



**Action Document
For
Panel 7**

**THE GREATEST OVERLOOKED LEVER IN ANY SMALL
BUSINESS:**

**Leading and Leveraging Your Team to Stunning
and Sustaining Growth**

"Expertise is only as good as the actions you take with them. In this program, we've gotten you world-class experts. We've tried to get you world-class interpretations that we are moving mountains to share with you. What you do with it is up to you."

Jay Abraham & Rich Schefren

Panel 7

**THE GREATEST OVERLOOKED LEVER IN ANY SMALL BUSINESS:
Leading and Leveraging Your Team to Stunning and Sustaining Growth**

<i>Participant Name</i>	<i>Web site</i>	<i>Recommended Books</i>
Brian Tracy	www.briantracy.com	<i>Maximum Achievement: Strategies and Skills that Will Unlock Your Hidden Powers to Succeed</i> <i>Speak to Win: How to Present with Power in Any Situation</i> <i>The 100 Absolutely Unbreakable Laws of Business Success</i>
Sam Deep	www.asksamdeep.com	<i>Yes, You Can: 1,200 Inspiring Ideas For Work, Home, And Happiness</i> <i>Act On It!</i> <i>Lost & Found</i>
Fran Tarkenton	www.frantarkenton.com www.tarkentonfinancial.com	<i>What Losing Taught Me About Winning: The Ultimate Guide for Success in Small and Home-Based Business</i> <i>Every Day Is Game Day</i>
Jeffrey Pfeffer	http://www.leadingthoughts.com/talent/pfeffer.php	<i>Managing With Power: Politics and Influence in Organizations</i> <i>What Were They Thinking?: Unconventional</i>

		<p><i>Wisdom About Management</i></p> <p><i>The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First</i></p>
Joseph Grenny	<p>www.josephgrenny.com</p> <p>www.vitalsmarts.com</p>	<p><i>Influencer: The Power to Change Anything</i></p> <p><i>Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High</i></p> <p><i>Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior</i></p>
Marshall Goldsmith	<p>www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com</p>	<p><i>What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful</i></p> <p><i>Global Leadership: The Next Generation</i></p> <p><i>Mojo: How to Get It, How to Keep It, How to Get It Back if You Lose It</i></p> <p><i>What Got You Here Won't Get You There</i></p>

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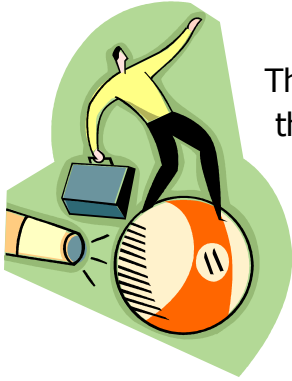
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An Overview of this Action Document



The greatest challenge with leadership, according to Brian Tracy, “is that most people back into entrepreneurship. As people start off, they sometimes become like that for the rest of their career; they’re just scrambling to get results.”

If you do not think about the future, you cannot have one.’ ~ John Galsworthy

Effective leadership in small organizations is critical. “The smaller the organization, the bigger the impact of the leader, because there is nothing to buffer you,” shared Jeffery Pfeffer. And, the very existence of this smaller organization is precarious. “No one is going to bail you out.” It really is up to you to do the things that will make your organization successful.

Sam Deep spoke most eloquently about that one thing which prevents an entrepreneur from being a great leader. Do you remember what that is? I’ll give you a hint...It’s a four-letter word which starts with F.

Fear.

Very few people who are held back by fear and insecurity would admit it. “We are all desperately insecure; some of us are just more desperate than others,” Sam concluded.

“You can’t lead a Calvary charge if you think you look funny on a horse.” ~ John Pierce

Overcoming this fear, this insecurity means coming back “to the wisdom of becoming more aware of your emotional intelligence. This is where you have to start, the assessment, the training, and to personal executive coaching” – should you choose to hire a coach.

It’s all about learning to accept criticism with an open mind. Assessing your own strengths and weaknesses, through the insights offered by your peers or team. Stretching. Growing.

Step #1: Stand up and say, “I am the problem. I am not the leader that I have the potential to be.”

Step #2: Get Feedback. Set a benchmark for improvement, based on this feedback.

Step #3: Get help: books, CDs, seminars, private coaching. And remember the concept of 'deliberate practice,' discussed in Panel 6? Practice your leadership skills, every single day. *Always* think, "It's show time."

"If you're going to be a leader, it's show time every day," shared Marshall Goldsmith. "You look like a leader, you act like a leader, you talk like a leader, and you project like a leader. You may feel bad on the inside, but you don't show it on the outside. By the way, that's not being a phony, it's being professional."

"The better leader you are the more of your life you get back; the more leverage and the greater the success of your business." ~ Rich Schefren

See Yourself as a Leader...Right Now

Say to yourself, "I am a leader." Only then can you practice great leadership, which is to say that you focus on constant improvement. Always ask yourself:

- How can I be a better leader?
- How can I be a better manager?
- How can I be a better team player?

You get the answers to those questions from internal self-assessment, but primarily you get it from those around you.

