

LEADERSHIP, COACHING AND MENTORING –PACK

April 2021

(15th Anniversary Year editions)

2006 - 2021

Welcome to this month's edition and here are the highlights:

The first article from **Damian Piper our Resilience coach**: “My work with people often involves conversations about individuals feeling out of control. Competing demands for their time, bulging inboxes, the balance between professional and personal commitments are common drivers for this. This can lead to feelings of overwhelm, frustration and dare I say it, for some, living a life as a victim of circumstances.” [Is this you?](#)

Leaders Lean Back! “Sitting in the back of a freezing cold military vehicle, we are parked up on the edge of a forest. It is the middle of the night; the skyline is lit up by moon light and there is no wind - it is deathly quiet. It is cold because we are somewhere within the Artic Circle” My story starts in North Norway 35 years ago and is brought up to date.

‘Managing in turbulent times’ Roger Whalley provides us with another excellent article: “In 1980 Peter Drucker wrote a book called “Managing in turbulent times”. He didn’t know the half of it. The last year could be rightly referred to as “turbulent times”. You have probably faced and are still facing situations which two years ago you couldn’t have dreamed of.”

‘Be More Bettina’ a few weeks ago I was asked to write an article for International Autism Awareness Week. “This evening as we were sat around the dinner table chatting, Bettina has excused herself as she has completed a task (her meal) and is now on to the next ‘task’ and we recognised about how we need ‘to be more Bettina’”.

A different approach to problem solving.... Phyllis Maynard (Phyll my friend and former colleague wrote “When it comes to Leadership, we all have tried and tested tools that we use to solve problems. I would like to share with you one tool that I have used as a Leader and also in my everyday communication with others” This article still receives views on my blog most weeks after 5 years since it was published and I recommend it to you.

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It's not about how good you are

It's how Good You want to be

My work with people often involves conversations about individuals feeling out of control. Competing demands for their time, bulging inboxes, the balance between professional and personal commitments are common drivers for this. This can lead to feelings of overwhelm, frustration and dare I say it, for some, living a life as a victim of circumstances. In the spirit of openness, I think I can personally identify with each of these situations – more often than I'd probably want to admit. So, what have I observed as a route to help this situation?

Before I get into my observations, I'd like to offer a few suggestions of things we might need to accept.

1. **There is no magic solution.** There can be a tendency for people to seek the next hack, app or book that will provide the answers to their challenges. I've witnessed others and done plenty of my own reading, experimenting and using many of the so-called hacks to improve productivity. These can definitely help but I don't think there's a magic solution that will simply change things. At least that I've found yet.
2. **The volume of 'stuff' will outstrip our capacity.** Chances are in 21st century life we will have more things pulling at our available 168 hours than we have capacity for each week. Even over the last year which has curtailed many of our choices it's still common that people have a range of things in their lives that are not as they'd want because they lack capacity and or motivation to take them forward. It's less about finishing everything on the to-do list. That means working on our own expectations of success.
3. **It's easier to create productivity support systems than they are to use.** There are a range of options to help us manage the things we want and need to achieve. It's common that people set these up when things get too tricky to manage without them. They do this setting up with great intent and enthusiasm 'this time it's going to be different'. Only rather like the dieter who decides they will never eat chocolate or so much as look at a biscuit the productivity seeker finds the system they have created takes too much effort to maintain so they end up resisting it or as is often the case resenting it. Accepting that we need something that is sustainable rather than some idealised version is key.

Observations about ways to help

1. **Types of control** – One of the challenges I hear when people talk about their workload management is that they '*feel out of control*' or alternatively '*I don't want to feel controlled by my diary or a to-do list – I need freedom to be creative*'. Control is a relative word and very specific to an individual's personal perception. One person's freedom to work on what they want is another person's to-do list prison. Have you objectively thought about what control means to you? And do you really understand what it is you are looking to control. We can control a car when driving we can't control the weather. As obvious as that sounds, the distinction when it comes to our productivity is less obvious but, in my view, just as important. [If the word control is something that jars with you, then try replacing it with 'manage' and see if that feels better.]

