

THE BLUEPRINT *BEHIND* THE BLUEPRINT!

THE CULTURAL BLUEPRINTING TOOLKIT™

A Structured Process for
Blueprinting Your Invisible Architecture
of Core Values, Organizational Culture,
and Workplace Attitude

Joe Tye

CEO and Head Coach, Values Coach Inc.

Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit™

Workbook to accompany the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit™ webinars

A resource from Values Coach Inc.

Trademark ™ 2013

Copyright © 2013 Values Coach Inc.

Values Coach, Inc.

Jordan Creek Plaza

Suite 400

PO Box 490

Solon, IA 52333

319-624-3889

www.valuescoachinc.com

www.culturalblueprint.com

Contact Joe Tye at:

joe@valuescoachinc.com

The following are trademarks of Values Coach Inc.:

The Twelve Core Action Values, Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit, Invisible Architecture,
The Blueprint Behind the Blueprint, Culture Mechanic, The Self-Empowerment Pledge,
The Pickle Challenge, The Pickle Pledge, Direction Deflection Questions
and Emotion Deflection Questions.

Designing a Culture that Makes Your People Proud to be Part of the Organization

The statue Self Made Man by Colorado sculptor Bobbie Carlyle is a brilliant metaphor for the Values Coach mission of transforming people through the power of values and transforming organizations through the power of people—and for the function of this *Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit* and the ongoing *Culture Mechanic* advisory service.

The tools, strategies, and great ideas included in this workbook, the six companion webinars, and *Culture Mechanic* will help your people be more effective in their personal and professional lives by carving away attitudes and behaviors they're not proud of and build upon the underlying core values that help them achieve their most authentic goals and dreams and be their most authentic best selves.

And these tools, strategies, and great ideas will help you build a more positive and productive organization by carving away disengagement, toxic emotional negativity, and counterproductive behaviors so that you can foster a stronger culture of ownership, which is ultimately the only sustainable source of competitive distinction (as we shall learn in this workbook).

Peter Drucker taught us that culture eats strategy for lunch. These resources will help you create a blueprint for your Invisible Architecture™ of core values, organizational culture, and workplace attitude—a culture plan to reinforce and underpin your strategic plan.



To learn more about the work of Bobbie Carlyle visit
www.bobbiecarlylesculpture.com

Values Coach: Helping You Build a Culture of Ownership on a Foundation of Values™

Values Coach is dedicated to helping organizations build a culture of ownership on a foundation of values. We provide the following services:

- ✓ Inspirational keynotes for conferences and events.
- ✓ Volume discounts on *The Florence Prescription: From Accountability to Ownership*, the bestselling book that is helping hospitals everywhere transform their cultures.
- ✓ Leadership retreats focused on the Invisible Architecture™ of core values, organizational culture, and emotional attitude in the workplace.
- ✓ The Ownership Challenge, a 3-day event that begins with a full-day leadership retreat the first day and a series of all-employee sessions and community events over the subsequent two days; includes pre- and post-event consulting.
- ✓ Consulting on leadership strategies for building a culture of ownership, promoting a more positive and productive workplace environment, and creating sustainable competitive advantage by capitalizing on the organization's Invisible Architecture.
- ✓ The Values Collaborative, a train-the-trainer program for participating organizations to share *The Twelve Core Action Values*—a comprehensive and systematic course on values-based life and leadership skills—with their employees and their communities.

Values Coach, Inc.

Transforming People thru the power of Values
Transforming Organizations through the power of People
319-624-3889 / www.valuescoachinc.com

Culture Mechanic

The Values Advisor Consulting Service

Whether your culture needs a complete overhaul or just a periodic tune-up, a *Culture Mechanic* subscription will provide you with an ongoing infusion of new tools to add to your *Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit*.

- ✓ The subscribers-only *Culture Mechanic* weekly newsletter on cultural best (and worst) practices, real-world observations, practical recommendations, and miscellaneous musings from Chief Culture Mechanic Joe Tye.
- ✓ Every other month you will receive a more comprehensive and in-depth special report, eBook, prerecorded webinar, or other original resource from Values Coach. As a subscriber, you will also be able to submit your requests for topics you would like to see covered in future newsletters and special reports.
- ✓ Periodic teleconferences for members that are also recorded and archived where Joe Tye will answer your questions, share stories and ideas from participants, and discuss recent research, stories of success and failures, and his own insights into values and culture.

All resources that you receive from your subscription may be shared with anyone else in your organization. This is the best investment you can make to assure ongoing and sustained progress in your cultural blueprinting efforts.

Even a Ferrari needs a periodic trip to the mechanic!

Your Culture Mechanic subscription will give you an ongoing infusion of new tools, strategies and great ideas to add to your Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit.

Onsite Consulting and Event Creation

If you would like to jump-start the Cultural Blueprinting process in your facility, a Values Coach consultant can visit you for a full-day planning retreat for your management team and/or members of your Cultural Blueprinting Team. While on-site he or she can also visit with all key constituents to describe the process and answer any questions. In addition, Joe Tye or other members of the Values Coach team can provide a series of 90-minute presentations (3 or 4 per day) to inform and inspire your people to take ownership for their part of the process.

Hardcopy books

This Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit Workbook is also available in a professionally bound soft cover edition. Call Values Coach for additional information, or visit the www.culturalblueprint.com website for details or to order. Quantity discounts are available.

The Values Collaborative

The Values Collaborative is a highly cost effective way for you to share the 60-module course on *The Twelve Core Action Values* with your organization. Values Coach partners with regional organizations to provide a centralized train-the-trainer course, and can also tailor a program specifically for you organization. *The Twelve Core Action Values* is a comprehensive and systematic course on personal values that has been life-changing for many participants, and that has helped organizations create a more positive and productive workplace cultural.

“The Twelve Core Action Values is like graduate school for the 7 Habits. This course is a great way to cultivate and nurture leadership talent at every level of your organization.”

David G. Altman, Vice President and Managing Director,
Europe, Middle East and Africa, Center for Creative Leadership

Dedication

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit is dedicated to Michelle Arduser, Director of Client Services at Values Coach (if you are a Values Coach client you know what a special person Michelle is). Michelle used every motivational trick in the book including cajoling, flattery, bribery, bartering, pleading, good-natured threats, and child psychology to keep me focused (Focus is Core Action Value #9 in our course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*) on the work of finishing this Toolkit. It is thanks to Michelle that you are now able to use this resource in your organization. I'm blessed to call Michelle a professional colleague and a true friend.

Acknowledgements

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit™ has been inspired by the clients we are privileged to work with, many of whom have asked questions like “what comes next?” and “how do we drive this deeper into the organization?” and “how do we keep up our momentum?” This Toolkit is our answer to those questions. We love our clients and it is a special privilege to work with you all. I especially appreciate the organizations that have joined us in the Values Collaborative (more than 80 as of this writing) and the individuals who have become Certified Values trainers (more than 500 as of this writing) and are sharing our course on *The Twelve Core Action Values* with their coworkers and their communities.

In his book *Great by Choice*, Jim Collins says that the most important luck any business can have is the luck of finding the right people, and in that regard I am one of the luckiest men on the planet. In particular, Michelle Arduser, to whom this Toolkit is dedicated, takes great care of our clients and tries valiantly to keep me focused; Thuy Do manages our finances, our website, and our webinar program—and in her spare time is working on her CPA; Sally Tye is a one-woman shipping, receiving, and graphics design department; Elisabeth Roush does our Social Media and writes for the *Spark Plug* newsletter, and is working on her Master’s Degree; and Dumpster reminds us all that a well-balanced life includes treats, naps, and play time. Happiness is being able to say “I love you” to the people you work with and really mean it, and in that regard I am also one of the happiest men on the planet.

Adina Cucicov created the graphic design for this workbook (as she previously did for the Values Coach workbook on *The Twelve Core Action Values*); as she always does, Adina contributed lots of great ideas for making the workbook even better.