Always remember that leadership is your job. So you should study it. "You ought to be investing a significant amount of time both in benchmarking against colleagues, talking with those who are doing it better than you are," declared Joseph Grenny, "finding out how they do it, asking yourself how do you assemble and influence strategy to change the behavior of your people in your organization."

"Great leaders beget great followers." ~Sam Deep

"Leadership is too important to put in the hands of one person." ~Peter Drucker

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When you create great followers, when you share the responsibilities of the day-to-day operations of your business with your team, then you create more than what you had before. Together you can achieve more than the sum of your parts.

Exercise: Is There Increased Value?

Ask the question: *Are my team members more valuable to our team, to our business, and to themselves than they were a year ago?*

The Qualities of Leaders

Leaders have a very clear vision of who they are. They understand their strengths and weaknesses, and they're very honest with themselves.

They have a very clear vision of where they want to go with their business. "You have to have absolute clarity about who you are," shared Brian Tracy, "and what you want and where you are going and how you are going to get there, and then you must be prepared to revisit that as you get new information."

Exercise: Idealization

If my business is ideal sometime in the future...

What would it look like?

If my products and my services were ideal, if they were the best in the market, and the most respected...

What would they look like?

How would they function?

What kind of results would they get for my customers?

If my business was ideal....

What markets would I go into?

How would I get into those markets?

If my business was ideal....

What kind of people would I have working with me?

How would I attract them?

How would I keep them?

How would I treat them?

And, if I was ideal, if I was the very best person I could possibly be, what is my vision for myself and my future as a leader of this company?

"If you don't see yourself as building a world-class company, you never really fulfill your potential."

Create a Monopoly, Build the Team, and Influence Behavior

Joseph Grenny offered a simple three step plan to leadership. First is the monopoly, and he reminds us that it's not important if there are people in your market category somewhere; "what matters is that you have a way of describing what you do better and differently than anybody else." Find a segment that has not been served as well as you know you could, and set to work serving them.

Building the team involves "learning how to gracefully, respectfully, and lovingly separate from somebody – so you retain your humanity," and also that you communicate to your staff that you care for and respect people, but are willing to make the tough choices necessary for the benefit of the whole organization.

And last, but not least, is the challenge of influencing this remarkable team, to create the most success for your business. And success is measured by *results*.

"The #1 job of a business is to create and keep a customer." ~ Peter Drucker



Fundamentals of Leadership

The number one job of a leader is to get results. Are you the person most capable of getting the most important results that are essential for the survival and ultimate success of your business? If you're not that person, you must be quickly moved aside, and a leader

be put in your place.

Set and achieve goals.

It all comes down to clarity. You must be clear and specific about your goals, especially your financial goals, and your sales goals. You must have *standards*, *metrics*, and must have *deadlines*.



Focus on Innovation and Marketing.

If you agree that business success can be defined as *customer satisfaction*, we'll posit that it can be measured by *repeat business*. And Brian Tracy was quick to share that the only two things that lead to customer satisfaction are *innovation* and *marketing*.

Innovation: finding faster, better, cheaper, easier ways to serve customers.

Marketing: finding better, more creative ways to engage your prospects, and current customers.

Based on this definition of business success, how much time do you spend in marketing or innovation? Studies have shown that the average leader in a small-to-medium sized company spends 11% of their time in marketing. Hazard a guess on this pivotal point – how much time do *you* spend in marketing your business?

Exercise: Time Tracking

Take the next month, and track your time, each and every day. Keep a clipboard and stopwatch by your side, and be ruthless in your record-keeping. This activity is central to other elements in developing leadership, and returns us to the critical importance of *clarity*.

Solve Problems and Make Decisions.

“The third critical responsibility of leadership is to solve problems and make decisions,” shared Brian Tracy. All of business is a process of solving problems. A goal unmet is a problem unsolved; a sales target unachieved is a problem unsolved. All of businesses problem solve and the mark of the leader is that they are effective at solving problems.

Now the key to being an effective at solving problems is to be solution oriented, is to focus, clarity. Be clear about what the problem is and then focus on the solution. The average person focuses on who is to blame, who did it, what happened – the past, which cannot be changed. “The leader focuses on the future as we said before. The leader focuses on the solution. And especially the leader is always asking, *what action can we take now in order to solve this problem to move ahead?* The leader thinks in terms of actions they can take immediately.”

Lead by Example.

The mark of the leader is that they conduct themselves as though everyone was watching, even when no one is watching. Ask yourself, "What kind of a company would my company be if everyone in it was just like me?"

If you keep repeating that question, you'll keep raising your own standards and you will become a better and better leader.

Leaders Should Be Modest.

What Jeffrey Pfeffer would hope to imbue in every leader is a "sense of modesty about what they know, and what they don't know. Ego, hubris, is a big problem in organizations of any size. Understand your limitations.

Exercise: What are the Limits of My Expertise?

Being relentlessly honest, just what are your weaknesses, in both skills and knowledge?

Skills	Knowledge

Leaders Must Work Well with Others.

