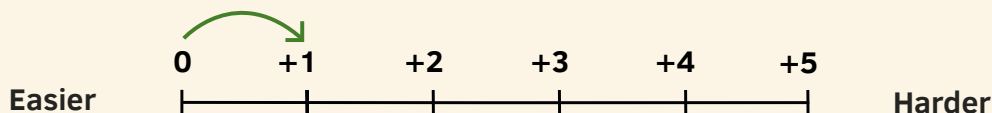
My default: what I usually do instead of my Stretch

Do it myself, keep feeling 'responsible', staying in control



My new Stretch

Let others lead and 'shine'



TO PUT THIS STRETCH INTO PRACTICE, I WILL (WITH A 'BY-WHEN'):

1. Ask my team what ideas they have about the project - and listen to them.
2. Invite Sara to facilitate our next team meeting - and offer my support.
3. Share the platform / spotlight with Alex at the next Department meeting.

SABOTAGE? GIVEN MY HISTORY, HOW MIGHT I 'SABOTAGE' THIS ACTION COMMITMENT?

- Keep telling my group what I think & want, managing their 'contribution'.
- Continue to run meetings myself, thus 'ensuring the highest effectiveness'.
- Make sure the boss sees me as the hero in how the project turned out.

AFTER-ACTION REVIEW: HOW I DID. WHAT I LEARNED. WHAT IS NEXT?

I was surprised how well Sara had lead the meeting and how it helped me to be more effective in my own meeting!

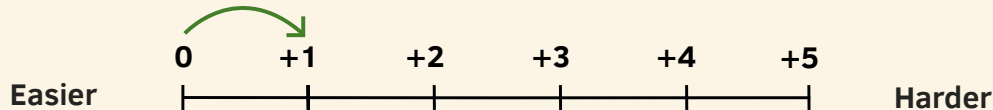
My default: what I usually do instead of my Stretch

Agree for every suggestion from my partner about spending our free time.



My new Stretch

Openly say "no", when I truly disagree. Show my opinion.



TO PUT THIS STRETCH INTO PRACTICE, I WILL (WITH A 'BY-WHEN'):

1. Write down all my reasons why I hadn't been saying my opinions; what was I afraid of? (today at evening, when kids are in bed)
2. Ask my partner for a conversation about plans for the weekend (today I will ask him/her for a meeting with just the two of us)
3. I will tell them what was my reasons not to share my opinions.
4. I will share my 2 proposals about next weekend.

SABOTAGE? GIVEN MY HISTORY, HOW MIGHT I 'SABOTAGE' THIS ACTION COMMITMENT?

- I will feel tired today, and postpone my writing for the next day.
- If my partner says that they do not have time for our meeting – I will let it go.
- I will think that my propositions are not so great as my partner's.

AFTER-ACTION REVIEW: HOW I DID. WHAT I LEARNED. WHAT IS NEXT?

It was better than I thought. He was actually listening to me and he said he liked my clarity. So now we have a new agreement.



A video from John on how to put your stretches to work.

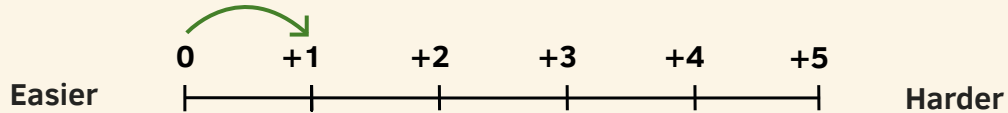


Now *you* do one...

My default: what I usually do
instead of my Stretch



My new Stretch



TO PUT THIS STRETCH INTO PRACTICE, I WILL (WITH A 'BY-WHEN'):

SABOTAGE? GIVEN MY HISTORY, HOW MIGHT I 'SABOTAGE' THIS ACTION COMMITMENT?

AFTER-ACTION REVIEW: HOW I DID. WHAT I LEARNED. WHAT IS NEXT?

When you have filled in several Shadow Worksheets, here is what we recommend:

- Every day select a different Stretch to practice and bring it to your mind, off-and-on during the day like a prayer or mantra.
- Before an important conversation or interaction, select a *specific* Stretch you believe would be helpful in the situation and create several new 'Plus 1' Action Steps to practice during the experience.
- Make sure to sit down and fill in an *After-Action Review*. This step is very important in ensuring you 'get the lesson' from what happens during the day.