Table of Contents

Click on a heading to be taken to that page

Introduction	1
Homework.....	3
Suggested process for using the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit.....	4
Great Organizations are More than Just Organizations.....	6
Overview of the Six Modules.....	7
Module #1: From Accountability to Ownership	10
Introduction.....	10
Culture and the Bottom Line.....	11
The <i>Real</i> Crisis: The Engagement and Attitude Deficit.....	12
The Journey from Accountability to Ownership.....	15
It’s not about money.....	22
Employee Engagement and a Culture of Ownership.....	22
Spark Plugs, Zombies, and Vampires.....	24
Disengagement negatively affects every aspect of your organization.....	28
Rewiring Your Organization’s Brain.....	30
Intolerance for toxic emotional negativity.....	32
The Left Brain Counts—the Right Brain Matters.....	32
Honey and Glue—because “recruitingandretention” is not just one word.....	36
Questions to spark your thinking on accountability and ownership.....	43
One more thing: How to know if your organization is in decline.....	44
Module #2: The Invisible Architecture™ of Your Organization	45
Goals for this Module.....	45
Invisible Architecture™ is the Soul of Your Organization.....	46
The Foundation: Core Values.....	48
The Superstructure: Corporate Culture.....	49
The Interior: Emotional Attitude.....	50



This Building is Never Finished.....	52
Questions to Ask about Your Organization’s Invisible Architecture.....	58
Module #3: The Foundation of Core Values.....	60
Goals for this Module.....	60
Defining Values Forces You to Make Choices and Set Priorities.....	60
Review, Revise, Revitalize.....	61
The Ideal Statement of Values.....	62
Overview of <i>The Twelve Core Action Values</i>	77
10 Great Ideas to Help People Learn <i>Their</i> Organization’s Core Values.....	84
Questions to Ask about Your Organization’s Core Values.....	86
And finally—your core values should lay the foundation for culture.....	87
Module #4: The Superstructure of Organizational Culture.....	88
Goals for this Module.....	88
Eight essential characteristics of a culture of ownership.....	90
Essential Lessons for Cultural Transformation.....	96
Questions to Ask about Your Organization’s Corporate Culture.....	115
Module #5: The Interior Finish of Emotional Attitude.....	116
Goals for this Module.....	116
The Invisible Ceiling on the Potential of Your Organization.....	117
Three important distinctions.....	119
The Solution to (Almost) Every Problem in the World.....	120
Questions to Ask about Your Organization’s Emotional Attitude.....	153
Module #6: The Four Dimensions of Values-Based Leadership.....	154
Goals for this Module.....	154
Leadership is above all about inculcating shared values.....	155
Transactional and Transforming Leadership.....	155
The Four Dimensions of Values-Based Leadership.....	157
What Transforming Leaders Do.....	163
Special Report: Presenting Yourself with Power.....	175
Conclusion: Making the invisible become visible.....	178
Culture Mechanic.....	179
We’ve got our cultural blueprint, now how do we raise the bar?.....	180
Bring Values Coach to <i>Your</i> Organization.....	182

Exercise List

Module #1: From Accountability to Ownership—Rewiring your Organization for a Culture of Ownership

Toolkit Exercise #1-1: The Accountability-Ownership Continuum

Toolkit Exercise #1-2: The Attitude Bell Curve

Toolkit Exercise #1-3: The Culture Assessment Survey

Toolkit Exercise #1-4: Transforming Your Vision of the Ideal Culture Into a Memory of the Future

Module #2: The Invisible Architecture of Your Organization

Exercise #2-1: Use the Invisible Architecture Schematic to begin the blueprinting process

Toolkit Exercise 2-2: Diagram the Invisible Architecture of role models and competitors

Module #3: The Foundation of Core Values

Toolkit Exercise #3-1: Write a values definitional statement

Toolkit Exercise #3-2: Clarify the functional parameters of your statement of values

Toolkit Exercise #3-3: Specify the operational and societal relevance of your statement of values

Important! Avoid the ultimate sin of boilerplate (or “boringplate”)

Toolkit Exercise #3-4: Do a Values Reality Check

Toolkit Exercise #3-5: Conduct a three-minute values clarification drill

Toolkit Exercise #3-6: Apply the Values è Behaviors è Outcomes Continuum Test

Toolkit Exercise #3-7: Help people make values-based choices

Toolkit Exercise #3-8: Help people correlate their personal values with the values of the organization

Toolkit Exercise #3-9: Establish expectations for attitudes and behaviors

Toolkit Exercise #3-10: Expect people to learn the values of the organization—by heart



Module #4: The Superstructure of Corporate Culture

Toolkit Exercise #4-1: Rate your organization on the eight essential characteristics of a culture of ownership

Essential Lessons for Cultural Transformation

Toolkit Exercise #4-2: Diagram Your Culture Plan with the Culture Mapping Schematic Tool

Toolkit Exercise #4-3: Do the 6-word culture clarification exercise

Toolkit Exercise #4-4: Recognize that culture is like a patchwork quilt

Toolkit Exercise #4-5: Know and tell your Big Story and the little stories that give it life

Toolkit Exercise #4-6: Reinforce culture with rituals

Toolkit Exercise #4-7: Utilize the power of symbols

Toolkit Exercise #4-8: Celebrate successes and good faith failures

Toolkit Exercise #4-9: Mind (and mend) the physical environment

Toolkit Exercise #4-10: Conduct a Metaphorical Move-In

Toolkit Exercise #4-11: Know when to be penny-foolish and pound-wise

Module #5: Interior of Emotional Attitude

Toolkit Exercise #5-1: The Passion-Performance Matrix™

Toolkit Exercise #5-2: The Self-Empowerment Pledge™—Seven Simple Promises that Will Change Your Life and Transform Your Organization

Toolkit Exercise #5-3: Take The Pickle Challenge™:

Toolkit Exercise #5-4: Help Your People see the Lion in the Mirror

Toolkit Exercise #5-5: The Janitor in Your Attic™

Toolkit Exercise #5-6: Help people ditch emotional baggage (e-bags)

Toolkit Exercise #5-7: Foster a PUA!—Proceed Until Apprehended—attitude about taking initiative and getting things done

Toolkit Exercise #5-8: Manage your reference groups

Toolkit Exercise #5-8: Determination and Brick Walls

Toolkit Exercise #5-9: Let people play to their strengths

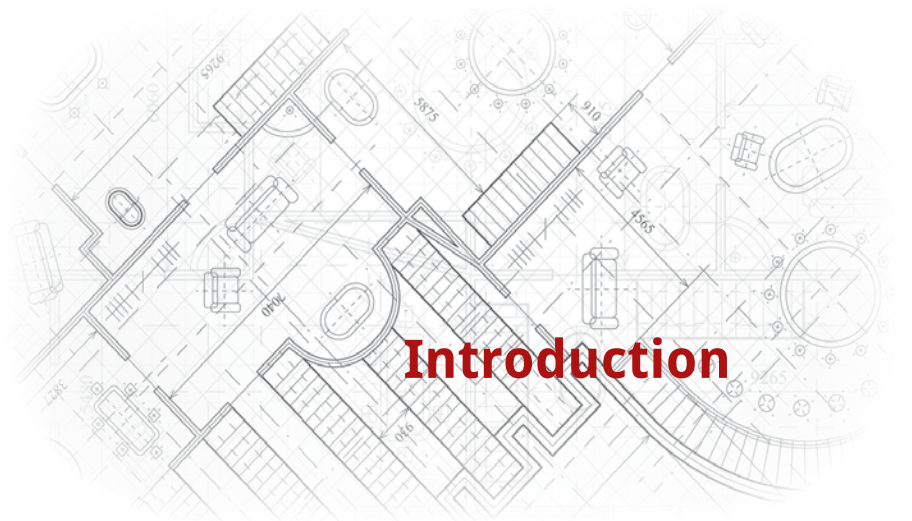
Toolkit Exercise #5-10: Minimize internal competition

Toolkit Exercise #5-11: Make the job description a floor, not a ceiling

Toolkit Exercise #5-12: Use management role-playing to teach critical skills

Toolkit Exercise #5-13: Don't tolerate gossip and rumor-mongering

Module #6: From Transactional to Transforming Leadership



“ ‘Tool’ is clearly a metaphor... to indicate tangible things you can do to get desired results. Every tool is a product of some good intention to do something. With repeated use, a tool will evolve and become refined. A good tool will have a central use but will also be usable for things other than that which it was intended. For instance, a good hammer could be used to prop open a door. The metaphor of ‘tool’ indicates any distinct, learnable process or practice that can be described and repeated to get an effect.”

David Sibbet: *Visual Leaders: New Tools for Visioning, Management, & Organization Change*

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit is a comprehensive and systematic guide to help you create a plan and a blueprint for what we at Values Coach call the Invisible Architecture™ of your organization. Using a construction metaphor, this toolkit will help you design a blueprint for the foundation of core values, superstructure of corporate culture, and interior finish of emotional attitude in the workplace. The Toolkit will not only help you think more clearly about your values, culture, and attitude, it will also give you tools, strategies and ideas for developing that ideal Invisible Architecture and the inspiration to use those tools.

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit is not a paint-by-numbers cookie cutter; it is, rather, a toolkit in the best sense of the word that it contains resources that can be used for a wide range of culture-building projects. The tools in this Toolkit are meant to be used repeatedly, not used once and put back in the box. And, as with any tool, the more you use them the more skilled you will become and the more effective the tools will be.