Having the skill of empathetic understanding, according to Jeffrey Pfeffer, is essential to effective leadership. Avoid 'thoughtlessness' by cultivating the habit of seeing the world from another person's point of view.

Leaders Must Inspire Confidence.

This suggests that you are always honest with people, and that you give them a sense that you understand how to move the organization forward.

Leaders Must Build Trust.

Again, telling people the truth, and admitting when you've made a mistake. Not pretending you know something, when you don't; being truly, consistently authentic with those you work with – that's how you build trust within your organization.

Leaders Must Always Think Two Years Down the Road.

"As an entrepreneur," shared Joseph Grenny, "people will always be telling you to look 10 or 15 years ahead; we all know you don't have time for that. If you shorten that a little bit," yet go beyond the usual 30-day thinking – you get to realize that a two year vision is just about right.

So 80% of the time, you can think about the next 30 days. But be sure to take that remaining 20% of the time and consider how large you'll be 730 days from now.

What office space will you need?

What staff will you need?

Remember to always hire the person you'll need two years down the line; "otherwise, you create tomorrow's problem with the staff you hire."

Exercise: Self-Assessment

Just three, not-so-easily answered questions. Are you ready?

How easy is it for you to be honest about your mistakes in the workplace?

Do you feel empathy for those around you?

Do you feel confident in decisions you make, enough to transmit that confidence to others?

Leadership is the Ability to get the Results Expected

The number one reason cited for the dismissal of top company leaders of Fortune 500 companies was "failure to execute." In other words, the person didn't get the job done. They simply had to be replaced quickly by someone who could get the job done or the company would collapse.

The number one reason that companies succeed is because they have good leadership. The number one reason why they fail is because they have poor leadership. So the leader must...

- Be very, very clear about the results he or she is attempting to get.
- Be clear about how every single person contributes to those results.

The leader must go forward, execute, take responsibility, and offer no excuses. The leader must have the courage to charge and to stimulate and motivate the troops and get them to follow you. "If you can do that," shared Brian, "aimed at specific targets and achieve those targets, then that is the ultimate measure of leadership."

Does that sound like you? Remember, be ruthlessly honest.

"Over the years you'll find that in the early centuries, the leaders always led the attack. The leader always turned towards danger. The leaders always said, let's go, and went first." ~Brian Tracy

Critical Success Factors

There are several 'bottom line' numbers in a business which leaders should look at all the time. It should be easy for your accountant to track these on a daily basis:

Number one is the number of new leads that you are attracting. That is the sum total measure of the effectiveness of all of your advertising and all of your business and all of your product development and all of your market positioning, is how many people are raising their hands and saying I'm interested in what you are selling.

The second measure is the number of conversions. Of people who say they are interested, how many of them actually convert to customers? That is very important because the number one reason for business success is high sales. The number one reason for business failure is low sales. That is the ultimate measure of the leader; did they take the hill or not?

The third measure is the size of each sale. What is the actual size of each sale?

The fourth measure is the profitability of each sale. How much net profit did we make on each sale?

The fifth measure is the profit margin. Are the profit margins increasing or decreasing?

The sixth measure is repeat business. How often do our customers repeat, come back and buy from us again based on the way we treated them when they bought from us the first time?

A good leader is willing to be measured against how well the company is doing in those dimensions.

There are others, as well, but those six are the top factors to examine regularly. Others include:

- Company turnover
- Wastage
- Returns

Exercise: Run those Numbers!

True leaders are willing to allow themselves to be measured by how well they and their company, the people under them, are doing in hitting those numbers. With that said, ask your accountant to run these numbers daily, and at the end of each day, review them.

The Law of Three

Take that list of everything that you do in the course of a week or a month, gleaned from the earlier [Time Tracking](#) exercise, you will end up with 20 or 30 or 40 different things that you do from the time you get in Monday morning to when you leave Friday night.

Exercise: The Three Magic Questions

If you then ask what Brian calls the first magic question:

If I could only do one thing on this list, which one thing would it be that would contribute the greatest value to my company?

The law of three says that there are only three things that you do in the course of a day, a week, or a month that contribute 90% of your value to your company. "Everything else," declared Brian Tracy, "is a support activity, a small activity, a fun activity, a frivolous activity, going for lunch, checking your email, or reading the paper."

The next question then is:

If I could only do two things on this list, what would be the second thing that would contribute the greatest value to my business?

And the obvious conclusion to this exercise is the third question:

If I could only do three things, what would be the third thing?

This is a remarkable tool for entrepreneurs to assess the value of their current activities. "I have worked with business owners," shared Brian, "taught them the law of three and they have doubled the size of their business, their profitability and transformed their lives sometimes in as little as 30 or 60 days because they realize suddenly, with like a flash bulb going in the face, that good grief, almost everything I am doing is really irrelevant. It could be delegated, downsized, outsourced, eliminated, deferred, and delayed."

The Ultimate Answer Becomes...

