LEADERSHIP MANUAL 2023

Erik Kruger

Powered By Sasfin

Leadership Manual 20 23

The Playbook for **Peak Leadership** Performance

From best-selling author Erik Kruger

Powered by Sasfin
Written with great care for those leading the way

In This Manual

Leadership Manual 2023
Letter from Erik

This is my **third edition** of the Leadership Manual.

I wrote the first one at the end of 2020 with the goal of providing leaders with some support and inspiration as we entered a period of extreme uncertainty.

The feedback I received from leaders following the inaugural edition inspired me to commit to releasing a manual at the start of every year.

Since then, the manual has been downloaded thousands of times. I have delivered keynotes, workshops, and coaching based on the content of the manual. And, to top it all off, I joined forces with Sasfin to expand the reach even further and impact more leaders.

Before we talk about 2023, I want to pause to thank Sasfin for supporting the Leadership Manual. Their involvement means that more leaders have access to the manual and can upgrade how they lead, and more organizations can benefit from their intentional leadership.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

On to 2023.

The theme for this year's manual is all about change.

This is a topic that we are too familiar with, but I do hope to provide you with some steadfast principles that you can apply in the pursuit of transforming yourself, your team, and your business.

This year I've taken a slightly different approach than previous years. In this edition you will not find trends or predictions but instead see that I have taken a more literal approach to the idea of a manual (a book giving instructions).

Outlined in this manual are six different plays for leaders to implement. Each play addresses a specific challenge that leaders face either in their personal capacity or in the work with their teams.

What you will find is that the plays themselves, the practical ways of solving common challenges, is straightforward. Learn the framework, apply the framework, iterate on it, stay consistent with it, and over time you will be successful in fostering new habits for yourself and your team.
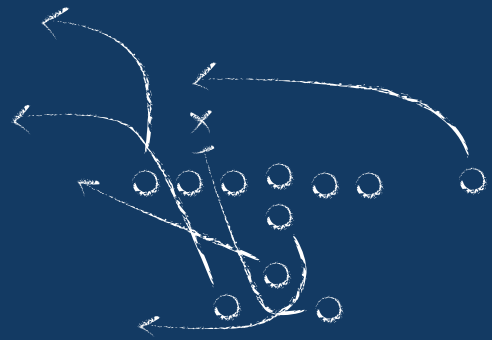
However, we know that it's never as easy as that.

Even with the steps laid out as clearly as possible, we still often fail at making the changes required.

And so, for us to go from good to great, from here to there, from harmless to dangerous, from survival mode to thriving, we must become masters of change.

So, let's start there.

Erik Kruger

Letter From
Sasfin

Sasfin: Enabling our clients to reach their full potential

Given our entrepreneurial roots, Sasfin is no stranger to change – something we have always been proud of. We have fostered an agile mindset because we have understood that we can only deliver value-adding solutions to our clients if we are able to adapt quickly to the changing market conditions.

This is one of the reasons why Erik Kruger's theory of transformation through accretion speaks to our business. Transformation is not something a business achieves. The ability to transform is something a business – and a leader – can become, however. This ability allows a business to evolve through small but powerful daily habits that put the customer's needs at the centre of every decision, action, or change.

At a time when the world is change fatigued, Erik's Leadership Manual reminds us that even though we've been through unprecedented levels of change over the past three years, there is nothing new about change. It is, in fact, our only constant, and learning how to master it will be one of the biggest differentiators and personal and corporate growth drivers of the future.

We work closely with our clients and understand that like us, they are endlessly facing change, which highlights how critical these leadership and transformation insights are.

How are we collectively facing the challenges of building businesses? How do we partner and support each other? How do we learn from each other? When we approach change through a lens of opportunity, we hope to master it. We are proud to walk this journey with South African leaders and we look forward to seeing what we can collectively bring to 2023.

Michael Sassoon

CEO: Sasfin Holdings Limited

www.sasfin.com

Becoming Masters of Change

If you want to fix a weakness, you must change.

If you want to improve a skill that you care about, you must change.

If you want to alter habits and behaviours, you must change.

If you want to innovate, transform, or disrupt, you must change.

I lay out change in various permutations above because I want you to realise that change is the ultimate skill to master. Most people with good intentions fail at changing because good intentions aren't enough.

The reason intentions are not enough is that change is incredibly difficult. Even more difficult when operating in a group or team environment.

I have been in the game of change for a long time, having undergone my own personal transformations and helping others in the process too. These days I spend most of my time with teams at offsites, helping them plot the path from good to great. But, if I am honest, it can be quite a frustrating space to play in. Because we all know that what happens at offsites often stays at offsites.

The hype from Friday dissipates before Monday arrives. And so, we spend hours and hours working on gameplans that are never executed, finetuning behaviours that are never practiced, and making commitments that are never followed through on.

This is a pattern that I would like to see broken.

Into a thousand pieces.

But we are not going to break this pattern through sheer willpower alone. We need guiding principles that inform how we think about change and how we implement it into our lives.

Below, I have outlined four ways of thinking differently about change that hopefully helps you with changing too.

01

Transformation through accretion

> "
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> **The most successful men in the end are those whose success is the result of steady accretion.**
>
> **- Alexander Graham Bell**

Transformation is the thing we are after when engaging in change. The etymology of the word transformation is "change in form/shape". Meaning; how you look after is different from how you looked when you started.

Transformation is a messy process but it's obvious when the process has been completed and we have reached a new form or shape.

It seems easy—identify the transformation, become the transformation, done. Almost like how the Power Rangers could take out their little shield gizmos and, in a few seconds, go from average teenagers to sword-wielding superheroes.

Do not be seduced by the siren song of transformation.

It's sexy, but it's the wrong thing to focus on.

Instead, let's talk about something more powerful and meaningful.

Accretion.

I first came across this word in 2015. Since then, it has been a principle that I live by.

Accretion means "growth or increase through the gradual accumulation of additional layers".

From Wikipedia, "In astrophysics, accretion is the accumulation of particles into a massive object by gravitationally attracting more matter, typically gaseous matter, in an accretion disk. Most astronomical objects, such as galaxies, stars, and planets, are formed by accretion processes."

Imagine this: right now there is a small rock floating through space. Over time, smaller pieces of rock

will bump into it and through gravitational pull adhere to it. Through millions of collisions this piece of rock will keep adding additional layers of debris and matter to it until one day it could be classified as a star.

This might not be the correct technical interpretation, but it's a powerful image.

Here's what I realised many years ago.

Transformation is the result of accretion.

Every single day, you are in the process of accreting small decisions and actions. These small decisions and actions accumulate and lead to your eventual transformation.