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit can be used for an entire organization or for part of the organization. These tools apply to a division or a department within an organization as much as they do to the overall organization itself. For that matter, many of the tools in this toolkit can apply at home in the organizational life of your family. Many



of the tools included in this toolkit can also apply in your own personal life to help you achieve your career, family, financial, service, and spiritual goals.

At any given time, you can use or adapt some or all of the tools in this Toolkit. For example, if you are a department or a division within a larger organization that works under established organizational values not subject to change, you can use the module on core values to develop guiding principles under the umbrella of those values, and then use other modules to define the culture and the emotional attitude that you want to cultivate where you work.

As with all planning, the process is as important, and usually more important, than the outcome itself. There is no one right or wrong way to use the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit, and in many cases the process will evolve in a positive way as you progress. Because people take ownership for what they helped to create, it is important to have as broad-based participation in the process as possible. And unlike the visible architecture, plans for your Invisible Architecture are never cast in stone, and the work is never done.

Each section within the Toolkit workbook complements one of the six webinars that are an integral element of this system. Each section contains links to worksheets, posters, and other resources; and links to additional resources, including the eBooks, workbooks, and other resources from Values Coach.

Our purpose at Values Coach is transforming people through the power of values and transforming organizations through the power of people. The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit will help you do both. Our goal is to help you build a stronger and more resilient culture of ownership on a foundation of values (both personal and organizational).



Homework

The Values Coach website resources page includes a wealth of additional materials that will help you build a more positive and productive organizational culture. This includes eBooks (such as *Never Fear, Never Quit*, *The Florence Prescription* and *The Healing Tree*), the workbook on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, webinars, special reports, and other resources.

Throughout this Toolkit Workbook you will see references, quotes, and excerpts from other books and resources, like the one below. In each case I've excerpted a passage that is most relevant to the point I am making, but I encourage you to select and read a number of these books yourself (or assign them to a member of your team to read and report back to the group). Especially in recent years there has been a burgeoning interest in corporate culture and workplace engagement, and no one single source has a monopoly on the best of the wisdom and practical advice.

“An organization that develops a strong and adaptive culture will enjoy greater loyalty from customers and employees alike. Cultures that foster ownership create labor and cost advantages because they often become better places to work, so they become well known among prospective employees. Compared with less effective cultures, they generate higher referral rates and more improvement ideas from employees.”

James Heskett, W. Earl Sasser, and Joe Wheeler: *The Ownership Quotient*



Suggested process for using the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit

Begin by having your leadership team watch the introductory video, discuss the questions at the end of this section, define your specific goals and—most important—make sure that you have enthusiastic commitment from this group. This is also the time for you to consider your specific process, and in particular who should be involved and the proper balance between top-down and all-inclusive participation.

Disallow Opting Out: The ultimate success of cultural blueprinting will substantially depend upon enthusiastic engagement by your middle management team. We've worked with organizations that have a “culture of optionality” that tolerates managers sitting on the sidelines or, worse yet, cheering for the opposing team by not participating or by actively resisting cultural transformation. Have the CEO or other senior organizational leader, either in person or by way of a video presentation, emphasize the organization's commitment to this process, show the introductory video, and lead a discussion about how the process will work in the organization. Make sure that any objections and concerns are addressed upfront, and ask managers to think about informal leaders from their areas who might be engaged.

The Cultural Blueprinting Team: We recommend that you select a Cultural Blueprinting Team to serve as a steering committee for the process. While the team might include representatives from the senior leadership group, ideally it should be comprised of formal and informal leaders from throughout the organization, or your part of the organization. It is imperative that there be close coordination and cooperation between the Cultural Blueprinting Team and the leadership group to avoid any misunderstandings, or to have members of the Cultural Blueprinting team feel as though they have not been supported or (worse yet) that the rug has been pulled out from under them by a lack of support from their leaders.

One of the most frequent questions we get asked refers to the specific process by which members of the Cultural Blueprinting Team are selected. Again, there is not a single cookie cutter approach. You can open it up to applications—the upside is you'll have a highly committed group and might well find leaders in the most surprising corners (later in the Toolkit I quote from a book by my friend Brian Jones which says that ordinary greatness is found where you least expect it—everywhere!). The downside of using the application process is that you will undoubtedly have to tell some would-be volunteers that the panel is full, and you'll have to turn them away. Then your challenge is to find other constructive ways to engage these people in the dialog and the process.



Or you can hand-select participants. The upside to this approach is that you will get people you know will be positive and committed to the project. The downside is that most of these people are already over-committed and you might gain less ownership from the rest of the organization. Most organizations do some blending of approaches: encouraging key people to take part and selectively opening it up to other applicants; enhancing participation with sub-groups; using town hall meetings or other methods to engage people who are not internally involved in the process. Many of the tools in the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit can be used to enhance organization-wide engagement.

Assuming a six month process, with one Toolkit module per month, begin by having the leadership team, including middle management, and the Cultural Blueprinting Team view and discuss the first webinar. After a kick-off session, where you watch and discuss the introductory video, schedule 6 additional sessions with the management team and/or cultural blueprinting team. This will typically be a two-hour commitment with the first 30 minutes including a review and discussion of previous modules and homework assignments, 60 minutes for watching the webinar, and the final 30 minutes for discussing next steps and making homework assignments.

Early in the process you should establish a cultural baseline using some of the tools provided, including the Cultural Assessment Survey, the Passion-Performance Matrix, and the Attitude Bell Curve. You should also establish a baseline for internally maintained data including employee engagement, customer or patient satisfaction, turnover statistics, productivity, and other appropriate data. The Toolkit includes downloadable PowerPoint slides for each of the six webinars. At the option of the organization, the webinars can be shown to employees in their original format and/or managers and Cultural Blueprinting Team members can tailor the slides to make a personal presentation.

“ If you subscribe exclusively to the belief that everything has to have an immediate return or investment, you will never fully comprehend higher math. It requires an equal commitment to such things as safety, training, loss prevention, wellness, and benefits, the so-called soft matters that are essential to sustainability but rarely create a short-term return on investment.”

Dan J. Sanders: *Built to Serve: How to Drive the Bottom Line with People-First Practices*



Great Organizations are More than Just Organizations

The most successful organizations pursue innovative and aggressive business strategies, but they also appreciate the aphorism that culture eats strategy for lunch (a saying coined by the late, great management guru Peter Drucker); they have attractive and functional physical plants but they also understand that their greatness derives from things that cannot be seen, not from beautiful buildings. Without using the words Invisible Architecture™ or Blueprint Behind the Blueprint™, they are as diligent in working on these as they are their structures and strategies. A few examples:

- ✓ Southwest Airlines flies the same types of airplanes and recruits the same pilots, flight attendants, and mechanics that are employed by every other airline, but has by far the highest employee loyalty and productivity in the industry.
- ✓ Zappos sells the same shoes you can buy in any department store, but getting a job at their call center is more competitive than trying to get into Harvard. The company went from start-up to a billion dollar enterprise in eight years, selling the same shoes you can buy in any department store, and has created a tremendous competitive advantage from its values and culture.
- ✓ Les Schwab sells the same tires you can buy at any other tire store; Schwab came to dominate the tire business in the Pacific Northwest by creating an empire of people on fire to sell you a tire (they actually *run* out to your car to welcome you when you pull into the parking lot).
- ✓ Starbucks built a global powerhouse in less than two decades selling the ultimate commodity product—coffee—at a substantial premium over what people could get it for out of a Folgers can. When the company got into serious trouble in 2008, it was a resilient culture more than brilliant strategies that set the stage for one of the most impressive business turnarounds ever.

Each of these organizations, and every other that makes “Best Companies” and “Great Place to Work” rosters, intuitively understands that the Invisible Architecture of core values, corporate culture, and emotional attitude creates the only sustainable source of competitive advantage. Strategy can be copied, technology can be leapfrogged, and your best people can be recruited away by competitors. But no one can steal your values, copy your culture, or compete with your attitude. Designing and building a



great Invisible Architecture is both one of the most rewarding things a leader can do, and one of the greatest legacies he or she can leave for those who come after.

The Great Place to Work Institute, which selects the 100 Best Places to Work for the annual *Fortune* magazine roster, says that the three most important determinants of being a great place to work are pride, connection, and trust. Note carefully: these are not qualities that can be developed with business strategy, technology, or physical construction. They are outcomes of your Invisible Architecture—values, culture, and attitude. You should be just as deliberate in designing this “blueprint behind the blueprint” as you are for the other things.

“ People will not desert a leader, they will only desert a boss.
People will not quit a mission, they will only quit a job.
People will not leave a team, they will only leave an organization.”