How you improve, increase, multiply your leadership abilities is *do more and more of fewer things, but do those fewer things better and better and spend more and more time on them*. "That alone, concluded Brian, "sets the example, enables you to achieve results, it enables you to execute, it enables you to move to the front of your company, enables you to make a maximum contribution." It sets a high standard of leadership and peak performance.

The Winning Combination of Zero-Based Thinking and KWINK Analysis

Brian also teaches a concept called zero-based thinking, and he couples it with KWINK analysis, to create a powerful methodology of decision assessment.

Zero-based thinking comes from accounting, where you draw a line under all your previous accounting decisions and ask the question, "If I was not spending this money in this area, would I start spending it today?"

KWINK analysis occurs when you add the phrase 'knowing what I know now' to that original question.

So, it becomes...

If I was not doing anything in my company right now, knowing what I now know, what would I not start up again, knowing what I now know?

You then apply this in three areas.

PEOPLE

You apply it first of all to every person you deal with inside and outside the company and say, if I was not dealing, if I had not hired this person, if I had not promoted this person, if the person applied for a job with me today, knowing what I now know would I hire them? Would I put them in a particular position?

If the answer is no, the next question is, how do I get rid of this person and how fast I As soon as the answer comes up no, to the knowing-what-I-know-now question, it means it is too late to save the situation.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Apply it to your products and services. Is there any product or service that I am offering today that knowing what I now know I wouldn't bring to the market? Is there any process in my business, any expenditure, any form of marketing, any form of manufacturing and production service that knowing what I now know I wouldn't start up again today? If the answer is yes, how do you stop and how fast?

INVESTMENTS

The third area has to do with any investments. And the investments are three kinds: time, money and emotion. Is there any investment of time where I have put in a lot of time? I have contributed a lot of time to this and knowing what I now know I realize it's not a good idea? If there is, how do you get out and how fast? Is there any area of money where I've invested a lot of money and in retrospect I realize it was not a good investment? Then cut your losses and get out as fast as you can. The third area has to do with emotions, which is a very, very sensitive area where you have invested a lot of emotion, in a career, a person, a relationship, a job, a product or service if you would not now start, how do you get out and how fast?

"It takes tremendous courage to practice zero-based thinking in your business, shared Brian, "but when you have the courage to do it and you finally decide to stop, get out of something, eliminate it, afterwards you will only have one reaction and the reaction will be, I should have done this a long time ago. Why did I wait so long? You will feel a

tremendous sense of relief and exhilaration. All the pressure and stress will be gone when you make this decision.”

The Singular, Most-Important Question

Brian suggests that you ask yourself every day, *what can I and only I do that if done well will make a real difference?* “In other words, if you don’t do it, nobody else will do it, nobody else can do it. Nobody else is tasked to do it. Nobody else has the power or responsibility.” So, here it is again:

What can I, and only I, do, that if done well will make a real difference?

Then focus on that every hour of every day. This will double, triple, five, ten times your effectiveness and your contribution to your business.

Be Courageous – Ask, and You Shall Learn

Sam Deep heartily suggests that you choose to make this a part of your on-going leadership training program. Regularly sit down with your team members, one-on-one, and ask them these two questions:

- Am I using you properly?
- Are there things I’m doing that you should be doing; and are there things that *you* are doing, that *I* should be doing?

“You’ll be amazed that what you’ll learn, because one of the greatest opportunities that entrepreneurs have for getting the most out of their people is that everybody in your company is given the tasks they are best suited for, and properly paid for.”

Then ask them this question, and sit back with an open heart and deeply-listening ears:

“What’s the one thing that I could be doing for you that I’m not doing now? In other words, if there was one thing that I could add to my leadership behavior that you think would help us succeed more, what would that one thing be?”

Use Your 'Open Face'

"One thing we need to do as leaders is keep people talking," shared Sam. And he feels the easiest way to do that is to adopt an expression of openness. "If you lift your eyebrows, put a little half smile on your face, it's amazing how people will share with you. How they will tell you things that they would never tell you otherwise."

He adds that there's an additional benefit to this attitude of open receptiveness: once people tell you something, they feel closer to you – it automatically builds intimacy into the relationship. And that leads to deeper dialogue down the line.

Don't Forget the Power of Praise!

Sam recommends this simple tool. "Write down three names of people you plan to catch in the act of victory this week, and say "thank you" to them when you do. This is such an important concept; we've included content from www.asksamdeep.com on this issue as part of Appendix 2.

Using 360° Assessment

Sam Deep believes that the term "self-assessment" is an oxymoron; "I really don't believe it is possible to do an objective self-assessment." You've got to go to 'your people' – but you've got to "be thoughtful about how you do it."

He recommends that you hire an outside agency to conduct the 360° leadership assessment, and that you leave *numbers* out of it. Rating someone's performance on a numbered scale "isn't a good thing;" and Sam's developed a set of 22 leadership dimensions instead. Peers are requested to select the top three dimensions, those the leader performs reliably; and then select the bottom three – with an explanation of why these are at the bottom. "This is the best way to get anything that mirrors an objective assessment," he declared.

"Create an environment where you learn how you're seen as a leader by those important people around you." ~ Marshall Goldsmith

What is 360° Assessment?