THE THREE 'BIGGIES'

Reading to this point and taking on The Five Questions may *already* be transforming the way you interact with yourself, other people and Life. At this point, it is therefore likely to be difficult for you to continue to go around *unconsciously* pumping up your Persona, trying to get hits of your Addiction while avoiding your Terror and powering your way through the day, expecting to have real impact.

Awareness is a curse. Sorry about that...

But now, in Question #5: What will UNLEASH me? begins with a shift in your *thoughts* and *feelings*, but moves quickly to how it manifests in your *actions*, in what you DO? How are the insights you are having now going to show up in your *behaviors*? It will not do you, or other people, or Life any good for you to have a lot of insights but then not make them visible.

Unleashing insights only become *real* when they show up in your *calendar* and/or in a *video* of you-in-action.

What you need now is a way to narrow down your focus.

THE THREE *BIG BEHAVIORS* ('BIGGIES')

What *are* the most powerful things you could do to put your insights to work that *would* show up in your calendar or a video? In American slang, when something is significant, it can be called 'a big deal' or, in short, 'a biggie'. We think there are several such 'Biggies' worth focusing on from now on because they can take you 'home' to that Golden Center of your Mandala—to that 'eye of the hurricane'—where you can be all you can be, and perhaps all that is needed.

Each of the following ‘Biggies’ are behaviors that are well-within your control. Put them together on a regular basis and you are more likely to have real impact in more situations, increasing your sense of purpose, power and peace.

Biggie 1: The Power of Your PRESENCE—*Showing Up for What Happens*

Everything begins with you being fully where you are right now. How can you be anywhere else? Well... You can’t, but your *mind* manages to be ‘somewhere else’ much of the time, like the past or the future:

- *Anger* comes from holding on to the *past*.
- *Fear* comes from anxiety about the *future*.
- Both take you out of the here and now.

What we are talking about is something called ‘presence’ which can only happen IN the present moment.

In ‘The Now’, there is only what IS.

The first Biggie, the *sine qua non* (the essential element) of transformation, is to ‘show up’ for what is happening right now, *and be with it just as it is*.

In our LDI, we describe this as ‘Deep Presence’. Think of it as that internal place you go when you are in a really important conversation with a significant person. Like at a restaurant when you are so present, so focused, so genuinely ‘there’, that a waiter could drop dishes right beside you and you would hardly notice.

When you are deeply present with people, everyone involved—including YOU—may experience yourselves thinking, feeling and saying things not said or thought before. It usually feels ‘fresh’, not like a familiar conversation happening again. One thing that can happen, however, is that people engaged in Deep Presence can find themselves *feeling something*, which can make it awkward. This is because people are not used to the powerful, creative *depth* that comes from being in that kind of interaction.

To put your Deep Presence to work, first *stop multi-tasking!* We know you do it all day. The logic runs like this: “If I do three things at the same time, in an 8-hour day, I can get 24 hours worth of work done!”

Wrong.

Think about it. If you’re doing two or three things at the same time, you are missing 50% or 66% of each of the things you are not attending to. Focus on one thing at a time. Calm your mind.

Here is another Deep Presence experiment: Consciously bring yourself fully present today in a few interactions and see what happens—to you, to other people, and to the situation. See if it doesn’t transform those interactions into new or ‘fresher’ experiences—even with people you have been working with (or living with) for years. Even with people you don’t especially like. *Especially* with people you don’t especially like.

**Your *presence* is alchemy. It can turn lead into gold.
The reverse is also true:
The absence of your presence can turn gold into lead.**

Your presence is more than a skill, technique or behavior. Deep presence, like a river’s source, begins with caring, openness, respect, curiosity, wonder, acceptance, welcoming and even love—for yourself and the others involved. Whenever people are interacting, they are speaking ‘into a listening’ or ‘a presence’ the other person is creating for them. The size of that space, the quality within it, and its ‘spirit of invitation,’ actually determine what can be expressed. The larger, more open, more inviting that space or presence is, the more can be said and heard—the more ‘realness’ can show up.

And isn’t that what all interactions should be about at home and at work?

Biggie 2: AUTHENTICITY—Bringing All of Who You ARE to Everything You DO

How would people who know you well ‘grade’ you on each of these?

- How ‘real’ you are? Do you ‘ring true’? How much of a ‘chameleon’ are you? (How often do you modify yourself to appear more agreeable to others?)
- Can people ‘read’ you easily—or is it hard for others to know what is happening inside you?
- Do you ‘walk your talk’?