2. **Don't rely on your brain to manage your stuff.** David Allen, author of the book *Getting Things Done* talks about our brains being brilliant places for having ideas and awful places to manage them. Varying studies have shown our inability to hold information reliably in our conscious minds. Four to seven is a common number. This reduces when we are under pressure. Most people are comfortable that they will use some form of calendar to manage their date specific appointments from meetings to birthdays. And yet for many they choose to manage the volume of other activity in their heads or using incomplete systems. We can often find our beautiful brains remind of that stuff at the most inopportune moment.
3. **Big and small matter.** This next point links to the one above. Until things are clarified our brains find it hard to distinguish between the big and small. It's common that our brains remind us of things like *'you need to buy stamps to post Kelly's birthday card'* in a team meeting or a flash of inspiration about a strategic choice you have been debating with your team whilst unloading the dishwasher. We kid ourselves in both cases that we will remember these points and take action. Only to find another equally 'important' thought quickly pops into our heads to replace the last one. For some of us we have recurring thoughts that ping around like a ball in a pinball machine. Our brains won't let go until we have taken action or put the thought into a trusted place that we will see when we can actually do something about it. So having an approach that you can capture the big and the small commitments and then consistently engage with them, will free up more of your mental capacity to do things of meaning.
4. **Weekly review** – With all this stuff captured how do you ensure you are on top of what needs to be done and ultimately can see the wood from the trees. Sitting down once a week for a dedicated session to objectively assess what's been going on in your world and what you'd like to have happen in the future is a game changer for many people. Don't be fooled by the simplicity of this, it takes a fair bit of discipline to achieve this consistently. I know I'm guilty of deprioritising the weekly review when things get particularly hectic. And then I definitely regret it. The more consistently you are able to complete the weekly review the less time it takes. Most people I've worked with find the Weekly Review takes approximately 60-minutes. The Weekly Review is a topic I'll explore in more detail in the May leadership newsletter.

I hope this has provided some food for thought. As always, I'm interested in any questions or observations you may have.

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LEADERS LEAN BACK



Sitting in the back of a freezing cold military vehicle, we are parked up on the edge of a forest. It is the middle of the night; the skyline is lit up by moon light and there is no wind - it is deathly quiet. It is cold because we are somewhere within the Arctic Circle. I can now hear a raised voice.

Our new boss, Major C. is super frustrated and is berating one of my senior colleagues. He can't understand why we have not deployed into the wood, secured the ground, and set up our operation. We were a squadron of experienced leaders and managers, a small (some would say important) cog within 3 Commando Brigade. He had expected every one of us to have known our role and responsibilities and we should have acted without permission as soon as we had arrived in the forest.

My colleague patiently explains to Major C. that we are not bad managers, it is simply that our previous leader had insisted on making all the decisions for us and having total control.

We were to quickly learn that our new boss 'leans back' and expected us to act without seeking approval or authorisation. He trusted us to do the right thing and I never heard him raise his voice again, I don't remember him giving many orders either, he didn't need to.

I have always thought of myself as a sponge for leadership learning and because I got to work for some amazing people in my first career (and one of those people I still work for in this career) I was able to see what worked, especially in adverse conditions. I knew for certain this was going to be the approach I would adopt for my teams in the future.

Leaning back was going to be an essential part of our 'culture' (the way we do things around here) wherever I worked.

Five things a leader who leans back does:

- 1. They know what they want from their teams**
- 2. They recruit leaders – every team member is a leader**
- 3. They give control - not take control** (and it starts with you)
- 4. They lean back every day** – you cannot pick and choose, with one day being autocratic and the next day you are democratic just because you feel like it!

5. **Enables and Empowers team members** to use their initiative and be pro-active, to really make this principle real you need to have a '**no blame culture**'.