360-degree feedback, also known as *multi-rater feedback*, *multisource feedback*, or *multisource assessment*, is feedback that comes from all around an employee. The number *360* refers to the *360 degrees* in a circle, with an individual figuratively in the center of the circle.

Feedback is provided by subordinates, peers, and supervisors. It also includes a self-assessment and, in some cases, feedback from external sources such as customers and suppliers or other interested stakeholders.

Create change in yourself, noted Marshall, “by involving everyone around you; by openly acknowledging what you need to work on, listening to their input in a non-defensive way, and then the whole follow-up strategy of sticking with the necessary changes – this is a very simple process for measured improvement.”

Bring Your Vision Alive

“Throw away your 40-word statement that has *seamless* and *world-class* in it – or some other meaningless terms,” asked Sam Deep, “and replace it with one single strong statement that points your entire team in the direction of creating something that you don’t have now.” He then offered a brilliant example for you to draw on: Nike’s two-word statement, their *raison d’être*:

Crush Reebok.

“Just find that one thing, and bring it alive,” and continually point your team toward it.

What is your current vision statement? Write it down here:

Now, distill it; refine it, bring it down to its essence. That will then be the guiding force behind everything you and your team pursue in the coming months. What did you come up with? Write your ideas here:

Which one says it all?

The ability to clearly articulate the *vision* is one of the critical factors in leadership. "By showing your team the future, and the form you want it to be, where you want the company to go; that's the one thing a leader can't delegate: the responsibility for pointing the way," shared Sam Deep. The other critical factors include keen listening skills; the ability to praise team members regularly, creating processes for

What is Emotional Intelligence?

According to John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, two of the leading researchers on the subject, emotional intelligence (EI), is "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions." Interest in emotional intelligence has grown significantly since the 1990s, with research suggesting that good emotional understanding can lead to increased social effectiveness.

What are some of the characteristics of an individual with high emotional intelligence? In a 2004 article, Mayer and his colleagues presented some observations on emotionally intelligent people:

- * Better at perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions.
- * Generally more agreeable and open.
- * Less likely to engage in risky behaviors including smoking, drinking, drug abuse, and violence.
- * More positive social experiences.

accountability, and finally, emotional intelligence – which gives you the power to influence people.

"Great leaders are great listeners."
~Sam Deep

"The greatest challenge that leaders face at all levels is figuring out how to get the right expectations of people, and how to put the right processes in place to make sure that

people remain responsible for the results of their work." ~ Sam Deep

The Challenges of Influence

Joseph Grenny was quick to share his thoughts about the one skill set that all entrepreneurs, no matter the field or industry, need to master. It's "the ability to think in systematic and effective ways about the challenge of influence." The most common problems you'll face in the coming years will be human problems – and this is true in both your professional and personal lives. The people around you won't always behave as you'd wish them to; how can you influence them to do otherwise?

Ask them...

What do you think?

How can we make this better?

How can we have a better marketing plan?

How can we get our message in front of more people?

Focusing on Your Team Members

Marshall Goldsmith offered us the *six question process*, to be used about once a month with the members of your team. Sit down with each of them and ask these questions.

- Where are we going?
- Where are you going?
- What are you proud of?
- What are your suggestions for their improvement?

"As a leader you should be a coach," shared Marshall. Sit there and say, "Here are suggestions for the future that I have for you."

Then ask them, "If you were the coach for you, what advice would you have for you?"

And finally, "how can I help?"

In between this monthly dialogue, establish what Marshall calls *mutual responsibility*. This, he shares, "is a real simple process." Make a commitment to one another to be open, and honest. Just say, "If you ever have any feeling that you've lost the vision; that you have a lack of clarity, direction or alignment; if you need feedback, take the responsibility to talk to me."

"The only way we win is if you make your teammates better. The focus cannot be on you; it's got to be on your teammates." ~Layman Sellers, football coach to Fran Tarkenton

"Leadership comes from caring about your product and believing in your product and service, and then caring about the people that are producing the product and who are your business partners and are part of your team." ~ Fran Tarkenton

Habits to Cultivate

Experts have interviewed hundreds of people who have reached the age of 100 or more, and asked them, *if you could change anything in life, what would you change?* They all had three answers in common.

#1: I would have given more thought to myself and to what I really wanted in life rather than just simply reacting and responding to the world around me.

#2: I would have taken more risks in the direction of the things that I wanted. I wouldn't have played it safe so often.

#3: I would have taken more time to think. I would have gone and sat and thought. I would practice solitude.

So, perhaps the one best thing that a person can do in life is to develop the habit of solitude. Solitude means that you go and sit quietly by yourself for 30 to 60 minutes, with no distractions. Spend this time, if you can, in nature.

"One of the greatest forms of solitude," shared Brian, "is simply looking at water. It is simply sitting and looking at a pool or looking at the ocean and just looking at water. It takes about 25 to 28 minutes for your mind to go calm, almost like silt falls to the bottom of a bucket of water."