These all tap into the domain of authenticity. The word comes from the same root (*auto* or ‘self’ in the Greek) from which we get words like ‘automobile’ and ‘author’ plus *thentikos* or ‘source’. The authenticity question could be summed up this way:

Who or what is ‘authoring’ *this* moment?

The first ingredient in ‘unleashing’ yourself is Deep Presence, but that begs the question: *Who* is it that is being present—or not? Remember Peeling the Onion and what was revealed as your Game-of-Life Strategy? When you are being run by your somewhat out-of-date Operating System—which is most of the time for most people—you are not being authentic. *You* are not authoring this moment. Your Autopilot (acting on behalf of your Operating System), is actually ‘authoring’ the moment as you ‘pump up your Persona’ in an attempt to be someone you think will get you what you are Addicted to and avoid what you are Terrified of.

Being authentic means simply being who you are in the moment and ‘letting the chips fall where they may’. And that’s where ‘courage’ comes in!

In looking at ‘authenticity’ and being ‘the author’ of your life moments, let me remind you of one of the Biblical creation stories, but not the one about The Fall that has humans being lost and evil. There is *another* parallel story in the book of Genesis that says The Creator makes human beings “in our image: a little lower than the angels” and says that we are *partners* in co-creating this world. *That* version, it seems to me, is in complete support of what we are suggesting here about co-authoring our lives...

Jesus, Buddha, Moses, Mohammed, were all authentic, with a strong sense of who they were, their true ‘Self’, along with the courage to be just that—no more, no less—*all out*. They didn’t deny their

gifts, or brag about them; they simply *used* them, putting their charisms in the service of something beyond themselves.

Remember Question # 4 that asked: What CALLS Me?

What calls *you*? Ask yourself these questions:

- Who or what do I put *my* Self in the service of?
- Where do I 'aim' all these gifts I have been given?
- Am I protecting my self-concept, that illusionary 'self' I am seeking to maintain, or am I willing to let that little 'self' fade in order to unleash that greater Self for fuller and freer contribution to others and in service to Life itself?

Practicing greater authenticity means knowing who you are, and having the courage to BE exactly that. That's being humble, like the soil, '*humus*'. It just is what it is. Ready for whatever comes along.

Biggie 3: A SPIRIT of WONDER—Learning from Whatever Happens

How would the people who know you best see you on *these* dimensions:

- Do you see interactions as debates-to-be-won or points-to-be-made?
- Do you argue about the 'rightness' of your position before understanding what the other people are saying?
- How willing are you to *learn*—especially about things you 'already know'?
- How open are you to having your opinions changed?
- How hard or 'costly' is it for people to give you feedback?
- Can you hold 'negative' situations and experiences as exactly-what-is-needed-for-learning, and, on reflection, see them as contributions to your deep development?

A Spirit of Wonder requires learning to learn from experience.

This way of living requires an emotional investment in something you are so eager to learn that cannot wait to get into it. Remember a time when you felt like that? Maybe it was in a classroom setting (OK, maybe not...), maybe a strong desire to learn to play a sport or a musical instrument. I can still picture the scene on the Collegiate School playground on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia, when I was 11 or 12 years old, trying to learn to shoot a jump shot on the basketball court. I stood there, sometimes with a buddy, and shot and shot and shot at that basket, missing, stumbling, awkward, frustrated, but eventually successful. That feeling of 'Yes!' is still within me. (If 'fist-pumping' had existed back then, it would have been *that* kind of moment.) Such a moment of learning a new skill or seeing a new reality *begins with a spirit of wonder*: 'Can I really do this?' I was simply not going to quit trying until I mastered the jump shot.

Your spirit of wonder comes into play in those moments when you see something that is difficult (think 'tiger'), when you *know* what it is you want, but *not how to get there*. Wonder opens you up to discovery and learning at the deepest possible levels—and from sources (our 'teachers' and 'Ukes') you might never have imagined.

Stop thinking you have to know everything! Start WONDERING! As my son, David, explains it: 'Don't stop yourself from learning just because you don't know something. There is no shame in not knowing.' He says:

SHAME is the feeling that we Should Have Already
Mastered Everything. (Good luck with that!)

Biggie 4: GOING for TOV

TOV was introduced in Question #4, as part of **What CALLS Me?**, but it comes back again here. When you are in your TOV State, your Persona gifts (charisms)—and now your Shadow Stretches (the

new aspects of who you are capable of being)—are being unleashed into the world, nurturing Yourself, contributing to Others and in alignment with what Life is calling for.