Jim Collins in his book Good to Great says that, "In creating a good-to-great transformation, there's no single defining action, no grand program, no single killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment. Once you fully grasp how to create flywheel momentum in your particular circumstance and apply that understanding with creativity and discipline, you get the power of strategic **compounding**. Each **turn builds upon previous work** as you make a series of good decisions, supremely well executed, that compound one upon another. This is how you build greatness."

This is what accretion is about—compounding.

The idea that accretion is responsible for our large and small transformations is both liberating and a bit scary. Liberating because it gives us permission to stop trying to do everything at once and to realise that transformation takes time. But also a bit scary because you realise that the small decisions and actions of today matter and you should probably be more mindful about what you are accumulating.

A quote that I can recite verbatim till this day comes from Die Empty, a book by Todd Henry.

It goes, *"No-one charts a course to mediocrity, yet it's a destination of choice. It's chosen in small ways over time. And these tiny, seemingly inconsequential decisions accumulate and eventually result in a state of crisis."*

What you accumulate will lead you to transformation.

Good to great. Or bad to worse.

Execution

Instead of focusing on the transformation, on tomorrow, focus on today.

Focus on the process, the habits, the small decisions that will accumulate and result in who you want to become, where you want to go, what you want to achieve.

Indulge me for a moment.

If you have ever watched a movie about time travel, then you will know that there is one cardinal rule that you are not allowed to break. The rule is that you are not allowed to change even the smallest thing in the past because it will fundamentally change the present.

Step on a bug and when you return to the present the world is overrun with mega-sized cockroaches. That kind of thing.

Well, let's apply that idea to where you are today.

You are currently in the present. But the present will soon be the past. This means that the small things that you do today could fundamentally and drastically change the future.

Don't underestimate the effect small things can have over time if they are done consistently.

Key Takeaways

01 Accretion refers to growth or increase through the accumulation of additional layers.

02 Small decisions and actions accumulate and lead to eventual transformation.

03 Instead of focusing on transformation, it is important to focus on the small daily habits and decisions that contribute to growth.

04 Accumulating the right habits and decisions can lead to personal and professional greatness, while accumulating the wrong ones can lead to mediocrity or disaster.

Become more intentional with the actions and decisions you accumulate.

02

Change for Today, not for Tomorrow

> ❝
>
> ## The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.
>
> **– Alan Watts**

Here's a shocking insight from a research study.

In this specific study, they identified patients who were at high-risk for having some sort of cardiac event, like a heart attack. The researchers then educated the patients on their current risk status, gave them eating plans, exercise regimens, and told them that changing their overall lifestyle was the only way to avoid catastrophe.

Would you agree that these patients had everything they needed to change?

They were motivated – no one wants to die.

In fact, they were doubly motivated – to live for their families.

They had clarity on what must be done.

And they also knew the consequences of failing to change.

You could not ask for a clearer path to change.

Yet, and here's the shocking part, when they debriefed with the patients a few months later they found that only one in seven patients changed their ways.

One in seven.

Fourteen percent of the participants.

The findings from the study mirror well something that I saw when I was still working as the head of rehab for a stepdown facility. Humans like to wait for catastrophe before they take action and change.

We wait for the heart attack.

We wait for the pain.

Then, when we are forced to move, we move.

This is why I think using the future as a motivator is often quite a futile exercise. We tell people that they must reskill because AI will be taking their jobs. We tell people that the world is changing more rapidly

than ever before and that they must change if they want to remain relevant.

Yet people still just go about their day to day without really paying much attention to the future.

That's because if it doesn't hurt in the moment, we are likely to wait until it does.

How can we then get people to move before they are forced to?

We have already started answering this question in the previous section. To focus on accretion instead of big changes. To focus on the present instead of the future.

Here are two additional suggestions.

01 Focus on Improving your Average Day

Most of your days will be quite average. The same routine. Doing more or less the same work. Surrounded by more or less the same people. Average here does not mean mediocre. It just means... typical. Routine.

But in that lies terrific opportunity.

We have the opportunity to engage in small but time-altering activities. The question that will help you to identify these activities is:

How can I improve what my average day looks like?

One small decision today, one small action today, opens multiple doors, which leads to many different opportunities.

All starting with improving your average day.

This Tim Urban illustration shows how there are multiple paths in front of us, available to us at any time, we just have to choose it.

And we choose it through our actions.

Key
- ⬜ Life paths closed to you
- 🟡 Life paths open to you

Today

You're born

Your life path

Your life today

The past

The future

Credit: Tim Urban, Wait, But Why
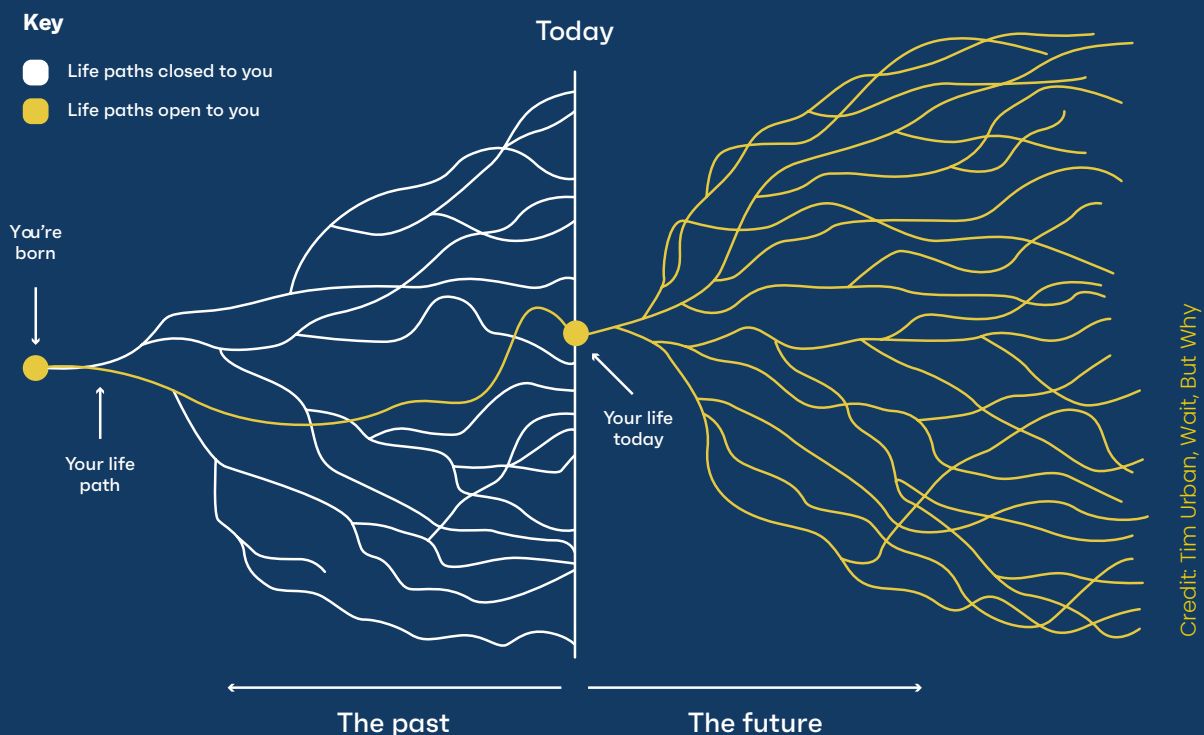
02 Cultivate the Habit of Play

Reskilling for the future sounds daunting. There are stakes attached to it, it takes you out of your comfort zone, and means that you must start at the bottom again.