At that point your mind will suddenly go clear and you will see ideas and answers and insights. You'll have possibilities. Sometimes one session of solitude will give you an insight that can change the rest of your life and bring you back into connection with who you really are and what you really want. Sometimes you'll get an answer to a problem that has been plaguing you for a long time. It will just emerge from your intuition as you sit there quietly."

Take some time, everyday if you possibly can, at the end of the day or the first thing in the morning and just sit quietly by yourself, mulling over these questions. "It's called *the golden hour*, where you sit quietly by yourself and you just get in tune with the very best that is in you and the very highest mind that is available to you.

Another piece of advice in the course of a busy life and a busy day, it is to cultivate the habit of asking yourself these questions:

- What are my real values?
- What is really important to me in life?

Exercise: You're on Your Deathbed

Ok, get those imaginations going. Take a couple of deep breaths, and relax. Envision you're now 93 years old – and you're getting ready to die. Before you take that final breath, you're given the opportunity to go back in time, and talk with a younger version of you – not just to talk, but to truly affect the quality of your life.

You're going to do that for them in two areas: professional, and personal.

What professional advice would you give that younger version of you?

And what personal advice would you give?

Marshall Goldsmith shared with us the wisdom gleaned from asking, and listening, to those who were dying. It's simple really:

1. Be happy, now. Have fun.
2. Enjoy what you have. Don't focus on what you don't have.
3. While work is important, it's friends and family who will comfort you at the end.
4. Have a dream, and then go for it.
5. Do whatever you can to develop people, to help others become more than they were before.

The Panelists, Their Web sites, and Extra Resources

Brian Tracy

One of today's most influential authors on the subject of business and personal achievement, urges entrepreneurs to ask themselves a basic question: What would my company look like if it was ideal in every way? Tracy also says that leaders should take a clear-eyed look at the many ways they divide their time, and determine what single activity adds the most value to their enterprise, and then find a way to make that activity a much higher priority. He emphasizes that leaders must have clarity for their business – what is the purpose/ what is most important - and they must lead by example. His Web site: www.briantracy.com.

Sam Deep

One of the top executive leadership coaches and the author of 15 books, Sam explains the five key components of successful leadership – vision, accountability, emotional intelligence, and the abilities to listen and offer praise. Deep urges entrepreneurs to rally their teams around a strong, simple goal, not a generic mission statement; he also offers concrete advice for soliciting candid feedback from employees. Visit his site, www.asksamdeep.com, where you can access an [archive of questions](#) (and his answers).

Fran Tarkenton

Fran Tarkenton, entrepreneur and Football Hall of Famer, posits that true leadership is rooted in genuinely caring about the product and service a company is delivering. Leaders must lead by example, Tarkenton says, which means staying later and working harder than anyone else. He also argues that for a business to realize its full potential, a leader must endeavor to make his teammates as successful and fulfilled as possible. For his witty, insightful blog, visit www.frantarkenton.com, while to learn about his financial services company, you should go to: www.tarkentonfinancial.com.

Wisdom of the Ages

“Learn to be silent and let your quiet mind listen and absorb.”

~Pythagoras

“All men's miseries derive from not being able to sit quietly in a room alone.”

~ Blaise Pascal

Jeffrey Pfeffer

Jeffrey Pfeffer, professor of organizational behavior at Stanford University and a writer on business topics, says that business leaders should have a sense of modesty about what they know and don't know, and need to be willing to interact with people at all levels of their business. This helps develop true empathy, which in turns provides important insights into employee and customer thinking, Pfeffer says. You can learn more about him through a variety of sites, including:

[Stanford University Faculty Profile](#)

[Leading Thoughts](#)

[The Trium Group](#)

Joseph Grenny

An entrepreneur, author and accomplished speaker on business subjects, he argues that most entrepreneurs don't know what leadership is. Rather than solving a specific technical problem or tackling a specific sales issue, leadership is the ability to influence the behavior of others, he says. Grenny also says that most leaders take too long to fire underperforming employees, and that more leaders should consider whether their enterprises are socially rewarding for employees and customers. You can access more of his wisdom at www.josephgrenny.com, where you can access fascinating [video clips](#). Joseph also recommends that you visit www.vitalsmarts.com, where you'll be able to sign up for the newsletter, and have access to other great free resources.

Marshall Goldsmith

A leading authority in helping top executives achieve lasting behavioral change and the author of several influential books, says that most entrepreneurs don't see themselves as leaders. Goldsmith argues that that must change, and offers several recommendations to assist in the transition. For example, he says that executives should be willing to ask their direct reports how they can lead more effectively. We suggest that you visit www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com/, for a wealth of free resources. And always remember, "Life is good!"

For a remarkable instructional journey, check out the 70+ videos he's got on [YouTube](#).