Joe Tye: All Hands on Deck: 8 Essential Lessons for Building a Culture of Ownership

When you are planning new construction or remodeling is always a great time to also be working on changes in your Invisible Architecture. You wouldn't move old furniture into a new building. Why would you move in negative elements of culture, and inappropriate attitudes and behaviors?

Overview of the Six Modules

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit features this workbook plus six one-hour webinars that are designed to inform, challenge, and inspire you to think about the ideal Invisible Architecture of your organization and to create a plan and a blueprint to foster that ideal. You can download the slides from each webinar and customize them for your internal communication purposes at the Client page on the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit website.

Here is a recap of the six modules:

Module #1: From Accountability to Ownership—Rewiring your Organization for a Culture of Ownership

In today's turbulent and competitive world, a highly engaged workforce and a culture of ownership are the only sustainable sources of competitive advantage. Mere accountability is no longer enough; accountability is externally imposed motivation (having



your feet held to the fire, being held accountable with rewards and punishments); a spirit of ownership is intrinsic motivation that does not require having someone else hold you accountable. This module covers general strategies to foster a culture of ownership, provides a simple cultural assessment tool, and challenges your team with questions to spark thinking for the next five modules.

Module #2: The Invisible Architecture of Your Organization

In this module, we begin the process of creating “the blueprint behind the blueprint” for your organization, and crafting a culture plan to reinforce and complement your strategic plan. Using examples of best and worst practices from multiple industries, we challenge your team to think in new ways about your Invisible Architecture, and to create a source of competitive distinction based on your core values, corporate culture, and workplace attitude.

Module #3: The Foundation of Core Values

Your core values should define who you are, what you stand for, and what you won't stand for. In this module, we use tools like The Values → Behaviors → Outcomes Continuum and The Values Clarification Drill to help your team appreciate the power (and in many cases the missed opportunities for building culture) of your statement of values. We explore how and when to revisit, revise, and revitalize your organization's values, and strategies to inspire your people to relate their own personal values to the values, vision, and mission of the organization. We look at innovative ways to package, present, and promote your values so they don't look like generic boilerplate (we call it boringplate) that could just as well grace the walls of a competing organization without anyone noticing. Finally, there is a brief overview of the Values Coach course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, which is the core course for the Values Collaborative.

Module #4: The Superstructure of Corporate Culture

It's often said that culture eats strategy for lunch, but most organizations do not have a culture plan to reinforce their strategic plan. This module begins by describing *why* culture trumps strategy, explores the culture-strategy interface, describes essential qualities for building a culture of ownership, explains why we need cultural toughness and resilience today more than ever before, and shares practical tools and strategies for fostering a more positive, productive, and resilient culture.



Module #5: Interior of Emotional Attitude

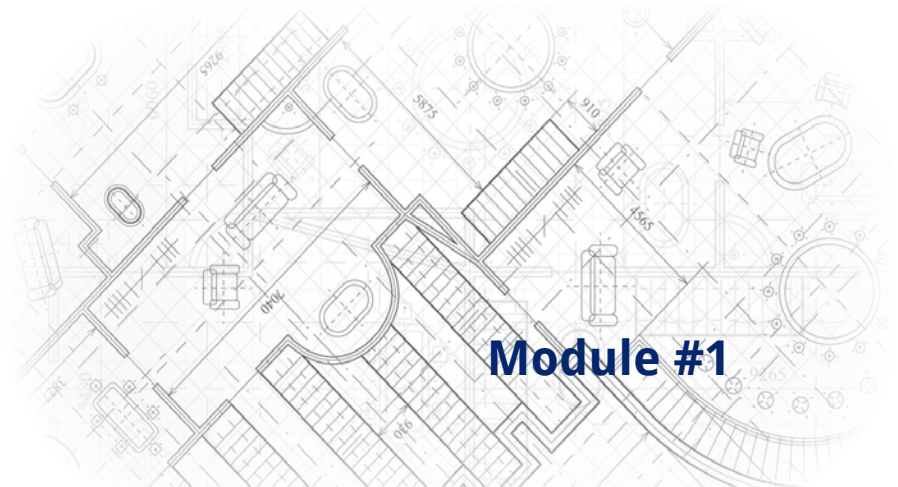
The aphorism “attitude is everything” applies to organizations as well as individuals. In this module, we explore how the collective self-talk, self-image, and emotional baggage of your people creates an invisible ceiling on the performance potential of your organization. We then share strategies for creating cultural intolerance to toxic emotional negativity, including The Pickle Challenge for a more positive and productive workplace. The goal is to help you eradicate toxic emotional negativity from the workplace, the way we not so long ago eradicated toxic cigarette smoke from public places (including the workplace).

Module #6: From Transactional to Transforming Leadership

In this module, we describe the relationship between transactional and transforming leadership and cover The Four Dimension of Values-Based Leadership: Character, Expectation, Fellowship, and Quest. Using real-world examples as well as those from fiction (including some of the greatest leaders who *never* lived) we consider various leadership archetypes. The module includes twelve strategies for being more effective as a transformational coach and leader and for building a culture of ownership on a foundation of values. In today’s world, we need leadership in every corner, not just in the corner office, so we conclude with a focus on fostering a self-empowering organizational culture.

“ Investing in people and building their skills and abilities raises their sense of their own competency and capability. To the extent people believe they are better prepared and more skilled, they will perform at a higher level simply because they have more confidence in themselves, including a belief in their ability to learn and develop that encourages further learning and growth.”

Jeffrey Pfeffer: What Were They Thinking? Unconventional Wisdom about Management



Module #1

From Accountability to Ownership

Rewiring your Organization for a Culture of Ownership

Introduction

In Module One, we begin the process of moving from a culture of mere accountability to a culture of ownership. The key goals of module #1 are:

1. Understand what employee engagement is and why it is so vitally important
2. Review the essential elements required for having a culture of ownership
3. Review key lessons for creating a vision and for building a culture of ownership

The webinar outlines three assumptions regarding your engagement in the process of creating a cultural blueprint:

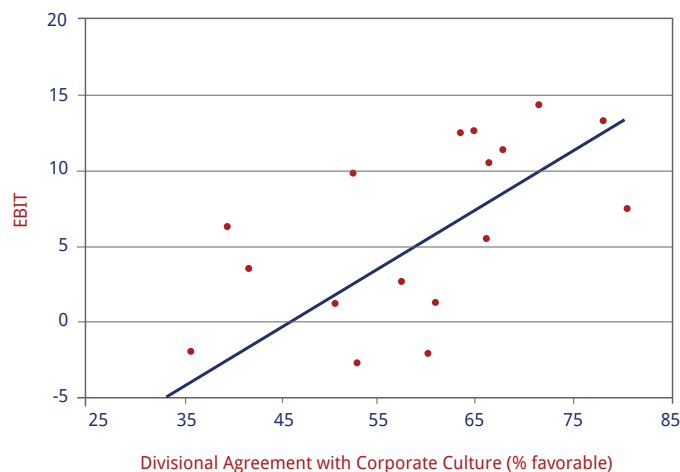
1. You really do want to create a culture of ownership where people feel empowered to do the right thing;
2. You don't want just another program or flavor of the month, you really do want to start a movement for a more positive and productive workplace culture;
3. You see this as both an investment in your people as individuals and as an investment in the overall organization.



Culture and the Bottom Line

It's often said that “culture eats strategy for lunch” and as we will see in Module #4 on the superstructure of corporate culture there are many reasons why that's true, but of course the strongest organizations have both a powerful culture *and* effective operating strategies. Culture and strategy should reinforce one another; the strongest competitive positioning is having both working together in a well-thought-out manner.

Short-term profitability and productivity is primarily defined by your strategies. Longer-term, though, culture has the greater impact. Your bottom line next year will be determined by your strategy; your bottom line two or three years down the road will be more substantially determined by your culture. In some of the most definitive research on the subject, Eric Flamholtz showed an almost straight line correlation between divisional adherence to cultural norms and profitability within that division, as shown in the following chart (from his book *Corporate Culture: The Ultimate Strategic Asset*). In his study, culture accounted for fully 46% of the best-performing divisions' bottom lines (defined as EBIT—earnings before interest and taxes).



“ Although culture generally changes slowly (except when there are certain major events, such as a merger or acquisition), it requires adjusting as the organization grows in size, complexity, and geographical dispersion of people. *This means that the culture management process must become a way of life in an organization.*” (Emphasis added).

Eric Flamholtz and Yvonne Randle: *Corporate Culture: The Ultimate Strategic Asset*



The *Real* Crisis: The Engagement and Attitude Deficit

Important: Before you read this section and jump to the conclusion that your organization—like all of the children in Lake Woebegone—is much better than the average on the Engagement and Attitude Index, look in the mirror and make sure that you are not wearing rose-colored glasses.