However, let's encourage people to play.

To have fun with innovative technology and ideas. Not only is this less intimidating but you start realizing just how adaptable you are when you apply yourself.

Instead of fearing AI, head over to ChatGPT and have some fun with it.

Instead of wondering about Web3, spend R100 and figure out how to buy an NFT.

Instead of mindlessly scrolling Facebook, join a Discord server that relates to one of your hobbies.

The best route forward is through immersion.

When we get people playing, learning, improving, every single day, we don't have to fear the future.

Through repetition of small change we unconsciously become better at change as a whole.

Key Takeaways

01 Research has shown that humans often wait until they are forced to change before acting.

02 Using the future as a motivator may not be effective in inspiring change.

03 To encourage change, it is important to focus on the present and on improving one's average day.

04 Engaging in small, enjoyable activities can help individuals adapt and prepare for the future.

05 Allowing time for play and immersion in the latest ideas can help individuals become more adaptable and less intimidated by change.

06 It is important to focus on the process of change rather than just the end result.

07 Small daily actions can lead to significant transformation over time.

08 To achieve lasting change, it is important to embrace a growth mindset and continuously seek improvement.

03

The Spirit of Discipline

> ## "
>
> ## Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak, and esteem to all.
>
> **– George Washington**

Discipline is the master key of change.

It speaks to our ability to stay consistent and to do what we said we are going to do. Irrespective of how the world unfolds around us.

When I assess failed change initiatives that I have witnessed, I cannot help but feel that a failure in discipline is to blame.

As with our heart attack patients from earlier, for many of these initiatives everything required for change was present:

- A goal
- Clarity on execution
- Urgency

Yet nothing changed.

If you know exactly what you need to do, you have broken it down into a small enough action, and you still don't do it, then I am assuming that you have a discipline problem.

You are not overcoming the inertia, the status quo, of your current situation.

This made me think that perhaps the solution is to focus more exclusively on discipline itself when we are trying to change. Every change process must start with a vision and outlining the actions that must be taken. But once that's in place and we know what must happen, we should switch our focus to the discipline of execution and staying true to the game plan.

A quick example. I have been playing non-stop Padel since being introduced to the sport in May of 2022. My partner and I often go through patches where our game falls apart a bit. And usually, the culprit is a lack of discipline. Not a lack of skill. Or

fitness. Or motivation. But a dip in the discipline of sticking to the game plan that we outlined at the start of the match.

However, there is a problem with holding people accountable to being disciplined. We don't really have the language for it. Typically, we either say you are disciplined or not. But this to me feels lacking.

So, I created my own (remarkably simple) framework called **The Levels of Discipline.**

This framework has **five** levels of discipline.

Level 0

At this level:

- There is no consistency or discipline at all.
- You have a mismatch of intention and action.
- Example: You want to go to the gym but never go.
- Example: You make a commitment at the offsite to do things in a certain way but it never gets done.

Level 1

At this level:

- Some consistency starts to emerge but it's hit and miss.
- Example: You go to the gym once a week instead of the three times you planned on.
- Example: You implement some of the actions from the offsite some of the time.

Level 2

At this level:

- There is consistency.
- Consistently doing what is required of you when conditions are favourable.
- This is a substantial change though because you have gone from nothing to something.
- At Level 1 consistency you are already doing better than most.
- Example: Going to the gym 3x a week as planned.
- Example: Succeeding at new team behaviour 100% of the time.

Level 3

At this level:

- You are consistent in unfavourable conditions or are starting to improve and optimise your area of focus.
- At Level 1 you are doing what is expected. At Level 2 you are pushing yourself harder.
- Example: Not just training and getting through the program but now working with a trainer, lifting heavier weights, pushing toward higher goals.
- Example: Not just getting the team task done but looking for optimisation—trying new things whilst staying consistent.

Level 4

Level 4 is not technically a level but rather a transitory phase. If you have been consistent for long enough and are finding ways to optimise what you are doing, then there will come a time when you ascend to a new level. Transformation occurs and it's time to take on a new challenge, shape, form.

Level 3 represents the next reinvention.

It's a level up but also preparation to start at Level 0 again as you recommit to a new behaviour or way of thinking.

Example: You have been training consistently and now you want to add a new dynamic like doing yoga.

Example: The new behaviour that the team was working on has become habit and they can now look to work on a new behaviour.

How does this framework help us to change?

Up until now we have said that the path to change, to become all that we can be, to go from good to great, requires us to be more intentional with the small actions and decisions that we accumulate. That we focus on improving our average day.

Well, to do that consistently you need discipline.

And having language and some sort of measuring stick for discipline is a promising idea.

Next time you sit down with a change that you are trying to make you can ask yourself, "At what level am I currently operating?"

Even though this framework can be used by individuals, I originally envisioned it for use by teams.

How powerful is it for us to gather around a table and ask each team member at what level of discipline they are currently operating regarding a specific goal?

This does two things:

- We have a quick measuring stick for where people are, and therefore we can help them troubleshoot.
- It's a call to action to be better. No-one wants to be classified as having a lack of discipline.

04

Creating the Conditions for Change

"

Our only security is our ability to change.

- John Lily

Richard Hackman, the master of teamwork research, said that for a team to be successful there must be certain enabling conditions. He recognised that the environment in which a team operates determines its success.

The real unlock around change for you will happen when you realise that a focus on enabling conditions changes the game. Instead of fighting upstream, we rearrange the world to position ourselves for success.

Creating the conditions for change means that we pay attention to three aspects of the environment around us. For the sake of brevity, I will not be doing deep dives into each but rather simply present a quick overview.

The first is **proximity**. In other words; our distance from something. If your house is filled with sugary treats instead of healthy foods, then you are more likely to eat sugary foods. Simple.

The second is **people**. If we are in a group of committed and disciplined people, then we are likely to also be committed and disciplined. If we are in a group where accountability is high, then we are more likely to be accountable.