Appendix 1: Manners in the Workplace Self-Assessment

Print this list. Put a check mark (√) in the boxes of descriptions you are absolutely sure consistently characterize your behavior. Use a question mark (?) where you're not sure or the item only sometimes describes you. Put an (X) in front of the behaviors that you violate more often than you and others want to see. Leave blank those items not applicable to you.¹

Respect toward Others

- I work collaboratively and deferentially with senior management.
- I submit to those in authority.
- I arrive to meetings on time and stay the whole time, unless excused.
- In meetings, I keep my PDA and laptop computer turned off except to receive critical phone calls or to participate in the meeting.
- I attend retreats and conferences scheduled for my team; I don't look for an excuse to leave early.
- I attend and participate actively in training sessions paid for by my employer.
- In every way I respect the time, schedules, and workloads of others.

Communication with Others

- My speech is seasoned with grace; not peppered with demeaning, sarcastic, profane, or degrading language.
- I say my piece *once* and move on; I'm succinct and crisp; I don't blaviate.
- I'm careful to adjust the expression of my thoughts to the sensibilities, needs, and demographics of the particular person listening to me.
- I listen when others speak, rather than interrupt, finish their sentences, or merely wait to seize air time.
- I don't eavesdrop or barge into other's conversations; I respect their privacy.
- I won't speak in a language others don't understand in front of them.
- I'm not a gossip; neither do I violate communication confidences.
- My speech brims with "please," "hello," "excuse me," "thank you" and "my pleasure."

¹ <http://www.asksamdeep.com/what-role-do-manners-and-civility-play-in-the-workplace/>

Relationship Building

- I smile, give eye contact, and greet others when I encounter them.
- I provide a timely answer or response to people when they put the ball in my court.
- I fulfill my promises and obligations or alert others quickly that I can't.
- I express any concerns I may have about people's behavior to *them* and not to others.
- I am tactful yet directly honest about my positions, opinions, feelings, and beliefs.
- I ask, "Will you forgive me?" when I have disappointed, hurt, or offended others.
- I am not demanding nor do I exert unwanted influence or dominance over others.

Additional: What did you learn from your self-assessment. Record three vows for changed behavior that you will now make to people in general or to specific role players in your life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

And consider other ways to use this list. Will you ask colleagues, friends, and family for confirmation on your checks, questions marks, and X's? Might a few of these statements find a place on your work team's charter? (See the April 22, 2009 ASK in the archives.) Should this list form the foundation of a mandatory training class for the employees of your company? Are you now emboldened to give feedback, with help from the July 22, 2009 ASK, to someone whose lack of decorum troubles you?

Appendix 2: Are You a Praise Miser?

The content for this appendix came directly from the archives at www.asksamdeep.com. We believe that praise is such an important tool in team building, and a key to open dialogue between team members that we felt it important to include it *in toto* here. You can see the actual archived articles through the links in the footnote below.²

People desire to be told that they are valued, but far too many praise misers populate the management ranks. Is there any chance you're one of them? If you can say, "I resemble that!" for any of the dirty dozen statements below, please don't rationalize your miserliness, and please don't feel personally attacked by me. Instead, commit yourself to more inspirational leadership.

Saying "thank you" doesn't come natural to me. Do you also find yourself anywhere on the list? Perhaps we can be accountability partners for each other, at least in spirit, to overcome our emotional or intellectual counter indications to expressions of appreciation.

1. "My good people know they're doing good work; I don't have to tell them." One of the worst mistakes you'll ever make is to take your best employees for granted. Yes, they do know they're outperforming others, but they do look to you for special acknowledgment of that fact.
2. "Very few people exceed my standards for performance." One of the reasons great doers can make poor leaders is that they're often disappointed to find so few direct reports as dedicated or as competent as they were. They don't have the stomach for acknowledging anything short of their personal level of accomplishment.
3. "This appreciation thing is a little too touchy-feely for me." This continues to be a struggle of mine. I was raised in a home where "Thank you" was not said. If you were likewise influenced by an impersonal environment, you may have a similar deficit to overcome.
4. "We don't do that around here." In a corporate meeting I attended a few years ago, the Vice President of Engineering reported to the President with alarm that as he walked through the tooling plant he found too many people smiling. I'm not kidding! That corporate culture, like one you may be familiar with, was not exactly praise-friendly.

² <http://www.asksamdeep.com/who-me-a-praise-miser/>, <http://www.asksamdeep.com/495/>.

5. "If people want praise they'll find it in their pay envelopes." This is one you've heard before. In their pay envelopes employees find what they are entitled to according to the contract you made with them. They've given you a piece of their lives and you've given them a piece of the company's money. Who got the better deal? Small company owners should say "Thank you" as they put pay envelopes into the hands of employees.
6. "Can't you praise too much?" Of course you can! Passing it out like fortune cookies at an Asian restaurant because it's time to distribute thanks, demeans it. Like any valuable commodity it should be in somewhat limited supply, but it must not be the extreme rarity it so often is. NB: Managers who ask me this question are almost always praise misers. Think about why that's true.
7. "If you praise people they'll think they've made it and will stop trying to improve." Give this objection some serious thought and you'll realize how groundless it is. Recall a time when someone offered you a word of encouragement in the midst of a struggle. Did it not spur you on? Praise acts as a motivator when people receive it on their improvement journey. No one says, "Now that she recognized my work, I can slack off."
8. "If you praise people they'll expect a pay raise or a promotion." Maybe they deserve one!
9. "I'm not going to praise people for just doing their job." What do you think? Should you show your gratitude to those who give you only what you ask of them, and nothing more. By now you've realized that I find praise to be a motivator rather than a reward. If I'm right, you should be looking for opportunity to express appreciation to all in your employ—if some more than others.
10. "People shouldn't be coddled; I don't need constant approval and neither should they." Unfortunately, there are praise junkies out there—people who window shop for affirmation. If you supervise such a person, let your actions in the situation be tempered by a realization that one of two factors is likely operating here. Either that person as a child was fed a steady diet of "good boy/girl" or is suffering from desperate insecurity.
11. "I'm so busy. The last thing I have time for is walking around to make sure everyone is happy." Please don't tell me you believe that attending meetings, traveling, or staying tied to your desk are higher priorities.