Several years ago Values Coach conducted an observational study at a client hospital that had about 3,000 employees. We asked participants in one of our courses on values-based life and leadership skills to simply observe and record incidents of toxic emotional negativity (complaining, gossiping, etc.) for one month. At the end of that period we tabulated the results. Conservatively estimating that the average incident of toxic emotional negativity occupied the time of two employees for a total of two minutes each, we calculated that about 15% of all paid hours in that organization were wasted on such unproductive and counterproductive activities—a figure in line with findings of Gallup and other companies that study employee engagement, suggesting that in the typical organization about 15% of employees are actively disengaged.

We then calculated an estimate for the total number of incidents of toxic emotional negativity in that organization per year. *Ten million times a year* people engaged in nonproductive complaining and gossiping that cannot but help to have a negative impact on employee morale and patient satisfaction! I must emphasize that this was a well-regarded hospital that achieved respectable employee and patient satisfaction scores and quality outcomes. As scandalous as the figure of ten million per year seems—10,000,000 events of complaining, rumor-mongering, and the like—that equates to just 1.1 per hour per employee, a figure that is not at all unrealistic—and one that most people consider about the norm within their organizations (if not worse).



X 10,000,000 =

Poor Morale + Reduced Productivity + Impaired Safety + Recruiting and Retention Challenges + Competitive Disadvantage



More recently, we conducted a survey of readers of our *Spark Plug* email newsletter asking these two questions: 1) what percent of employees where you work are highly engaged Spark Plugs, and 2) what percent of total paid hours are wasted on complaining, gossiping, and other forms of toxic emotional negativity?

More than 850 people responded—the results are displayed in the charts below. Nearly half of the respondents believed that fewer than one-quarter of their coworkers are Spark Plugs who are really engaged with their work, with their coworkers, and with the people they serve. More than 80% believed that in excess of ten percent of all paid hours in their organization are wasted on toxic emotional negativity, with nearly half of all respondents believing that figure to be more than twenty percent.

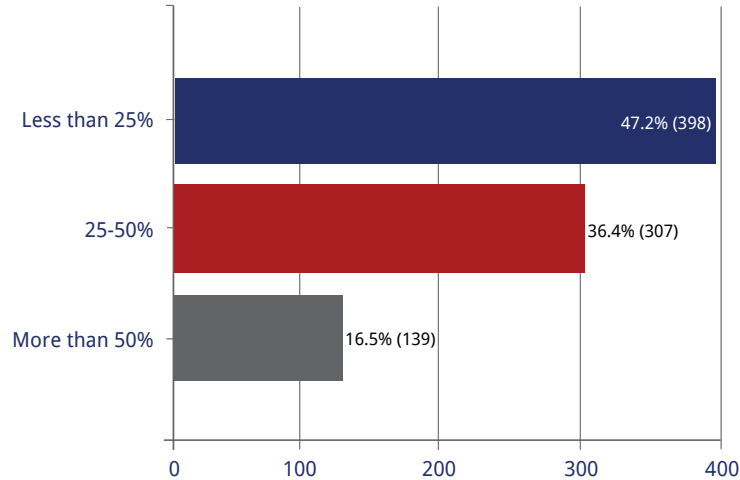
The juxtaposition of these charts shows the problem quite clearly—the configuration of the bars should be reversed (and in the most effective of workplaces they are). One of the best investments many organizations can make—in all likelihood including yours—is to work on reversing the shape of these two charts: increasing the number of highly-engaged Spark Plugs and reducing the amount of time wasted on toxic emotional negativity. This alone will have a huge impact on productivity, employee engagement, customer and patient satisfaction, competitive distinction, and ultimately (as we've just seen) on the bottom line.

If the engagement and attitude pattern in your organization looks even remotely similar to this, then one of your greatest opportunities for making the leap from good to great, winning a Baldrige Award, being awarded Magnet status, being recognized as a great place to work, and winning in the marketplace for great talent and loyal customers is reversing the picture depicted in these two charts.

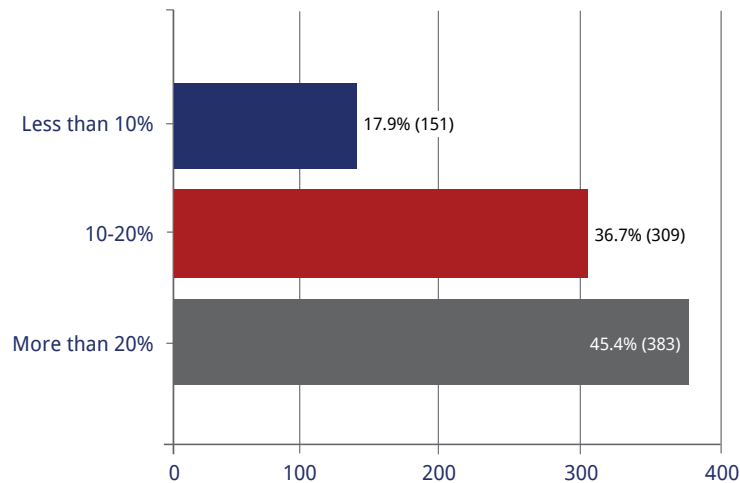
Left- brain process improvement quickly reaches a point of diminishing returns if it is not accompanied by right-brain attitude improvement!



What percent of the employees in your organization would you consider to be highly-engaged Spark Plugs?



What percent of total paid hours in your organization are wasted on complaining, gossiping, and other forms of toxic emotional negativity?



Results from the Engagement and Attitude Survey: in a great organization the pattern is the reverse of what this survey shows!

In his book *The Coming Jobs War*, Gallup CEO Jim Clifton argues that doubling the percentage of engaged workers in this country from the current 25% to 50% (still meaning that one of every two employees would not be engaged in their work) would be more effective in dealing with the biggest problems this nation faces than any other factor. If that's the case (and I believe it is), imagine the impact that doubling



the number of Spark Plug people and reducing the number of hours wasted on toxic emotional negativity by one-half would have for your organization.

That is one of the most important outcomes you will achieve by using the tools in the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit. A culture of ownership depends upon Spark Plugs and cannot exist in an environment permeated by toxic emotional negativity. As we will see, increasing employee engagement and reducing toxic emotional negativity will have a positive impact on every aspect of your organization's operations, including productivity, customer/patient satisfaction, employee morale and loyalty, marketing image and brand promotion, and product/service quality. More important, the reason those positive outcomes will occur is that people are personally more productive, more successful, and happier when they are engaged in their work and can break free from habitual toxic emotional negativity.

In a world where 75% of the people in a typical organization are *not engaged* in their work, an organization that can promote a highly-engaged culture of ownership will create an incredible source of competitive advantage for recruiting and retaining great people and for earning the enduring loyalty of "raving fans" customers!

The Journey from Accountability to Ownership

A culture of ownership is not created by economic interest, it springs from emotional commitment.

Organizations need to hold people accountable for fulfilling the terms of their job descriptions, and for not behaving in ways that are inconsistent with the values and mission of that organization. But in today's turbulent and hypercompetitive world, that's not enough to remain competitive, much less to make the now-proverbial jump from good to great. Great organizations are characterized by people holding themselves and each other accountable for their attitudes and behaviors as well as their performance because they have pride of ownership. Any time you hear someone say "that's not my job," see someone ignore a customer or walk by a patient room where the call light is on, or not stoop down to pick up a piece of paper on the floor, that person is just renting a spot on the organization chart. They're not taking ownership for the work itself. They are not thinking like owners, they are thinking like renters.



Differentiating Accountability and Ownership

Accountability is doing what *you are supposed to do* because someone else expects it of you; accountability springs from the extrinsic motivation of reward and punishment.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of accountability: “Subject to having to report, explain or justify; being answerable, responsible.”

Core metaphor: “I’m holding your feet to the fire.” (Does that sound like fun? No wonder so many people subconsciously go into avoidance mode when told they will be “held accountable.”)

When you break the word “accountable” down you get ac-count-able: able to be counted. But TQM guru W. Edwards Deming—the man who said that what gets measured gets done and encouraged clients to measure almost everything—also said that the most important number in your organization cannot be counted. How does one count pride or measure enthusiasm? You can certainly *see* these things in people’s attitudes and behaviors in the best of organizations, but they cannot be counted or measured.

Accountability is essential in organizations: managers need to be accountable for achieving performance and financial goals; salespeople must be held accountable for achieving sales goals; nurses must be held accountable for giving their patients the right medications; military officers must be held accountable for maintaining proper discipline in their units; teachers must be held accountable for assuring that their students are learning. Accountability is essential, but it is not sufficient. It is just the baseline, the price of entry.