The third is **place**. For most of us, place has changed significantly over the past three years. The habits that you have at home are different from the habits that you have at work. The habits I had living in Johannesburg are different from the habits I have living in Cape Town.

Change any of the above three conditions and you change how easily people change.

Preconditions for Change

When the pandemic had just started, I ran a program with organisations called Think Week. We'd get together every morning for sixty minutes to think about life and business through different lenses. More than seven hundred and sixty people spent time with me in Think Week.

During one of the sessions, we focused on the concept of preconditions and how they can facilitate and accelerate change. A precondition is a condition that must be met or satisfied before change can occur.

Let's look at a few preconditions.

Clarity. Knowing exactly what must be done. I have found in coaching that most people operate with a level of clarity that can best be described as foggy. They know they want to exercise but don't know what exercises to do. They know they want to run better meetings but don't know which frameworks to implement. The more granular the level of clarity the better.

Accountability. How often have you heard someone say, "Please hold me accountable" when starting something new? Accountability is a powerful force. We don't like letting people down. So, we do our best to do our best. Thirteen years ago, I strongly identified as not-a-morning-person. However, I decided that I'd like to start waking up at five a.m. thanks to Robin Sharma's five a.m. club. To enforce this change, I enlisted the help of a friend. We'd both wake up at the same time and meet at the gym. I overslept once or twice but never missed a day. Today, I wake up at five a.m. with no effort at all.

Goal. Some people jump into change because they feel compelled to. This could be because of societal pressures or just because someone (a manager for example) said so. But having no idea why the change is necessary means that they don't know what the end destination looks like. You'd think that this type of thing doesn't happen, but you'd be surprised how easily we fall into common traps.

Big vision. Goals are good, vision is compelling. Some people need to see the big picture. The goal behind the goal.

Coaching. This precondition is about having support and guidance to be most effective in navigating the journey of change.

Catastrophe. The most effective precondition of them all. People love to wait for things to break down before changing. It's somehow wired into our DNA that we will procrastinate on changing until we are forced to. As you can see from the list, there are better preconditions to use. Don't wait for catastrophe.

Next time you are trying to make a big (or small) change in your life, ask yourself what precondition you should activate to help you make the change. What can you do to support the change that you are trying to make? How can you arrange your world to increase your odds of success? How can you position yourself to win?

Key Takeaways

01 The success of a team is determined by its environment.

02 The environment is made up of three main factors: proximity, people, and place.

03 Preconditions for change include clarity, accountability, goals, a big vision, coaching, and catastrophe.

04 Clarity is knowing exactly what needs to be done.

05 Accountability is being held accountable for actions.

06 Goals are the end destination of a change.

07 A big vision is the bigger picture behind the goal.

08 Coaching is support and guidance during the journey of change.

09 Catastrophe is the idea that change only occurs when something breaks down.

10 It is better to use other preconditions for change rather than waiting for catastrophe.

Recap

As we know, **change is challenging**. Yet, it's the one skill that we must master if we are to succeed in a world that seems to look a little different each day.

I hope that the principles I discussed has provided you with some new motivation for taking on the transformation that lies ahead of you.

As a quick recap:

- Everything (improving skill, fixing weakness, innovation) requires change.

- It's best to not get hung up on the overwhelming nature of transformation but to rather redirect attention to the process of accretion.

- Accretion is the accumulation of decisions and actions.

- The more intentional we can be with this process the greater the transformation.

- It also means that our small actions and decisions matter.

- The future is not as great a motivator for change as we tend to think.

- Instead of saying be better for the future, let's just focus on being better for today.

- The future then takes care of itself.

- One way to do this is by asking, "How can I improve my average day?"

- The constant process of change and accretion means that you must be disciplined.

- However, we lack a good frame of reference when speaking about discipline.

- A quick framework is to think of it in levels.

- When we are trying to change, we should think of the world in which the change is happening.

- Is your world set up in a way to support the change that you are trying to make?

- To better arrange the world means creating the preconditions for change. Putting in place structures that will aid you in changing.

The Plays
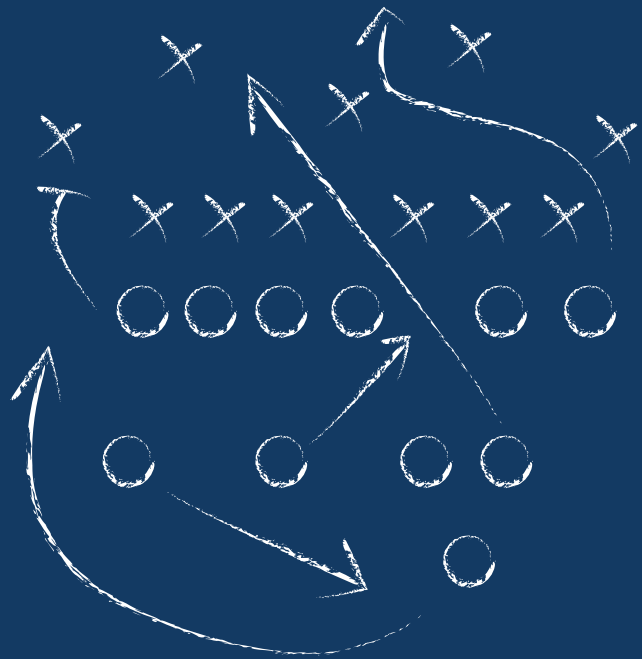
Wouldn't it be great to have a playbook for some of the most common challenges that leaders and teams face?

We'll that's exactly what you will find in the following pages.

I'll present a common challenge and then the play for **overcoming** that challenge.

These are of course not definitive plays. There are countless ways to solve the challenges that I present here.

This is my take on it.

Good luck.

Play One

Game-Changing Meetings

The Challenge:

Most Meetings are Ineffective

According to Forbes, there are roughly 55 million meetings taking place daily. Out of this staggering number, at least half are unproductive and don't achieve their desired outcome.

Meetings pull people away from important tasks, drag on longer than they should, and often the content is vague and can leave participants feeling confused. Whether they're formal or informal, in-person or online, or across industries, meetings can be overwhelming, exhausting, and counterproductive.

Time is our greatest asset, but it is squandered in meetings. From waiting for participants to arrive to speakers getting side-tracked or multiple participants dawdling while speaking, meetings are a vacuum for time and energy. Even with a small group of people, it can take ages to reach the salient points of the discussion.

Meetings can also:

- **Decrease morale:** Unnecessary meetings or meetings that drone on longer than they should impact your people's performance, as they may feel like their time could be better spent elsewhere. Also, they may become demotivated or aggravated if meetings they don't deem essential begin interrupting their workflow and start putting pressure on other deadlines or deliverables.