Please note: I often hear people say they have no blame culture, but do they? You only have a no blame culture if you have been tested on this and you can evidence that you have it - otherwise it is just words on a piece of page.

Why be a leader that Leans Back? Here are five reasons:

1. What happens when you are not there is how your leadership should be judged. If teams and your operation doesn't work in your absence, your leadership is failing.
2. You can't know all the answers or can be gifted in every aspect of your operation – allow your colleagues who have the technical skills to flourish and do their thing.
3. One of the most important leadership responsibilities and this should be your chief legacy, is to bring the next leaders through.
4. You want to get stuff done and you want to get it done soon.
5. Why on earth would you recruit and select outstanding people and then not allow them the freedom to make important decisions and act on them?

Fast forward 35 years from that night - I am the Managing Director and I lean back.

So how does leaning back work in my current company work? Dosh Ltd www.dosh.org is part of the Thera Group www.thera.co.uk . We support adults with a learning disability.

We have a Leadership Way and we share our philosophy with each team member. I wrote this in 2014 and it still holds true: <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2014/09/25/leadership-the-dosh-way/>

- Each team member wants to make a difference in a person with learning disabilities life, and that they want to take a leadership role within the company.
- As Leaders they want to support people to be more independent and have more control.
- Our default position is to say 'yes 'and when we do this it often opens new opportunities for all.
- We work within a culture that each of us is doing our best, so that when mistakes happen, we admit our mistake – we learn from it – I apologise – and we move on. We accept that mistakes happen, and (for Dosh) it is not about the mistake, but about how we react in a positive and urgent way to remedy whatever has gone wrong.
- Each one of us has a sense of urgency: In Dosh we have momentum! We are successful, but we know that we will lose that if we lose our momentum
- We all have a positive mind-set: "Optimism is True Moral Courage" – according to the polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton
- We have a passion for what we do, and we are passionate about supporting people with learning disabilities.
- Although our team members are based across the country, they all support each other with any challenges.

- As their Managing Director it is important to me that everyone feels invested in their work and It is something, I regularly check at the end of every 1-1 “are you still enjoying your job?”

We have self-organising teams within our company, giving control to our colleagues not taking control. This is called Holacracy and it looks like this: [Why Holacracy? - YouTube](#)

For 2021/22 we have made 10 commitments, and this is what they are: [Dosh 10 Commitments v2 - YouTube](#)

So, do you lean back? And if not, when will you?

Steve Raw www.leadershipintheraw.org



The mighty Dosh team celebrating their 10th Anniversary a few years go

I was inspired to write this blog post after taking in an excellent presentation: David Marquet speaking at the Army Leadership conference 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e754hUwPTal>

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"The real test is not whether you avoid this failure, because you won't. It's whether you let it harden or shame you into inaction, or whether you learn from it; whether you choose to persevere." Barack Obama

Hi Steve,

I came across this TEDx talk about impact and thought you might like to see it:

<https://youtu.be/9NV9tJj9kgk>

Thanks, Meike

(Meike Beckford – Head of Impact Management for Thera Trust)

Managing in turbulent times

Roger Whalley

In 1980 Peter Drucker wrote a book called “Managing in turbulent times”. He didn’t know the half of it. The last year could be rightly referred to as “turbulent times”. You have probably faced and are still facing situations which two years ago you couldn’t have dreamed of. And it’s still not over. Although we have a “roadmap”, a particularly silly phrase, we will have the residual effect of the pandemic for some time to come, maybe years.

The book stresses that of all things you must get the basics right. Everybody’s management roles have different basics, but you know what they are for your particular job. They are the things that without your input would descend into chaos. My regular readers will know that I do love my aphorisms, well here’s one for this month. “If it is to be, it is up to me”. Quite clearly placing the responsibility for achieving the objectives of your role is down to you.

I wonder how many of you could quantify in writing what the main objectives are of your role. I know that you know them and that you always can think about them, but can you be specific. These are the activities without which your job could not be completed. Last month I talked about cleaning your teeth. This is probably something you do without thinking and there are elements of your job which you do without thinking, but can you be specific about what these key activities are?