How to Recognize the TOV State

When you are in your TOV, you are usually:

- Physically balanced and stable
- Breathing deeply from the belly
- Relaxed, calm, and focused
- Aware of what is happening, in you and around you
- Appreciative of yourself, others and the situation
- Aware of and feeling your emotions—and learning from them
- Compassionate and connected
- Able to receive and give sincere acknowledgement
- Energized by a greater purpose
- Passionate, yet unattached to the outcome
- Experiencing joy

You are in *TOV* when you bring a sense of joy, peace, security, and accomplishment to your actions, so that what you DO is an expression or manifestation of who you ARE. The world will give you feedback, and it will be interesting, even meaningful, but not addictive—not the main reason for what you are doing.

When in doubt, *go for TOV*.

‘COMING HOME TO MYSELF’: THE DOORWAY TO TRANSFORMATION

Perhaps you have figured out that this book—and these Five Questions—are about *personal transformation*, which is about ‘changing the game itself’ created by your Operating System that has been doing its best to guide you.

Now that you are more conscious of what confronts you—inside and out, what you ‘bring’ to each moment, what has been running you unconsciously, and what deeply calls you, it is time to pull it all together. Assuming that you have made the choice to courageously go for it and ‘come home to yourself’, what can you DO or BE, starting now, that might lead to true transformation?

Well, how many times have you had a significant ‘A-ha moment’ of insight or awareness and told yourself, ‘This time, it’s going to stick! This time I am actually going to follow through.’ Then, a few months, or weeks, or hours, or even minutes later, you can’t *find* the insight or the commitment anywhere?

What makes it so easy to fall back into old patterns?

One thing that makes ‘promises’ of *transformation* harder to keep is that transformation is a lot more difficult than simple *change*. Remember that change is making incremental adjustments. Transformation is changing the game *itself*. This means not just getting more skillful at polishing your Persona to avoid your Terror, but shifting your state and stepping *away* from that Old (Automatic) Game with its fears and restrictions, and stepping into the New (Authentic) Game. This new way of being includes many unknown and less-developed Persona strengths and Stretches from your Shadow—all in the service of a purpose more worthy of who you are. That’s ‘coming home to yourself’. That’s using what happens every day as a ‘classroom’ for personal transformation. And that is what this book—and the principles and experiences underneath it—are all about.

It all sounds lovely, but how does transformation come into being?

PAIN AND POSSIBILITY: THE 'PARENTS' OF TRANSFORMATION

It has been said that *'Success has many parents, but failure is an orphan.'* When it comes to successful transformation, however, the same two 'parents' get things started every time: Pain and Possibility. As you will see, both are necessary-but-not-sufficient to generate true transformation.

PAIN: THE 'FATHER' OF TRANSFORMATION

In this context, 'pain' is the awareness of a significant gap between the way things *are* and the way they *could* be.

It may surprise you, but, as a consultant, therapist and corporate change facilitator for many years, *pain* is the only motivator for change—or transformation—that I trust. Too many times I have seen well-meaning people get scared at the moment of truth in a process of transformation, and go back to the old way. The people who *have* been able to create and sustain transformation have usually been in the grip of some kind of personal, professional, financial, and/or emotional 'pain'.

You might call it a breakdown—or even a 'tiger'.

This kind of pain manifests itself in various ways:

- It could be the strain of unresolved conflict with a colleague at work or a life partner,
- A mistake made with significant consequences for you and your organization,
- Awareness of an eating or drinking disorder,
- Difficulty in choosing what to do next with your career and/or life.

It's that little voice inside you that whispers—or shouts, 'Things are not working like they should.' These situations can be considered 'breakdowns'.

Jesse Watson, creative change consultant, good friend and colleague, talks about a *flat tire* as a fitting metaphor for breakdown. "But just having a flat tire on your car doesn't necessarily mean that you're having a breakdown", he says. "If your car has been sitting in the garage for a year with a flat tire, you are *not* having a breakdown. *To have a breakdown, you have to be going somewhere!*"

Awareness of 'pain' reveals a destination, a possibility.

POSSIBILITY: THE 'MOTHER' OF TRANSFORMATION

'Breakdowns', viewed in this way, actually reveal that you were headed somewhere, which can be seen as a *possibility, something desired but not happening yet*.

For instance:

- An overweight person (Pain) must see him/herself as leaner and healthier in the future, their destination or *possibility*.
- Work colleagues or life partners have to be able to see their crisis (Pain) turning into breakthrough (Possibility).
- A work team or organization must be able to imagine the possibility of the current situation (Pain) resolved, with productivity at new or even peak levels (Possibility).