- **Detract from productive work:** On average, the typical person spends roughly five hours in meetings each week. Taking them out of 'deep work' or away from 'needle-moving' tasks, to fill a seat in a meeting that perhaps only a portion of information is pertinent to them, could become costly to your company.

For most organisations, meetings are an integral part of a single business day, so much so that they're unavoidable. But if meetings seem to miss the mark so frequently, why do we not do something about it?

Because the truth is that meetings can be productive, effective, and even stimulating when done correctly.

The Play

A Framework for Better Meetings

The goal is to consistently hold productive meetings that add to and elevate your team, not diminish it. For this, there is a great framework that can be followed, one that'll reduce communication-clutter, save time, and keep people ignited.

Introducing Hyper Island's meeting design formula, **IDOARRT**.

IDOARRT is a simple meeting formula or framework that helps you and your team to get crystal clear on the goals and structure of your meeting. IDOARRT is an acronym which stands for **Intention, Desired Outcome, Agenda, Roles, Rules** and **Time.**

- **Intention:** What is the intention or purpose of the meeting? For what reason is this meeting taking place?

- **Desired Outcome or Outcomes:** What specific outcome or outcomes should you aim to be achieved by the end of the meeting?

- **Agenda:** What activities will the meeting participants go through and what order will the activities be in to be able to move toward the desired outcome?

- **Roles:** What roles or responsibilities need to be in place for the meeting to run smoothly? Who is facilitating the meeting? Who is participating in the meeting? Who is documenting the salient points of the meeting, and who is keeping track of time? What is expected of the participants?

- **Rules:** What guidelines will be in place during the meeting? These could relate to agreed group norms. They could also relate to the use of other apps or practical rules related to learning space. Let the participants add rules to ensure that they have ownership of them.

- **Time:** What is the expected time for the meeting? Does the meeting include breaks? At what time will the meeting end?

This might seem like a lot. But with some practice you will be moving through this framework in no time.

Here's how to practically implement it.

Before scheduling a meeting, write out why the meeting is being held, what the outcome is supposed to be, and the agenda for the meeting.

Once you are in the meeting – quickly recap the above and then in addition assign roles, mention the house rules and how long the meeting will run for.

That's it.

You'd be surprised how effective this can be.

By implementing **IDOARRT**, you'll know that your meetings are well structured, that everyone involved is fully aware of the purpose and intended outcomes of the meeting, and that there will be little to no deviation from this. You can also guarantee that the meeting will finish in the allocated time frame, thus respecting the time and energy of the attendees.

Play Two
A Tool for Accountability

02

The Challenge:
Poor Accountability in Teams

The strength of an organisation is largely dependent on the power of its workforce. Each individual is responsible for their respective tasks, and with this, they play an essential role in seeing the organisation achieve its goals.

Each person's effort is so intricately woven into the fabric of the organisation itself that their individual involvement means they have a high stake in the organisation's success or stagnation.

If you notice that someone is not performing adequately or that they need direction, you need to communicate this observation with them. However, that's much easier said than done.

In my experience we abstain from holding people accountable for a few reasons:

1   **Fear of conflict:** Some are afraid of the confrontation that may result from holding others accountable and so they avoid the issue to maintain harmony.

2   **Lack of confidence:** Some don't feel confident in their ability to effectively hold others accountable.

3   **Lack of clarity:** Some may not be clear on what exactly is expected of them or the person they are trying to hold accountable, leading to confusion about what actions to take.

4   **Personal biases:** Personal biases or favouritism toward certain individuals may prevent someone from holding others accountable, especially in "family" teams.

5   **Lack of consequences:** Without clear consequences for not meeting expectations, people may not feel motivated to be held accountable.

When you're faced with someone who is either underperforming, in need of guidance, or out of alignment with the company's goals, how do you:

1   Express your concern

       Encourage redirection with positive reinforcement

2   Suggest improvements or deliver feedback

3   Maintain company goals

without micromanaging your resource, barking orders, and burning yourself out in the process?

You need a structured approach to holding your team members accountable.

The Play
The Accountability Dial

The Accountability Dial is a communication framework developed by Jonathan Raymond, the CEO and founder of Refound and author of Good Authority: How to Become the Leader Your Team Is Waiting For.

It's designed to help leaders navigate the sometimes difficult conversations that occur in the workplace. The framework gives a guideline of five steps or levels that act as 'interception' points where leadership would address the people at different stages of observed behaviour or behaviours.

The Mention: In real time, if possible, pull the person aside for a short chat or casual check-in. This should last no longer than a few minutes. Share what you've observed or suspected about their actions or behaviour and check to make sure that everything is alright.

E.g. "Hey, Sam, I noticed you were late for the meeting today. Is everything okay?"

The Invitation: If the behaviour persists and turns into a pattern, invite the person to partake in an informal, private conversation where you aim to build their awareness about it. This is your attempt to help your people connect the dots between isolated instances. Offer two to three examples of how the behaviour is repeating and how they can work on it.

E.g. "Hey, Sam, I have noticed that you are showing up late to meetings quite often now. Could we discuss how to address this? Is there anything you'd like to chat about?"

The Conversation: This becomes a more serious engagement. Invite them to a meeting where you place a level of urgency around the issue. This is your opportunity to shift their mindset to help them realise that the behaviours or patterns impact both themselves and the people around them.

E.g. "Hey, Sam, when you show up late it affects team morale. They feel like you don't care. This is beginning to hinder the team. Can we chat about how to resolve this?"

The Boundary: At this point, the discussion will need to get even more serious. Together, make an agreement around what needs to change, and by when, and share that if the behaviour continues, consequences may come into effect.

E.g. "Sam, if you continue to show up late for meetings, we may need to discuss the following consequences. How can things change to avoid this?"

The Limit. Before giving up and parting ways, offer the person one final attempt at improving and making a meaningful change.

E.g. "Sam, this is your final warning. We've discussed meeting etiquette countless times without any improvement."

It's important to note that these steps or levels aren't linear, meaning they don't always follow the order as set above. Sometimes, you may need to jump straight It's important to note that these steps or levels aren't linear, meaning they don't always follow the order as set above. Sometimes, you may need to jump straight to The Boundary; other times, using The Mention once or twice will suffice.

Personally, I love the Accountability Dial.

It takes something that for most exists as an abstract idea, accountability, and turns it into something practical and easy to execute.

The framework becomes more effective when everyone on your team understands it. It provides a shared language and mental model. This way when people start moving to higher and higher levels they'll hopefully self-

Play Three
Fast, Fantastic Feedback

The Problem:

Teams don't know how to give back

Working in a team can be a rewarding experience, but it's not without challenges. For example, managers and peers alike can find it difficult to express feedback effectively—they struggle to share direction, observations, or advice in a way that is honest, fair, and encouraging.