We are probably very good at setting targets and objectives for the people we manage but are you any good at setting them for yourself. You probably get them set by your boss, but can you quantify those which the boss hasn’t recognised? Those which only you can set. If you can quantify these and satisfy yourself that you are achieving them then coping with the turbulent times will be easier.

When you think of what we have had to cope with in the last year, the main difference is that we have had to cope with things which maybe we don’t completely understand. When the pandemic hit last year, I guess nobody knew what was going to happen. Politicians, medics and scientists ran round like headless chickens. As a result, we spent a lot of our time running around after them because we didn’t know what to do either.

It made common sense that the less contact we had with other people the best chance we had of avoiding the sickness. We learned that we needed protective equipment, to a level that we hadn’t needed it before so we kitted up as best we could and made plans to protect ourselves and others. In many cases these plans were unfulfilled or uncompleted. There is another, military, aphorism, “The plan is only any good until the first shot is first”.

The plans we had to implement were maybe a little strange to us, things we hadn’t done before. What these plans needed was change. Change in the way we did our job; change in the way we dealt with people; even change in the way we dressed. We coped with these changes very quickly, but we could have probably coped better if we all had a plan.

If we could have sat down with our troops and talked through the objectives; established what the indicators of success were; decided on the equipment and materials which were needed; set a time scale and signed off a plan which should get us to our objectives.

There's only one problem with a plan. The military aphorism that I just quoted is so very true. Which means we have to have a Plan B, and maybe a C, D and onwards. The pandemic caught us all napping. We didn't have the knowledge; we didn't have the equipment and we certainly didn't have a plan. So, we just sort of muddled on.

Eventually we put together a plan which would help us control and defeat the nasty little virus, but it took time. Whatever your objectives; whatever the job requires we all need to sit down before trying to tackle it and talk through with all the people concerned who can have an input into solving the problem.

The harder the problem, the more people you need to consult to get alternative courses of action to your own. Your plan may be right but one of your team might have a better idea. Ideas are not confined to the boss, everyone in your team might have a point of view to express and they won't be able to express it if you don't ask them.

Establish in your team a culture of teamwork. Get to understand what each can contribute and recognise that everyone's opinion might be different. You wouldn't expect your goalkeeper to score goals just as you wouldn't expect your centre forward to save a penalty. They each have their role to play. If people feel confident that their opinion matters then they will be prepared to come forward.

Maybe that opinion wouldn't work in your experience. If so then explain clearly why not and don't forget another aphorism, "We tried that years ago and it didn't work". The key words in that statement are "years ago", circumstances change and it might work now. It could be worth a try.

As we come out of these terrible times, we have to make plans for recovery. Change is certainly going to happen again. Look at our high streets. There are empty windows where familiar shops were that won't again have window displays. But maybe those empty premises will provide an opportunity for different entrepreneurs to try their hand. Already in my town we are seeing notices going up in shop windows telling us of the people who have vision and are looking for change. A shoe shop is becoming a coffee shop; a small department store is becoming a restaurant; all sorts of opportunities are being exploited.

We all need to have vision; a vision of the future; a vision of how we can benefit or profit from it. As a manager you don't have priority of vision, your most junior team member might visualise the solution because they see the problem through younger eyes. I learned this early in my career when the team I worked in as a very junior technician had a technical problem that seemed insoluble. I had faced this problem in a case study at college and when I suggested the solution to my manager, he just poo-pooed it as being unworkable. A few days later when the problem was solved, he came to realise that my way would have worked and saved us hours of work and pounds of cost.