Ownership is doing *what needs to be done* because you expect it of yourself; ownership springs from the intrinsic motivation of pride and engagement.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of ownership: “The state, relation, or fact of being an owner,” which in turn is defined as “to have power or mastery over.”

Core metaphor for ownership: “I’m transferring title to you.”

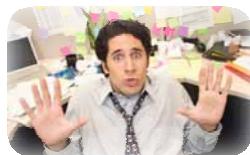
In Values Coach consulting engagements we often hear people say something to the effect that “we don’t hold each other accountable.” But when we press the issue, they’re



usually not really talking about accountability—they’re talking about ownership; they are really saying that people don’t take ownership for their work, their results, and their relationships. So it’s important to distinguish those things for which people can be held accountable by holding their feet to the fire, and those things for which they cannot be held accountable but which must be accomplished through personal ownership.

You can hold people accountable for:	But not for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complying with rules • Showing up on time • Discipline • Saying the right words • Meeting budgets • Meeting deadlines • Results • Competence • What they say at work • Appearance • Treating people with respect • Saluting • Their job description • Keeping their feet to the fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living values • Being emotionally present • Loyalty • Asking the right questions • Thinking entrepreneurially • Working with passion • Dreams • Caring • What they say at home • Pride • Honoring people’s dignity • Laughing • Their life decisions • Putting their hearts into the work

You cannot hold people “accountable” for the things that really matter.



Nobody ever changes the oil in a rental car!



Representative slides from the PowerPoint presentation for this module



Toolkit Exercise #1-1: The Accountability-Ownership Continuum

This exercise will help you visualize where your organizational culture falls on the spectrum between a focus on accountability and a focus on ownership. There is no right or wrong place to be, but it is important to know where you are—and to assess whether there is a gap between where you are and where you want to be. A mortgage banking company might need to be more focused on an accountability culture whereas a creative advertising agency should probably be more focused on having an ownership culture.

Because the life-and-death stakes are so high, hospitals understandably place a great deal of emphasis on accountability, and they are held accountable by countless outside agencies that monitor their performance in every dimension. But perhaps for this reason, many hospitals are over-weighted on the left-side of their collective brains, so strongly focused on accountability that it can feel punitive and actually interfere with efforts to promote a culture of ownership.

In many entrepreneurial startups and small businesses, on the other hand, everyone feels an incredible sense of ownership; they are thinking and acting like owners (and in many cases they are—they have an equity stake in the fledgling business), but the company lacks mechanisms to assign and monitor accountability.

Leadership's cultural challenge is to assess where your organization falls on the continuum between externally-imposed accountability and internally-generated ownership, and then to develop strategies to foster a more healthy balance between the two.

To create a visual picture of where your organization falls on the Accountability-Ownership Continuum, have people complete this simple survey by checking one box for each row, calculate each row's average and enter it on a blank form, then sketch a line down the page linking the filled-in boxes. This can be done for the entire organization or for individual work units within the organization; it is also a useful tool for assessing perceived cultural differences between work units. While it is subjective and anecdotal, having a sufficient number of people complete this exercise and then aggregating the results will give you a feel for people's perceptions of your cultural balance between accountability and ownership.



The Accountability-Ownership Continuum

Instructions: Think about the culture of your work unit. For each category, check the box that most clearly reflects your impression of where your area falls on the continuum between people being held accountable (on the left side) and taking ownership (on the right side)

Accountability	1	2	3	4	Ownership
Complying with rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Living values
Showing up on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being emotionally present
Discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loyalty
Saying the right words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asking the right questions
Meeting budgets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thinking entrepreneurially
Meeting deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Working with passion
Results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dreams
Competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring
What they say at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What they say at home
Appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pride
Treating with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Honoring dignity
Saluting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Laughing
Their job description	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Their life decisions
Keeping feet to the fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Putting hearts into the work

This exercise will give you a window into perception gaps that might exist within your organization, and also show opportunities for enhancing your culture. In the hypothetical example below, where the aggregate score is 1.8 on a 4.0 scale (heavily weighted toward accountability) one could conclude that people generally enjoy their work, care about the people they serve, and take a modicum of pride in the organization, but tend not to take initiative, contribute new ideas, or go above-and-beyond the call of duty except in limited situations. They tend to be serious (and



occasionally bored) about the work, and there is not much genuine laughter or spontaneity in the workplace. In other words, they are more focused on accountability than they are ownership. This suggests a significant opportunity to create a competitive advantage for both recruiting and retaining great people and for earning “raving fans” loyalty of customers by inspiring people to think and act like partners and not just hired hands.

SAMPLE
The Accountability-Ownership Continuum

Primary Focus on Accountability	1	2	3	4	Primary Focus on Ownership
Complying with rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Living values
Showing up on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being emotionally present
Discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loyalty
Saying the right words	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asking the right questions
Meeting budgets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thinking entrepreneurially
Meeting deadlines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Working with passion
Results	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dreams
Competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring
What they say at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What they say at home
Appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pride
Treating with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Honoring dignity
Saluting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Laughing
Their job description	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Their life decisions
Keeping feet to the fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Putting hearts into the work

Values in each box are an average of all employee responses: the aggregate score of 1.8 is the mean average of all of these individual scores.



The Accountability-Ownership Continuum

Primary Focus on Accountability	1	2	3	4	Primary Focus on Ownership
Complying with rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Living values
Showing up on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being emotionally present
Discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loyalty
Saying the right words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asking the right questions
Meeting budgets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thinking entrepreneurially
Meeting deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Working with passion
Results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dreams
Competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring
What they say at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What they say at home
Appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pride
Treating with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Honoring dignity
Saluting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Laughing
Their job description	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Their life decisions
Keeping feet to the fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Putting hearts into the work

Download this tool at the Client page on the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit website.



It's not about money

Merely granting stock options or creating a profit-sharing plan will not establish a culture of ownership. When it comes to creating corporate culture, that sort of ownership is emotional, not economic. We've all read stories of CEOs who get huge stock options and then, after the layoffs are done with, move on to the next big payday. People like the infamous "Chainsaw" Al Dunlap or Robert Nardelli (who was paid more than 200 million dollars to leave Home Depot after very nearly destroying what had been a beautiful culture) are not really owners, they're just renting a lucrative spot at the top of the organization chart until something better comes along. On the other hand, we've all known housekeepers who have an incredible pride of ownership in their work and in their organizations.

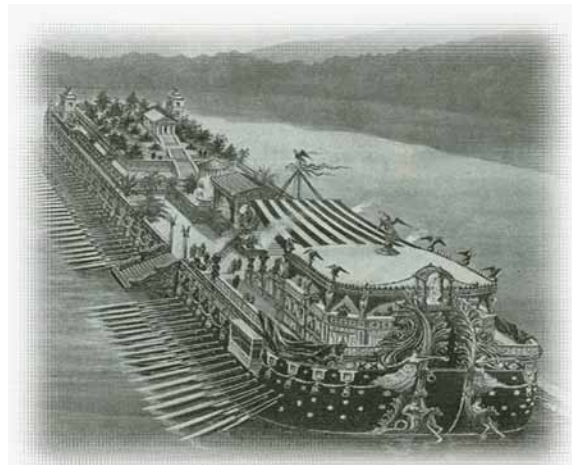
“ The old response ‘It's not my job’ is never an acceptable excuse . . . It's always my job, if the job needs doing and I am there to do it. I believe that human beings want to cooperate with one another but old patterns and reflexes keep them from the discovery of the delight of the give-and-take that comes from shared control.”

Patricia Ryan Madson: *Improv Wisdom—Don't Prepare, Just Show Up*

Employee Engagement and a Culture of Ownership

Imagine you are the captain of this beautiful galley ship, and you have 100 people at the oars. Of those hundred people, 25 have taken ownership for the mission and are putting their backs into the work. But 60 rowers are just going through the motions, doing what they need to do to get by, what's on the job description. And 15 of those rowers are actually rowing *backwards*—doing everything they can to impede the work of the hard workers, and calling them names like “overachiever” and “quota buster.”

I doubt you would be proud to be captain of that ship (at least I hope not), and suspect that the 25 hard workers would feel resentful toward the others who are coasting along, and toward you and your leadership team for allowing the situation to continue. Unfortunately, that is a picture of the





typical organization today. Gallup, Press-Ganey, Scarlett Surveys, and other companies that study employee engagement consistently find that:

- ✓ About 25% of workers are engaged; they bring their A-games to work every day.
- ✓ About 60% of workers are not engaged; that doesn't necessarily mean they are doing a bad job, but all they are doing is the job—and don't ask them to go above-and-beyond unless there is extra pay involved.
- ✓ About 15% of workers are aggressively disengaged; they are the emotional vampires who are never satisfied, and who simply cannot stand it that Spark Plugs are happy and productive.