There's an old saying that goes, 'If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all,' but carrying this ethos into the workplace and failing to share feedback with those who need it can lead to damaging results. Similarly, delivering feedback in a way that is without care or sincerity can result in the slow breakdown of the internal structure.

Lack of clear guidelines: Without clear guidelines or protocols for giving feedback, people may not know how to effectively do so.

Lack of training: Some people may not have received training on how to give feedback effectively, leading to discomfort or uncertainty when doing so.

Lack of trust: If there is a lack of trust within an organization, people may be hesitant to give feedback for fear of being perceived as confrontational or insubordinate.

Fear of backlash: Some people may be afraid of the reactions or consequences of giving feedback, and so they avoid doing so to protect themselves.

Teams need a new way of delivering feedback that is courageous and caring.

The Play
Embracing Radical Candor

Kim Scott, a former long-time director at Google and faculty member at Apple University, devised a model for managers, leaders, and teams to convey honest and effective feedback.

In her book, **Radical Candor: Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity,** Scott reveals a framework for sharing and receiving insights

Radical candor aims for teams to create a playing field of trust and collaboration so that toxic patterns that are typical in the workplace don't breed and destroy company culture.

The framework has **two main components:** caring personally and challenging directly.

Caring personally means that the individuals within the team should genuinely and sincerely care about each other and the organisation. In other words; they should give a damn about the people working with them. Work relationships are still relationships and should be handled with care, kindness, and common decency.
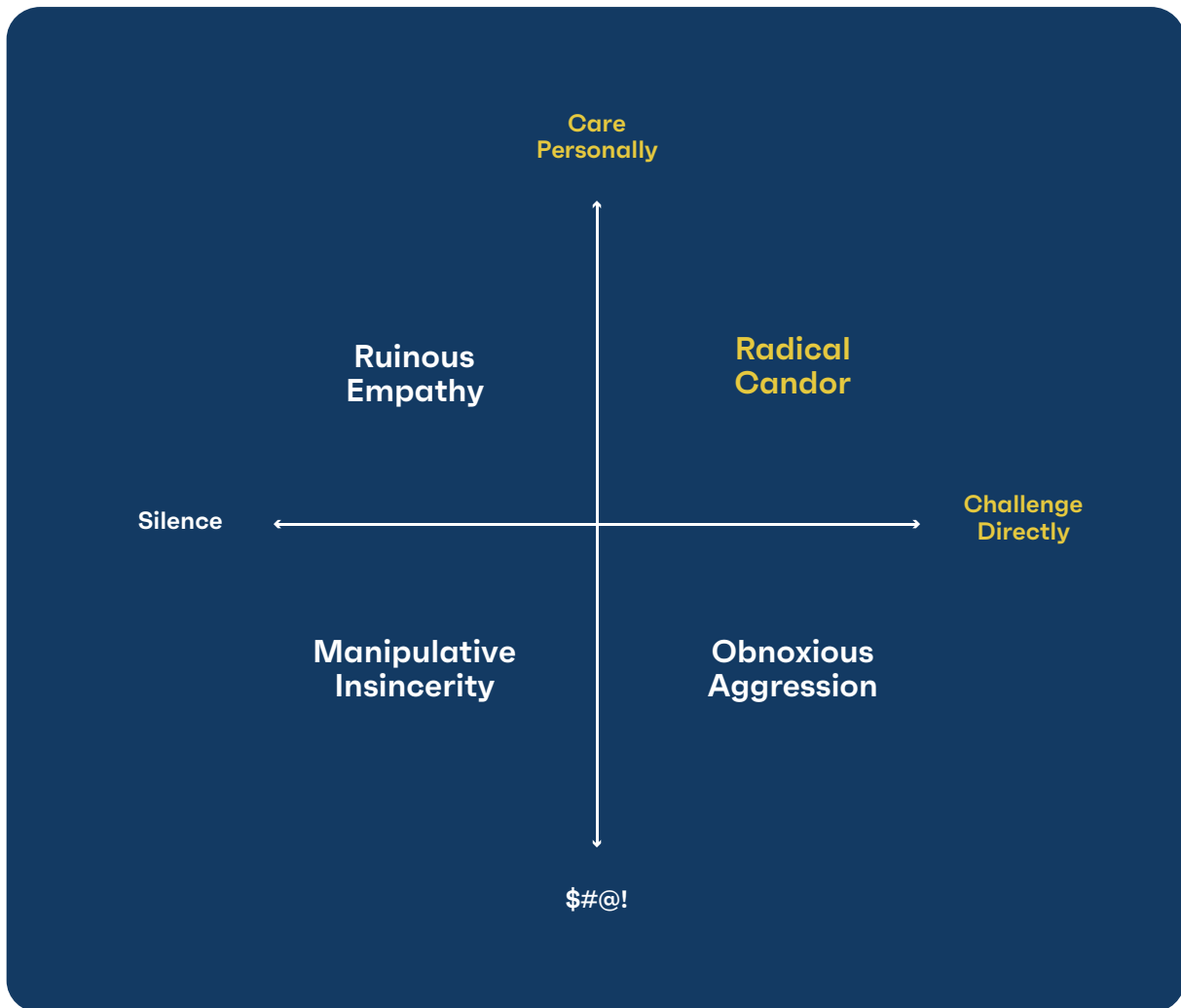
The person delivering the feedback or advice should have respect for the next person's well-being. With this foundation in place, each member of the team can feel safe knowing that whatever feedback comes their way is coming from a genuine place of care.

Without a doubt, professionalism in the workplace is important, but professionalism without humanity can lead to apathy.

Challenging directly means having the strength and bravery to voice opinions and share feedback, even if the feedback isn't necessarily positive. It's not always easy to be frank and honest when feedback isn't positive, but failing to do so by staying silent when people or a team member makes a mistake can result in bigger problems for your organisation.

When caring personally and challenging directly are done in unison, radical candor is achieved. Here, feedback, whether positive or negative, is delivered in a way that is honest, compassionate, and fair. Even when difficult feedback is delivered, with the foundation of genuine care and concern in place, the people or team member will know that what is being shared with them is not an attack, and they'll receive the feedback better.