Some managers feel that they will lose their power or control over the team if they ask for help but it is the wise, experienced, manager that asks for help. That help can also come from above. It is not a measure of weakness to ask your own manager for help. They might have experienced the problem before and could help with the solution. Even to ask people outside the team or chain of command can sometimes offer a solution. The key to all of this is that when times are hard as we have experienced in the past year help from anywhere is better than going under.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel that we find ourselves in, and it is approaching quickly but we have to be aware that it might be the headlights on the train coming the other way. There is always the temptation after a time of trouble to sit back and breathe a sigh of relief but don't forget to keep focussed. Remember the words of Winston Churchill at the end of the war in Europe "we may rejoice this evening and tomorrow, but the fight still goes on". He was so wise!

We are already hearing about the possibility of a third wave. This might or might not happen. But don't forget the five Ps, or maybe six? "Proper preparation prevents poor performance". We must not let our guard drop. Where you have responsibility for the health, welfare or safety of people you must still be prepared. Be prepared for the worst and be grateful for the best. In closing I remember well the mantra which I learned when I was a Boy Scout "Be prepared". I didn't really know then what it meant but in the years that have gone by I have constantly been reminded of it. So please "Be Prepared".

"Fortunately, the sky is beautiful everywhere" Simone Weil

BEING BETTINA'S DAD – BE MORE BETTINA



This evening as we were sat around the dinner table chatting (one of the pluses of covid19 lockdown) Bettina has excused herself as she has completed a task (her meal) and is now on to the next 'task' and we recognised about how we need **'to be more Bettina.'**

Do you know someone who has changed your life? Someone who makes you look at life differently and makes you feel and see so many things clearer and better?

A relationship that you have nurtured and benefited from that makes you feel so grateful and proud?

Over the last 33 years I cannot think of a time when a family decision has been made without considering what would be in Bettina's best interests. This could be about my first and second careers, our house move, holidays - even where we eat! Bettina (and her big sister) are the centre of our universe and we are happy and content because of that.

Bettina is a person who has autism (and a learning disability). Bettina is not an autistic person. Autism does not define her. Bettina does, however, define us as a family.

As a child, Bettina coped with the classic traits of autism:

- Poor eye contact and lack of facial expressions
- Delayed or absence of speech (apraxia)
- Does not understand questions and directions
- Repeats phrases or words
- Resists cuddling and holding

Patterns of behaviour included:

- Repetitive movements like hand shaking, spinning, or rocking
- Sensitive to light, sound, or touch
- Self-harming activities such as head-banging

Bettina overcame these traits through her inherent courage. This is a related story about Bettina's courage [Being Bettina's Dad: What is Courage without Fear? – Leadership in the Raw](#)

I have written this piece to celebrate Autism Awareness Week. I wanted to share with you how autism can have a positive impact on your life – not always being a negative impact – hopefully this short story will give you a small insight into our world.

Be more Bettina –Five things to emulate:

1. Bettina **never lies** – this is a concept she does not understand. She will always give you an honest answer. So, if Bettina tells you are pretty, or you are wonderful – take it as read you are! Not even white lies cross Bettina's lips!
2. Bettina **lives in the moment** and this how she has transformed my life with her mindfulness [Being Bettina's Dad: Bettina transforming my life with mindfulness – Leadership in the Raw](#)
3. Bettina **does not judge** others. 'B' takes you on your own terms. She does prefer to be around positive and confident people, but always accepts a person for who or what they are.
4. Bettina is a **passionate** person; she is loving and caring. It took years of being surrounded by unconditional love from her family and those who were significant in her life and now she is the very best of role models.

- 5. Bettina is Not tied to Social or Societal Norms.** Bettina does not follow fashion (if anything she is a trend setter – you should see the handbags she has chosen). Having autism means that Bettina does not feel it necessary to have latest clothes, join a club, gang, or group, play the latest music. Bettina enjoys Disney films as an adult (we like them too, have you seen Raya and the Lost Dragon yet?). Bettina likes what she likes and does not worry about what others may think of her choices.

Be more Bettina – 5 things that are important to ‘B’

- 1. Being Together**
- 2. Kindness**
- 3. Not having to keep up with others**
- 4. Not worrying about what others think about you (except for her family)**
- 5. Not concerned about prestige or status**

We want to be more Bettina, so this is important to us too.