*Pain drives you to stand in the doorway to transformation.
Possibility moves you to step through the door.*

If you cannot see or imagine a possibility for yourself, you will stand at that doorway, feeling the pain, and not make the move forward, sometimes for years, sometimes forever. My Pop, a full-blown alcoholic by the time he was 18 years old, knew that it was ruining his life but was never able to picture himself as anything other than 'a failure and an alcoholic'. Even in those moments when he stopped drinking for a while and became the extraordinary newspaperman that he was, he still saw himself as "Jack Scherer, the alcoholic who happens to not be drinking right now". His pain was so real and so overwhelming that he was not able to get past it into the world of possibility.

But the greater the possibility you are able to imagine, the more likely fundamental, transformative change becomes. Our LDI Seminar attendees who participate as if their life, or job, or relationship,

depends on what happens, are more likely to leave transformed than people who show up simply because the boss sent them. Small possibility: small change. Big possibility: transformation.

The 'Mother' of Possibility, whispers a promise:
'Come along ... I will be with you.'

So, for transformation to take place in your life or your organization, you must:

1. Feel and acknowledge some kind of pain, turbulence, or 'breakdown',
2. See—and want—a possibility,
3. *Not* know for sure exactly how to get there (if you knew, it wouldn't be a transformation),
4. Commit to discovering a new 'way' of thinking and being, and
5. Be open to the possibility of transformation.

So transformation and possibility go together: You can't have one without the other.

Taken together, they bring into existence something that 'was not' a moment before. 'Coming home to yourself' is such a transformation, based on a yearning for a possibility. The best way to look at what needs to happen in your life is as an act of creation, *ex nihilo*, 'out of nothing.' This place of nothingness—of not knowing for sure—is where possibility lives, and from which transformation appears.

NOT KNOWING: THE 'BIRTH CANAL' FOR TRANSFORMATION

Many people look at challenging situations in life as problems-to-be-solved, searching for solutions based on knowing what the problem is and what actions are likely to work.

However, if you have had a 'tiger' for *any* length of time, the chances are good that a) you might not know exactly what 'the problem' is, and b) therefore do not know which 'solutions' might work. But not-knowing-exactly-what-to-do often leads to anxiety and self-doubt, pushing us to fall back into the

familiar guidance of our Operating System, thus limiting the number of options available to us at the bottom of our Funnel.

Having been down this path with a lot of people, we say that *not knowing* is actually the only *real* starting point for a true breakthrough. Finding yourself in an *un-knowing* space, without solutions, opens your mind and heart to *what could show up*, something which might *not* have shown up as long as you were holding onto guidance and solutions from the past.

In summary:

- Constantly ‘pumping up your Persona’ leads you to feel the ‘pain’—and even exhaustion of having to do it so often.
- But realizing that your Persona charisms are simply ‘in you’—and you no longer need to ‘pump’—opens the door to relaxing into who you truly are (Authenticity).
- Next, seeing that many capabilities you thought were missing are also already present in you in the form of Shadow Stretches offers you brief experiences of the possibility that has been whispering from your heart.
- Through it all, your Greater Purpose Statement (GPS) provides you with an overall sense of direction and the awareness and integration of important Polarities.
- All that is needed now is the courage to step forward with all your hard-earned wisdom and insight into the unknown, where it all will be challenged, even resisted, not only by people not used to you ‘being this way’, but also by your own Operating System!

“IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE VOID...”



The Creation Myths of the world’s oldest religions reveal that the ancient ones saw the same basic truth about where the world came from. For them, some kind of ‘emptiness’ preceded the birth of the cosmos. Several of these myths actually use their word for ‘chaos’, the absence of anything familiar or known.

For example, in the biblical Genesis Creation Myth, the one I know the most about, the first few verses are usually translated, *‘And God’s spirit moved over the face of the deep.’* As is often the case, that translation leaves a lot to be desired. The Hebrew word used

here for spirit, *RuaCH*, can best be seen in this context as something that breathes life into what has been created. The word *RuaCH* is a kind of onomatopoeia: when pronounced forcefully, 'Roo-Achh!' sounds like a *sneeze*, which captures the sense of air, moving powerfully-but-invisibly, like the wind, making things happen. 'Wind' is, in fact, the English word often chosen by translators for *RuaCH*, and is aligned with the English word, 'spirit'. It shows up in words like 'inspire' (breath coming in), 'expire' (breath going out), 'conspire' (breathing together). When the Greeks translated the Hebrew Scriptures, they translated *RuaCH* as *pneuma*, from which we get words like 'pneumatic' and 'pneumonia'. Again: air-in-motion. Spirit, wind, invisible mover, life-giving force. All connected linguistically in the ancient languages.