Without these **pillars of communication** in place, your team or organisation could fall victim to corrosive communication. Scott coins these instances as ruinous empathy, manipulative insincerity, and obnoxious aggression:

```
                    Care
                  Personally

        Ruinous                    Radical
        Empathy                    Candor

                                              Challenge
Silence                                        Directly

      Manipulative              Obnoxious
       Insincerity              Aggression

                     $#@!
```

Ruinous empathy: Being too afraid to be honest and hurt another person's feelings could mean that constructive criticism is never delivered, even if necessary. Empathy is paramount to the success of healthy relationships, but when it is in excess, it can result in too many pleasantries, people-pleasing behaviours, and a pushover mentality in the workplace. People, team members, and even managers need to be challenged, as this is what leads to growth, so being conflict or feedback avoidant for the sake of saving one's feelings can be damaging to the individual and the organisation.

Obnoxious aggression: When brutal honesty is delivered without care or compassion, it could hurt another person's feelings. In this case, care for the individual on the receiving end of the feedback is missing, and the approach is cold, abrasive, and unfeeling. This can leave people or peers feeling scared or nervous about receiving feedback. They may feel as if they don't trust their managers or others on the team.

Manipulative insincerity: When there is no care for the next person and no courage to challenge someone in a healthy way, internal communication turns corrosive. In these instances, managers or peers may act sneakily, making moves behind people's backs, requesting private meetings after group meetings or acting shadily. This behaviour can make the organisation toxic from the inside out

Radical candor is a model that helps leaders, managers, and peers alike share constructive and encouraging direction in a way that is honest and fair. It's a subtle but necessary shift from sharing feedback to sharing guidance.

Play Four

Extracting the Best From People

The Challenge:
Team Members Do Not Bring Their Best to the Team

In organisations, team members often feel like they can't share their thoughts, ideas, opinions, or feedback. When people don't feel safe or comfortable in an organisation, they may worry that speaking up will lead to them being ostracised or alienated from the group. This is a deeply seated fear for all of us. Our need for belonging and safety is wired into our being.

When people do not feel a sense of belonging, the organisation develops a culture of quiet detachment where people resist verbalising their thoughts, collaborating, or engaging with each other. Obviously, something you do not want in your organisation.

The Play

Creating Psychological Safety in Your Team

Coined by Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson, psychological safety is defined as "a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking."

An organisation where psychological safety is present means that individuals feel safe and confident to share their thoughts and ideas. In an environment like this, they can vocalise with confidence without facing judgement or alienation.

Instilling a culture around psychological safety breeds trust within the workplace. As a result, people feel like they are respected within the team, feel accepted for who they are and what makes them unique, and feel as if the company values them as individuals as well as the work that they do.

Psychological safety in the workplace leads to increased inclusion, engagement, and productivity, and can decrease turnover. This benefits the individual employee and the team as a whole. A safe and inclusive work environment allows for positive exchanges and improved well-being, resulting in increased creativity and performance.

With psychological safety as the bedrock of an organisation, it can only thrive. **Here's a model that I created for psychological safety using OpenAI's ChatGPT.**

The 3R's of Psychological Safety

The "3 R's of Psychological Safety" is a framework that can be used to create a safe and supportive work environment within an organization. By focusing on **respect, responsibility,** and **reasoning**, organizations can foster a culture of trust, collaboration, and effective decision-making.

Respect: By treating team members with respect, organizations can create a positive and supportive work environment where team members feel valued and supported. This includes showing appreciation for their contributions, valuing their opinions, and treating them with dignity and consideration.

Responsibility: By holding team members accountable for their actions, organizations can create a sense of ownership and commitment to the team and its goals. This can be achieved through clear expectations, performance evaluations, and feedback.

Reasoning: By encouraging team members to use logical reasoning and critical thinking in decision-making, organizations can ensure that decisions are based on sound judgment and evidence. This can lead to better decision-making, increased innovation, and improved team performance.

As the leader or manager, you need to **set the tone** for your team. Once psychological safety is in place, you'll champion your people's well-being and ideas, leading them to feel safe, valued, and engaged. With this in place, you'll have better relationships within your organisation and a stronger united front for your internal team.

Play Five

Using Uncertainty to Your Advantage

The Problem:

Uncertainty Breeds Anxiety, and Neither Are Going Away

The 2020 Coronavirus pandemic stripped people of their sense of control. Human beings crave consistency and predictability, and living in a time where neither were present and conditions for the future were unknown sparked immense feelings of uncertainty.

Following the global upheaval of the pandemic, the world was thrust into the throes of the Ukraine war, which reverberated through the economy with drastic market fluctuations and rising costs for everyday items. At the time of writing, another recession looms, threatening our finances with even more economic decline.

The Play

Face Uncertainty Head On

The last few years have seen human beings face insurmountable pressures from all fronts: health, job security, financial security, emotional well-being, and more.

The world as we know it is gone and in its place lies a big, fat question mark. The future is uncertain, and anxiety levels are rising.

The OODA Loop **(Observe, Orient, Decide, Act)** is a decision-making framework developed by military strategist John Boyd. It suggests that individuals and organizations can make effective decisions in complex and rapidly changing environments by going through a continuous cycle of observing their surroundings, orienting themselves based on their observations, deciding on a course of action, and acting on that decision.

The **OODA Loop** was originally developed as a framework for military decision-making, but it has since been applied to a wide range of fields, including business, politics, and sports. In the context of leadership and change management, the OODA Loop can be a useful tool for leaders who are navigating complex and rapidly changing environments.
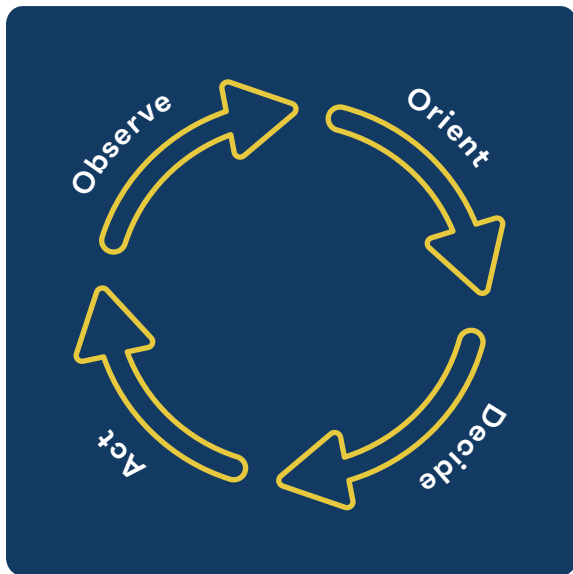
The first step in the OODA Loop is **observing**. By observing their surroundings and staying attuned to changes in the market, industry, or organizational environment, leaders can gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities they face. This involves collecting and analysing data, as well as seeking out new information and perspectives. By staying curious and open-minded, leaders can keep their finger on the pulse of their environment and be better prepared to respond to change.

The second step is **orienting**. Orienting involves aligning one's strategies and goals with their environment based on the observations made in the first step. This may involve updating one's mental models, adapting one's values and beliefs, or adjusting one's goals and plans based on new information. By orienting themselves in this way, leaders can ensure that their strategies are aligned with the current reality and are more likely to be successful.