And Five cool things about having someone in your family who copes with Autism

1. You start repeating and using Bettina’s phrases which make sense when you use them even if no one else understands your secret language.
2. Watching a favourite scene from a film twice or six times repetitively seems perfectly normal
3. Bettina will direct your attention to things you would normally not see or notice
4. Feeling very special and soaking up an enormous amount of wellness when you spend time in her company – Bettina is serene.
5. Being blown away as we often are as a family when Bettina manages to retrieve verbal language you had not heard from her before and it is in context. What will she say next to surprise and (often) amuse her family?

Plus, a bonus When walking down our High Street and being approached by a member of the public “Hello you must be Bettina’s Dad” and feeling very proud to say yes.

To be a parent for Bettina is to feel blessed. Her impact on our perceptions, beliefs, and expectations are immeasurable. The world is a better place because of Bettina, and I am going to ‘be more Bettina’ today.



My thanks to <https://www.verywellhealth.com/>

Steve Raw www.leadershipintheraw.org

A different approach to problem solving....

Phyllis Maynard (first published in April 2016 Leadership Pack)

When it comes to Leadership, we all have tried and tested tools that we use to solve problems. I would like to share with you one tool that I have used as a Leader and also in my everyday communication with others.

I was first introduced to this tool in 2010 when I took a Neuro Linguistic Programming course. I have since found it useful to use during supervisions and communication in my role as a student mentor.

Logical Levels

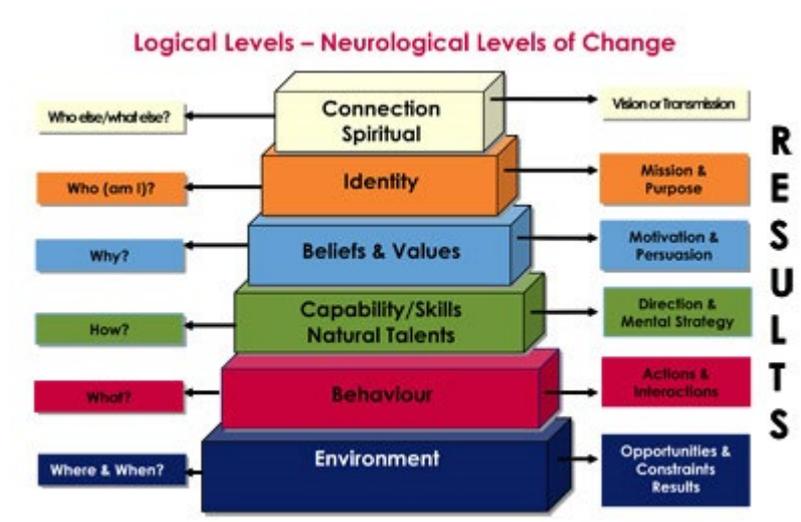
What are logical levels?

Logical levels are a way of identifying underlying structures and patterns in thinking about ideas, events, relationships or organisations. They help us understand what's involved, or what's going on. The logical levels form a hierarchy.

People often distinguish between levels when referring to their experience. E.g. "On one level the house burning down was a disaster, but on another level, it was what made me the man I am. Because I had to move away, I had to start again and that's how I built my own business and I've never looked back". One way of remembering the levels is that each of them gives us a different kind of information: it answers a particular kind of question.

- **Environment: WHERE? And WHEN?** This level involves issues or details of context. It may mean a physical context, as in a particular building, or a social context, for instance when with a certain group of people. I also include the when of it all.
- **Behaviour: WHAT?** Behaviour is what you actually do – or don't do. Issues on this level relate to what is happening or being done.
- **Capability: HOW?** Capability is about the how-tos of life – the knowledge, skills and processes that make it possible for one person who has them to find doing something easy and for another who lacks them to find the same thing really difficult.