Scarlett Surveys, a company that does consulting and assessments on employee engagement, defines engagement as follows: “Employee engagement is a measurable degree of an employee’s positive or negative *emotional* attachment to their job, colleagues and organization that profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform is at work. Thus engagement is distinctively different from employee satisfaction, motivation and organizational culture.” (emphasis added)

I’ve emphasized the word “emotional” in the above definition. You cannot hold people accountable for their emotions, and you cannot hold them accountable for thinking like owners and partners rather than hired hands. I would add this to the definition: “Engagement with one’s work is the key difference between being a great or a mediocre organization, and between having a great or a mediocre career—and life.”

The implications of these findings are staggering. The cost of employee disengagement is enormous both in terms of organizational effectiveness and productivity, and in terms of individual achievement and happiness. This also suggests, however, that organizations willing to make the investment in designing and implementing an Invisible Architecture that promotes employee engagement and that fosters cultural intolerance to toxic emotional negativity will create a tremendous source of sustainable competitive advantage.



Spark Plugs, Zombies, and Vampires

We call people who are engaged, not engaged, and aggressively disengaged Spark Plugs, Zombies, and Vampires respectively. In every organization, there is a bell curve reflecting the distribution of positive, disconnected, and negative attitudes of the people within that organization. One of the most important duties of leadership to honor and encourage the Spark Plugs; to wake up and motivate the Zombies to become Spark Plugs; and to marginalize the Vampires and, if they refuse to adopt more positive attitudes and behaviors, to direct them toward employment with the competition.

Spark Plugs (Owners): In the typical organization about one-quarter of employees are actively engaged in their work, meaning that they work with real passion and have a strong sense of connection with the mission and with their coworkers. Think of these people as Spark Plugs—the people who take pride of ownership in their work and their organization. When a Spark Plug walks into a room, he or she “sparks” others with their energy and their enthusiasm. They don’t sit around waiting for someone to tell them what to do—they see problems and they fix them, they seek opportunities and pursue them. Spark Plugs think and act like owners and partners, not like renters and hired hands.

A critical mass of Spark Plugs is vital to a culture of ownership. In our training initiatives on **The Twelve Core Action Values** we call participants Spark Plugs because that’s what we expect them to do—bring a spark to their own lives and to their organizations. Spark Plugs think and act like partners in the enterprise, not just hired hands. For Spark Plugs, the job description is a floor, not a ceiling; it defines the basic requirements of the job to which they add their own special contributions, not a limitation on the work that they will consent to perform.

Zombies (Renters): About 60% of today’s employees are not engaged with the work, with their coworkers, or with the mission of their organizations—meaning that they’re just putting in their time. They are “sleepwalking” through the workday without much enthusiasm, and without a strong sense of connection with the work they do or pride in the organization that pays their wages. They are hired hands, not partners, and make little or no contribution to innovation and improvement. Think of these people as workplace Zombies. They are renters, renting a spot on the organizational chart until something better comes along. In our experience, many of these so-called Zombies really want to be (and might already see themselves as) Spark Plugs. One of the most



rewarding experiences a leader can have is to help their people improve their performance (and their lives) by changing their attitudes.

Vampires (Squatters): Finally, about 15% of employees in the typical organization are actively disengaged, meaning that their lack of enthusiasm and commitment are on open display, and that they exert negative peer pressure on others to join them in the swamp of toxic emotional negativity. Think of these people as workplace Vampires. They suck the energy out of the people around them, and they suck the life out of their workplace. They sabotage productivity, customer service, and the brand image of the organization that is giving them a paycheck. Vampires often have domineering personalities, which means that they exert disproportionate negative peer pressure in their work units, and disproportionately influence the perception that customers and community have of the organization. They are squatters in the organization, drawing a paycheck while actually working against the best interests of their employer.

In order for there to be a culture of ownership, it is imperative that the organization's leadership have the courage to confront these Vampires and demand appropriate attitudes and behaviors, and discharge them if they do not comply.



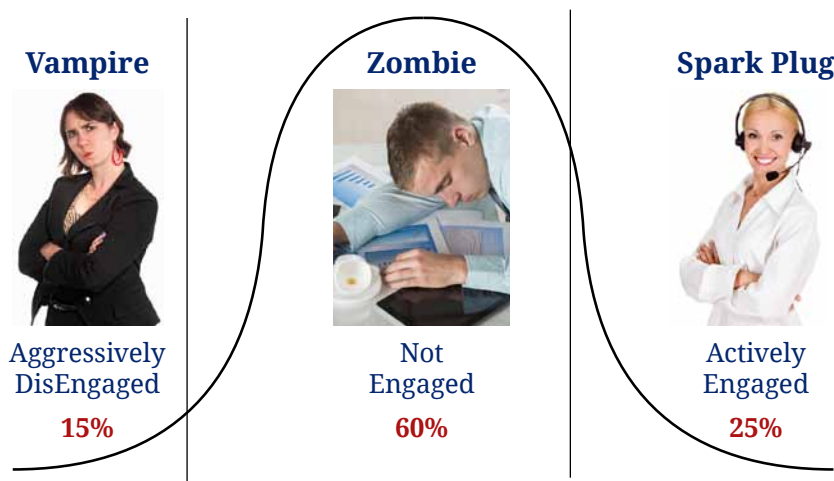
When Dorothy killed the Wicked Witch by throwing a bucket of water on her, she was afraid the witch's soldiers would be mad at her; instead, they celebrated by singing (Ding Dong the Witch is Dead! Hail Dorothy!!!). It's often the same in the workplace: when a manager finally drums up the courage to discipline or discharge an emotional vampire, people who might once have been thought to be a part of that vampire's negative little clique instead ask "What took you so long?"



Toolkit Exercise #1-2: The Attitude Bell Curve

Looking at the bell curve below, what percent of your employees would you consider to be Spark Plugs, Zombies, and Vampires? How does that compare with the averages of 25-60-15 ratio found by organizations that study employee engagement? Being as candid as you possibly can, would front line workers in your organization make the same assessment?

THE ATTITUDE BELL CURVE



Is the curve in your organization better or worse for the management team? If it's worse than the average—and especially if it's worse for the management team—you have a real problem on your hands. What actions can your management team take to shift the bell curve to the right by transforming Zombies into Spark Plugs and marginalizing the impact of Vampires by raising expectations, coaching and guidance, and (hopefully as a last resort) encouraging them to take their toxic attitudes to work for one of your competitors? As Jim Clifton said in his book *The Coming Jobs War*, a disengaged employee—and especially a disengaged manager—is a quality defect every bit as much as sending the wrong product to a customer or giving the wrong medication to a patient.



Attitude and Engagement Determine Perception

Gallup research suggests that people do not see the workplace as it is, they see the workplace as they are. People with a positive attitude are predisposed toward being intrinsically motivated and engaged; people with a negative attitude are predisposed toward rumor-mongering, finger-pointing, and avoiding real work. Gallup research also shows that positive employees are more likely to focus on challenges than they are frustrations, while negative employees actively seek out things to complain and gossip about. Positive and engaged employees are far more likely to perceive their relationships with supervisors and coworkers in a positive light, while for disengaged workers the reverse is true.

Furthermore, Gallup findings show that engaged workers are far more likely to be happy with their lives overall than are unengaged and actively disengaged workers; a culture of ownership is not only good for people's careers, it's also good for their personal lives and for their families. People do not see the workplace as it is—they see it as they are. The reality is that disengagement leads to a negative perception of the workplace and coworkers, and not that a bad workplace environment and unpleasant coworkers leads to disengagement.

People who are renting their spot on the organization chart, or claiming squatter's rights to a job to which they do not intend to give their best efforts—see the job description as a ceiling—a limit on what they are expected to do. People who own the work and take pride in their organizations see the job description as a floor—the minimum they expect of themselves, and to which they add their own individual efforts to make a difference in the lives of customers and coworkers.

“It's easy to forget what the measurements [that we make in our organizations] are measuring. Every number—from productivity rates to salaries—is just a device contrived by people to measure the results of the enterprise of other people. For managers, the most important job is not measurement but motivation. And you can't motivate numbers.”