Interesting...

And the verb used in that Bible verse for 'moved over the face of the deep' is the same verb used elsewhere to describe the actions of a mother eagle '*hovering*' over her nest, a scene of maternal love in action.

Put all this together, and a much more accurate and powerful translation of the opening sentence to the biblical Creation Myth becomes possible: "*And The Creator's loving intention hovered over the void (or chaos or nothingness).*" In other words, in the story, what The Creator 'brought to the party' when confronted by the chaos, the void, the nothingness, was a *loving intention*.

And, at least according to this Creation Story, was apparently enough to get the cosmos started!

We believe chaos is not only the birthing channel for the *cosmos*, but also the birthing channel for our transformation as *individuals*.

**Now is the moment to put all this together and
courageously step into the unknown.**

BEFORE YOU GO...

What is still unknown?!

Coming home to yourself and facing your tigers (COURAGE) definitely brings more understanding of who you really are, the person you are bringing into every situation from here on out (AUTHENTICITY). But what is unknown is exactly how to operationalize all of that in each moment—and how the world around you will react (TRUE IMPACT). That is the major aspect of ‘not knowing’: Not knowing what will happen next.

Unknown #1: Because I have been ‘training’ the people around me for years to see me in a certain way (my Persona), will they allow me to show up in a different way, *especially if I add in some Shadow characteristics?!*

Unknown #2: Because my own Operating system has been training ME for years to see myself as my Persona—and avoid all Shadow elements—will it allow me to NOT play by its rules, but allow instead to simply BE and ‘let the chips fall where they may’?

Will they *both* allow this ‘new me’—actually the ‘original me’, before my Operating System took charge—to show up?

In the face of *any* kind of unknown, what you need to focus on is finding and bringing a **loving intention** with you into the uncertainty. *And then trust The Unfolding...*

Following your GPS and ‘leaning into’ your Shadow Stretches are often enough to transform a situation, including your own thoughts and fears. This turns you into someone with *real* power—not power *over* but power *WITH*—yourself, the others around you, and the larger circle of Life.

Then a ‘tiger’ appears in your life, and *off you go...* Grateful to your newest ‘Uke’, who helps you stretch and grow into the human being you are capable of being, comfortable knowing or not knowing, at home in your Self, ready for the next experience in your amazing journey of Life.

* * * * *

It has been a great joy to bring you ***Facing the Tiger: Five Questions that Change Everything.***

You have no idea how TOV this whole process has been from beginning to end—even in the times when ‘nothing was happening as well as during the more creative moments with my thinking partner and writing colleague, Dorota Nawalaniec. We invite you to take on these Five Questions and make them a part of your intention to become wiser at work, wherever and whatever that work entails. Combine your new courage with your new authenticity and enjoy the real impact that could come your way. Make your GPS into a screensaver, put your Stretches on a wallet card and look at them from time to time. ‘Catching yourself in the act’ and ‘shifting your state’ will become faster and easier. Practice, practice, practice.

Personal Transformation is an ongoing process, but maybe that’s why we are here. Like HERE. What else do we have to do?! We each have the capacity to continually become more and more of who we truly are, coming home to ourselves, which, in fact, does change everything.

You’ll be amazed.

It’s a wonderful thing.

So are you.

And so is your ‘tiger’...

* * * * *



Personal ‘check-out’ with John & Dorota

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The one-on-one meeting with one of the experts in "Facing The Tiger" field to help you implementing all what you have learned during our courses into everyday functioning, to talk about the opportunities and challenges of a more authentic life. [Learn more](#)

We would like to thank to Everyone whose constant support, hard work, broad knowledge and warm hearts brought this book into being:

- **Edyta Korona**, for The Tiger's 'eyes' (the concept of the book's cover) and her extraordinary commitment to high-quality on every aspect of marketing, branding and the 'look' of the book.
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The 45 Facilitators-in-Development from 11 countries who, since 1987, have co-led the EDIs and LDIs where all these ideas and processes came into being. Their huge and surprising dedication to the mission (Unleashing the Human Spirit at Work) has kept both me and the program alive and strong all these years.

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