- Beliefs and values: WHY? Our beliefs and our values shape our understanding of why things are possible or impossible for us. They provide us with a rationale and drive our actions.
- Identity: WHO? Identity is to do with sense of self. This could be our personal identity or a corporate identity – in either case, who we are.
- Beyond identity: FOR WHOM/FOR WHAT? This is the level which relates to a bigger picture or larger system where questions about some larger purpose come into play. For us as individuals this often means the spiritual. It takes us into questions about our mission. This dimension of mission and vision can also apply to groups and organisations.



What do logical levels do?

Logical levels give you a way of understanding:

- What kind of information you are dealing with
- Where a problem originates
- On what level it is being experienced or manifested (these may not be the same)
- What the 'real' issue at stake is
- What is the appropriate level for interaction or intervention?

If you are mindful of the key questions – Who? Why? How? What? Where/when? – in any interaction with others, or in relation to your own thinking, you can usually identify the logical level involved. This in turn enables you to do other important things:

- You can find out where a difficulty is really coming from, as opposed to where it seems to originate (for example, problems about behaviour, or environment, often originate from issues about belief).
- You can find out where the points of leverage are to change the situation. Most people will find it easier to change a behaviour if they can be reassured that it doesn't involve them changing at a belief or identity level.
- You can find small interventions which will bring about larger effects: For example, providing a water-carrier, coffee-machine or kettle in an office (an environmental change) is likely to draw people to it (behaviour) which in turn may help them create or maintain a sense of belonging to a department or team (identity).

Think of logical levels

- When you or others react to an apparently simple or trivial situation with more feeling than seems to be warranted. Almost certainly there's something going on at the level of beliefs or identity.
- When you are wanting to make changes in your life, or in an organisation. Consider at which logical level you are attempting to do this, and whether this is the appropriate level. Often organisations need to win hearts and minds – which means they need to operate at the level of beliefs and identity. Too often though they try a quick fix at the level of behaviour.
- When there seems to be more involved than is obvious on the surface.
- When offering criticism or praise. Criticism is most easily received if it is pitched at the level of environment or behaviour (and possibly capability), and least effective when delivered at an identity seems under attack. Praise is most effective when

- offered on higher levels, especially identity – for example, ‘You’re so efficient/thoughtful.

How you can use logical levels

Use them to monitor situations and to identify what the real issues are. They can help you find the simplest or most effective point for leverage. Use them to help in rapport-building, by respecting what may be involved for yourself or others at an unconscious level. Logical levels can help you understand situations that seem puzzling: Just what is the issue here, and what logical level is it at?

Use them to help you assess ‘fit’ – between people and jobs, between people and environments, and between problems and proposed solutions

Phyllis Maynard, PGCE, Coach, NLP Practitioner

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Reference: The NLP Coach – Ian McDermott & Wendy Jago

“To lead people, walk behind them” Lao Tzu

Why Some People Fail and Others Succeed

By Jim Rohn

[What if we converted our dreams into plans](#) and our plans into refined activities that would lead toward the achievement of our goals?

Related: [10 Tips to Achieve Anything You Want in Life](#)

If we have a sincere desire for progress, then we are compelled to find every possible means to implement all that we know and feel. We must find ways to demonstrate on the outside all of the value that we possess on the inside. Otherwise, our values will remain unappreciated and our talents unrewarded.

[Why some people fail](#) and others succeed can be baffling. Sometimes it may even seem unfair. We all know people who have a good education, the right attitude and a sincere desire to make something of themselves. They are good parents, honest employees and loyal friends. Yet despite their knowledge, feelings and desires, they continue to lead lives of quiet desperation. They should have so much more than they do, [but they seem to receive so little](#).

Then there are those who always seem to receive so much and yet merit so little. They have no education. They have a poor attitude about themselves and other people and are often dishonest and unethical. The only thing they seem to share in common with those who should do well but do so poorly is [a sincere desire to get ahead](#). Despite their lack of virtues, knowledge and appreciation, these people often seem to come out on top.