12. "My job is to keep my people out of trouble, error-free, and on the straight and narrow." There are two kinds of leaders in the world: failure preventers and success insurers. Success insuring leaders see their jobs as helping their people grow, take smart risks, and achieve goals that initially look to be beyond their reach. They aim to catch people in the act of victory and celebrate it. Failure preventers look like the guy at the top of the page.

After creating this list and thinking about my own connection to #3, I was reminded of the saying, "To know ourselves diseased is half our cure." At 6AM next Wednesday you'll receive many ideas to use praise more effectively to motivate others and to complete the other 50% of the cure.

In order to take full advantage of the motivational power of your praise, use the ideas that follow.

1. Get your heart right about praise.
2. Be sincere! Don't praise merely because I or anyone else tells you that it's a good idea. Acknowledgment must stem from an earnest desire to lift a person up. If that doesn't feel right to you, the conniving nature of your commendation will be easily discovered and deeply resented.
3. Don't pass it out like candy. Scarcity equals value. If you praise too much, it can lose its value. But don't worry about this one. I have yet to hear of such a case in my 24 years of leadership coaching. I did see a movie once where it was a problem.
4. Keep it short. You may remember that the superb best-selling book *The One Minute Manager* recommended one-minute praisings. Don't do it! Praise someone for that long and they'll upchuck on your shoes. It takes one-half second to say, "Thank you." If you want to splurge, it takes two seconds to say, "You did a great job on that report." If you have as many as four seconds to spare, splurge with "I appreciate your willingness to stay late in order for us to meet that deadline."
5. Drop your skepticism. Don't wait to see more of a behavior before paying tribute to it: "I'll say something when I'm sure it's permanent." Don't feel entitled to the behavior: "It's about time!" Don't be suspicious of sudden improvement: "What's she up to now?"
6. Don't negate it. Never follow congratulations with "Make sure you keep it that way," "It's about time" or even "Keep up the good work." The best thing you can do after honoring improvement is to disappear. Don't give one and take two back. Don't blow up the balloon and then stick a pin in it.

7. Praise the deed, not the doer. You've learned "Condemn the deed, not the doer" as a constructive criticism principle—see the 7/22/09 archives. Guess what! The same is true for praise. What do you want your people to be turned on by? You? No! Themselves? No! Their work? Yes! So extol their work, not them.

8. Give a hand written note of thanks. A permanent record of your approval means a lot. One that comes from your hand will mean even more than one that rolls off a laser printer or pops up in an email. I have seen such notes framed and hanging in cubicles.

9. Post an entry in the employee's personnel file. This action is a first cousin of #8.

10. Thank people for not doing the wrong thing. You read this right! Your leadership role occasionally calls upon you to convert employee behavior from dysfunctional to functional, from unproductive to productive, and from troublesome to trouble free. When as a result of your coaching, employees succeed at any of these transformations, they will be looking for appreciation of the favor they feel they have done for you. Zero thanks from you will be interpreted as not caring about them or their improvement. Back sliding may well result.

11. Get people's names out there. You've heard that what you know doesn't matter as much as who you know. But even more important than who you know is who knows you. One the most valued forms of acknowledgment is to showcase your people in the company, in the community, and even in the industry. Do you allow the accomplishments (the shining light) of your rising stars to be widely seen? Or do you allow fear of losing them tempt you hide them under a bushel basket?

12. For every two times you praise someone, say something nice to others about that person. This is similar to #11. The only thing that great leaders do behind people's backs is pat them.

13. Favor "team of the month" over "employee of the month." It always amazes me that while we pay great lip service to teamwork, we subvert that goal by extolling the virtues of individual effort over that of a team. You'll see next why this was part of Jack's lapse of judgment.

14. Be careful where you do it. Somewhere along the way Jack apparently heard and bought into the adage, "Condemn in private, praise in public." He learned the hard way how poorly this idea can fare in practice. Indeed, Amber had done a great job on the training conference, but she didn't do it alone. Hearers of public praise who are not receivers are prone to one of three reactions: "What about the contribution I made?" "He never praises me that way." "She's a teacher's pet."

Pick three people in your life who need a word of encouragement from you. Identify them and plan the encounter in a way that honors the do's and don'ts above.