The third step is **deciding**. Based on the observations and orientations made in the first two steps, leaders can make informed and timely decisions about how to respond to change. This may involve making strategic choices, allocating resources, or taking other action to address challenges and seize opportunities. By making decisions in a timely and effective way, leaders can stay ahead of the curve and stay ahead of their competition.

The final step is **acting**. After deciding on a course of action, leaders must put their plans into action and drive change within their organization. This may involve communicating the plan to stakeholders, mobilizing resources, or taking other steps to implement the plan. By acting on their decisions, leaders can put their plans into action and drive change within their organization. This is an important step because it allows leaders to turn their ideas into reality and make an impact on their team, their organization, and their industry.

The OODA Loop is a powerful tool for leaders who are seeking to navigate change and make effective decisions in complex and rapidly changing environments. By following the cycle of observe, orient, decide, and act, leaders can stay attuned to their environment, align their strategies with the current reality, make timely and informed decisions, and put their plans into action. By going through this process repeatedly, leaders can continually adapt and improve in the face of uncertainty and achieve their goals.

Play Six

The Play for Self–Awareness

The Problem:
We are Terrible at Self-Awareness

The role of the modern leader is changing.

In today's work environment, leaders must contend with uncertainty within and outside the workplace. Beyond macro factors, they must also focus on larger social issues and processes relating to transformation and progress. They also need to take their people into account and be considerate of each individual's mental health and well-being.

Today's leaders must introduce empathy, authenticity, genuine care, and emotional intelligence into their leadership skills and decision-making. But one of the most critical aspects to cultivate is self-awareness.

Research shows that **only 15% of people are truly self-aware.** For leaders to have a great impact on their organisations, they need to develop a strong awareness of themselves and others.

The Play

Develop Self–Awareness as a Leadership Skill

Where leaders are often told to cultivate external skills like decision-making, communication, management, and so on, self-awareness is more of an internal skill, something intangible and less obvious.

Self-awareness is the ability to reflect and contemplate the internal side of oneself. It's the ability for a person to consider what they're good at, what they're not good at, what they can improve, and how this impacts others.

There are two sides to self-awareness:

▶ **Having both the ability to contemplate one›s values, opinions, and passions.**

▶ **Having the ability to contemplate how others perceive us from the outside in.**

To improve self-awareness, we must constantly ask ourselves probing questions to uncover what is happening, what has happened, or what can be done better.

Becoming more self-aware means that you're not only aware of your strengths, weaknesses, emotions, personality, and behaviours but that you can begin to see how these impact others.

When self-awareness is present in leadership, it could look like the following:

▶ **You exercise behaviours that don›t just benefit you or those in leadership positions but the team.**

▶ **You seek feedback and take it to heart, letting this become an opportunity for self-examination. Instead of brushing off critiques, you welcome feedback and insights from all members of the team.**

▶ **You admit when you›re wrong or when you›re unsure of something.**

▶ **You are present in the moment, actively engaging in tasks, conversations, decisions, and planning.**

Although there are many things that you can do to increase self-awareness there are two practices that can have an outsized effect.

Journaling and coaching.

Journaling

By regularly writing down their thoughts and emotions, leaders can gain insight into their own patterns of thinking and behaviour. This can help them identify areas for personal growth and provide a space for processing and making sense of their experiences. For instance, a leader who frequently becomes frustrated in meetings may benefit from reflecting on the root causes of their frustration in their journal.

Here are some concrete practices that can help you increase your self-awareness through journaling:

1 Set aside a dedicated time each day to write in your journal. This could be first thing in the morning, before bed, or at a time that works best for you. I find that morning reflection works best.

2 Be as specific as possible when writing in your journal. Instead of just writing "I'm frustrated," try to identify the specific cause of your frustration and explore how it makes you feel.

3 Ask yourself questions as you write. For example, "What triggers my frustration in meetings? How do I typically react when I feel frustrated? Is there a better way for me to handle this emotion?"

4 Reflect on patterns and trends that emerge as you journal. Do you notice any common themes or behaviour's that you'd like to work on improving?

5 Keep your journal private and use it as a safe space to be honest and vulnerable. This can help you gain greater self-awareness and insight into your own thoughts and emotions.

Coaching

Working with a coach, whether it be a professional coach or a mentor, provides leaders with a safe and supportive space to explore their thoughts and feelings. Coaches can help leaders gain insight into their own motivations and behaviour's, and can also provide strategies for addressing challenges and achieving goals.

Below is an outline for getting the most out of the coaching process:

1 Identify a coach or mentor who aligns with your goals and values. This could be a professional coach, a mentor within your organization, or someone you admire and respect.

2 Schedule regular coaching sessions with your coach. These sessions could be weekly, biweekly, or monthly, depending on your needs and schedule.

3 Come to each coaching session prepared with specific goals or challenges that you'd like to work on. This will help your coach understand your needs and provide targeted support.

4 Be open and honest with your coach. This will help them understand your motivations and behaviours and provide more meaningful feedback and support.

5 Follow through on action steps and homework assignments given by your coach. This will help you make progress toward your goals and increase your self-awareness.

About the
Author

Erik is a keynote speaker and facilitator with a wide range of local and international clients such as Anglo American, Young President's Organization, Cipla, Abbvie, and Pepsico.

He holds a Master's degree in business and executive coaching. As a best-selling author he as published numerous books and articles on topics such as team dynamics, leading change, and personal development. He also co-hosts a podcast with futurist, John Sanei, called the Expansive Business podcast.

Erik helps leaders and teams to become more effective in dealing with change by providing them with the tools and techniques necessary to drive successful change initiatives.

He is passionate about unlocking the potential of teams to achieve and surpass their goals. He believes that people are the ultimate source of value for organisations and have the ability to create meaningful and lasting change.

What's Next

Thank you for taking the time to read through the 2023 edition of the Leadership Manual. It's my sincere desire that the information contained in this document will assist you in leading your team more effectively this year.

If you would like help in applying some of the concepts and principles discussed, then feel free to reach out to erik@erikkruger.com.

I assist my clients by keynoting at conferences to share insights with large audiences. Or facilitating offsites where we identify challenges, brainstorm solutions, and ultimately drive change for smaller teams.

As for the manual, my last bit of advice is to be patient with the process of change. You cannot implement all of the plays discussed in the manual in one go. It will never work. Choose the play that makes the most sense for where your team is at and then create a singular focus around it until it becomes grooved.

Once it has become habit, move on to the next.

Remember, you are playing the long game.

Focus on accretion above all else.

Erik Kruger