Why is it that some good people seem to have so little while the dishonest seem to have so much? Why is it that the drug dealers and the mob members and the criminal element in our society are driving Rolls-Royces while many are struggling to make the payments on their inexpensive compacts? If our desire to succeed is as strong as theirs, and if we have the added virtues of philosophical refinement and emotional sophistication, why are we not all doing better than they are?

Related: [Rohn: The Formula for Success \(and Failure\)](#)

The answer might well be that we do not work at [achieving our goals](#), and they do. We do not take all that we are to the marketplace and put it to work. They do. We do not stay up late at night developing new plans to achieve our dreams and work hard day after day to make those dreams a reality. They do. We do not learn all that we possibly can about our industry and our markets. They do. We do not make every effort to get around the right sources of influence, to associate with those people who can help us to achieve our goals. They do. While we are dreaming about the promise of the future, they are doing something about it. Granted, they might be doing the wrong things, but they are doing consistently and with an intensity and a level of commitment that would put many of us to shame.

Evil always rushes in to fill the void created by the absence of good. The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing, and unfortunately, that is what too many good people choose to do. It is our lack of intense, [disciplined activity](#) that has allowed evil to flourish and good men to flounder. If life does not seem fair sometimes, we have no one to blame but ourselves.

Imagine how different our world would be if we made a commitment right now to put into action all that we currently are, wherever we currently are, and with whatever we currently have. What if we all gave 100 percent to our jobs, families and communities? What if, starting right now, [we began to read the books](#), replace errors with disciplines and associate with people who have stimulating ideas? What if, starting right now, we converted our dreams into plans and our plans into refined activities that would lead toward the achievement of our goals? What an incredible different we could make! In no time at all we would have evil on the run and good would be rushing in to recapture its rightful place. What a life we could then share with our families—a life filled with challenge, excitement and achievement. And what an inheritance we could leave to the next generation—a wealth of virtue, integrity and substance with which to build a whole new world, and all because we cared enough to do something with our lives and to [put our skills and talents to work](#).

Related: [Rohn: 6 Ways to Act on Your Ambition](#)

Adapted from [The Five Major Pieces to the Life Puzzle](#)

Courtesy of the USA 'Success' Magazine which I highly recommend to you.

[Why Some People Fail and Others Succeed \(success.com\)](http://www.success.com)

Leaders are the ones who keep faith with the past, keep step with the present, and keep the promise to posterity. -

Harold J. Seymour

My Top 3 Picks from Ted.com

Each month I look for 3 presentations on Ted.com so you don't have too. Here are my recommendations for April:

How to make a profit while making a difference

https://www.ted.com/talks/audrey_choi_how_to_make_a_profit_while_making_a_difference

Can global capital markets become catalysts for social change? According to investment expert Audrey Choi, individuals own almost half of all global capital, giving them (us!) the power to make a difference by investing in companies that champion social values and sustainability. "We have more opportunity today than ever before to make choices," she says. "So change your perspective. Invest in the change you want to see in the world."

Inside the mind of a master procrastinator

https://www.ted.com/talks/tim_urban_inside_the_mind_of_a_master_procrastinator

Tim Urban knows that procrastination doesn't make sense, but he's never been able to shake his habit of waiting until the last minute to get things done. In this hilarious and insightful talk, Urban takes us on a journey through YouTube binges, Wikipedia rabbit holes and bouts of staring out the window — and encourages us to think harder about what we're really procrastinating on, before we run out of time.

10 Ways to have a better conversation

https://www.ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation

When your job hinges on how well you talk to people, you learn a lot about how to have conversations — and that most of us don't converse very well. Celeste Headlee has worked as a radio host for decades, and she knows the ingredients of a great conversation: Honesty, brevity, clarity and a healthy amount of listening. In this insightful talk, she shares 10 useful rules for having better conversations. "Go out, talk to people, listen to people," she says. "And, most importantly, be prepared to be amazed."

Perhaps the ultimate test of a leader is not what you are able to do in the here and now - but instead what continues to grow long after you're gone -

Tom Rath