James A. Autry: Love and Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership



Disengagement negatively affects every aspect of your organization

Disengaged employees exert a disproportionate negative impact on every dimension of your organization including:

- ✓ *Product and service quality:* Disengaged people don't go home at the end of the day and read professional journals or books on how to do a better job at whatever it is they do—they go home and watch reality TV (and their image of what work is like comes from cynical shows like *The Office*).
- ✓ *Customer and patient satisfaction:* Someone cannot be a negative, bitter, cynical, sarcastic “pickle-sucker” in the break room and then instantly flip an inner switch when dealing with a customer or patient, and people see right through the fraud. (We call them “pickle suckers” because chronic complainers look like they're sucking on a dill pickle).
- ✓ *Workplace safety:* A substantial proportion of workplace accidents and patient care incidents come from simple inattention—from being disengaged. In our course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, Core Action Value #3 is Awareness (the cornerstones are mindfulness, objectivity, empathy, and reflection). One of the most important things you can do to enhance workplace safety is to teach people how to be more mindful (and yes, that is a skill). One study showed that disengaged people are five times more likely to be involved in workplace mishaps.
- ✓ *Productivity:* Disengaged people don't work as hard or as smart as do people who own their work. At Southwest Airlines they “hire for attitude and train for skill”—and the airline has the highest productivity in the industry. One of Zappos 10 Core Values—do more with less—is a statement that inspires employee pride there but would be more likely to elicit a negative response in many organizations where the saying is seen not as a core value to be embraced by all by rather as a management mandate (or worse, a take-away).
- ✓ *Marketing image:* You can spend a million dollars on advertising and promotion and have it all go down the drain when one employee badmouths the company in a public place.



- ✓ *Turnover (wanted and unwanted):* A negative workplace will attract and retain negative people and repel positive people.
- ✓ *Job security:* This is the ultimate irony: when all of the above happens the company loses customers and revenue and the things that the Zombies and Vampires are most worried about—losing their jobs—becomes a self-fulfilling reality.

In his book *The Coming Jobs War*, Gallup Chairman Jim Clifton writes: “a miserable [aggressively disengaged] employee, particularly a miserable manager, is a defect—a defect for the company, the customer, and ultimately the country... Whatever the engaged do, the actively disengaged seek to undo, and that includes problem solving, innovation, and creating new customers.” He goes on to say that “Going from 30 million engaged workers to 60 million engaged workers would change the face of America more than any leadership institution, trillions of stimulus dollars, or any law or policy imaginable.” The implications of this for your organization are staggering!

If doubling the number of people who are engaged in their work could eradicate every substantial problem this nation faces today, imagine the impact it could have on your organization!!!

Work Disengagement is Life Diminishing

As harmful as it is for the organization, the real tragedy of employee disengagement is the impact on the employee him or herself (and most likely on that employee’s family). As psychiatrist Edward Hallowell stated in a *Harvard Business Review* article (December, 2010).

Disengagement [is] one of the chief causes of underachievement and depression.

Last year Americans spent more than ten billion dollars on anti-depressants, which are the number one medication being prescribed for employees through employee health programs at many organizations (most likely yours included). What Hallowell is saying is that simply by getting people to engage in their work and with their coworkers, we could dramatically reduce that cost while at the same time increasing the level of happiness. He’s also saying that being disengaged in the work is strongly correlated to having a dysfunctional life outside of the workplace—and you intuitively know that’s true, don’t you? The most negative people at work are also in many (or most) cases the



ones in awful relationships, over their heads in debt, and bouncing from one personal drama to another.

When an organization makes a commitment to promote a culture of ownership, it is often the most negative people (or their families at home) who end up being the greatest beneficiaries. When someone can make the switch from being a negative, bitter, cynical, sarcastic pickle-sucker to being a positive, cheerful and optimistic person the results can be nothing short of miraculous (indeed, “miracle” is a word we hear fairly often from people who have changed their lives by making a commitment to live their values).

Rewiring Your Organization’s Brain

One of the most exciting fields of neurobiology today is that of brain plasticity, which has to do with the ability of the human brain to rewire itself in response to internal and external stimuli. The first, and probably still the best, analysis of this phenomenon that’s written in language the average person can understand is *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force* by Dr. Jeffrey Schwartz (with Sharon Begley). Dr. Schwartz describes how the brain can rewire itself through the power of directed thought and self-talk—thus giving a scientific underpinning to the things that philosophers (and motivational speakers) have been saying for over 2,000 years: your thoughts shape your reality.



Shortly after reading *The Mind and the Brain*, I had a long conversation with Dr. Schwartz. I told him about the *Janitor in Your Attic* exercise (we will cover this in Module #5) that we use to help people rewrite toxic inner dialog, and asked if it was possible that if someone consistently confronted negative self-talk with a mental cartoon character of a janitor wiping out mental graffiti, they could actually have the physiological effect of hardwiring out self-abusive chatter. His reply was “Absolutely!” He said “neurons that fire together wire together.” Every time you think a thought or feel an emotion, there is a firing between two neurons and—as with any muscle in the body—the more that occurs, the stronger the connection becomes. And—as with any muscle in the body—when you change the thought pattern and stop making the neurologic connection, it begins to atrophy.



“ [W]e are seeing evidence of the brain’s ability to remake itself throughout adult life, not only in response to outside stimuli, but even in response to directed mental effort. We are seeing, in short, the brain’s potential to correct its own flaws and enhance its own capabilities.”

Jeffrey M. Schwartz, M.D. and Sharon Begley:

The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force

In the years since that conversation, I’ve heard from many participants in our values training classes that *The Janitor in Your Attic* is one of the most helpful things they’ve ever done for themselves. I myself have made huge changes in my own inner dialog with the help of my own mental Janitor (his name is Spike)—a process that is, of course, always ongoing. I am convinced that using Metaphorical Visualization techniques like *The Janitor in Your Attic* and *The Pickle Challenge* can bring about permanent rewiring of the brain.

Module 5 will describe *The Janitor in Your Attic*™ in detail, and include links to the “Morning Motivation” and “Evening Meditation” audio programs.

That got me to wondering: do organizations have brain plasticity? If you could change the collective self-image, self-talk, and self-belief of a critical mass of people within an organization, would that be reflected in a more positive, productive, and resilient culture? I now know that the answer for the organization is the same as it is for the individual: Absolutely! Not only that, rewiring the organizational brain is essential if you want to break through the invisible ceiling that prevents you from reaching your organization’s full potential.

There is an age-old debate in the psychology field as to which comes first—changes in attitudes or changes in behaviors. While my own personal philosophy is “why take a risk—work on both,” there is growing evidence that changing what psychologists call “keystone habits” will inevitably have an impact on changing how we think and how we feel (for more on this concept see the book *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do* by Charles Duhigg). More than anything, disengagement and toxic emotional negativity are the result of attitudinal bad habits. Many of the tools in this Toolkit—especially those in Module #5—are intended to help you foster more positive and constructive attitude habits, with the result being increased employee engagement and a stronger culture of ownership for the organization.



Intolerance for toxic emotional negativity

Emotional climate in the workplace is determined by what you expect and what you tolerate, and over time what you tolerate will dominate what you say you expect. A positive workplace culture begins with intolerance for toxic emotional negativity. As I said in my book **The Florence Prescription: From Accountability to Ownership**: “One toxically negative person can drag down morale and productivity of an entire work unit.” When everyone on a work unit makes a good faith effort to break the complaining habit (and yes, it is a habit) it changes everything. I know of one 12-person hospital department where someone brought in a pickle jar and, in a good-humored way, they started fining each other a quarter for every instance of toxic emotional negativity. They raised more than \$80 in one month—and you know they didn’t catch them all! Both patient satisfaction and employee engagement went from the bottom quartile to the top ten percent by the time of the next reports.

Changing the keystone habits of an organization will inevitably change that organization’s culture. Duhigg tells the story of how Paul O’Neill, who took over as CEO Alcoa in 1987 when the company was in deep financial trouble. Instead of focusing on sales, revenue, and profits (something that shareholders expected him to do) he focused on making Alcoa an accident-free company. As it turned out, influencing people to change habits related to safety ended up making the company not only safer, but much more productive and profitable. O’Neill’s obsessive focus on safety resulted in record profits, and a quintupling of the value of Alcoa’s stock.

The Left Brain Counts—the Right Brain Matters

To understand the difference between accountability and ownership, it’s helpful to use the left-brain right-brain dichotomy as a metaphor. The post-World War II era was substantially left-brain dominant. Organizations were run by the numbers and business leaders said such things as “what gets measured gets done.” They built organizations where the focus of performance was on accountability. It was a left brain world. Over the past decade or so, there has been (to use another overused cliché) a gradual paradigm shift toward a bicameral world where such right brain qualities as imagination, creativity, loyalty, and culture are seen as being equally, or more, important. This understanding is reflected when business leaders say such things as “culture eats strategy for lunch.”—an aphorism that was coined by famous management guru Peter Drucker.



Albert Einstein said that the things which can be counted don't always count, and the things that cannot be counted often really do count. TQM guru W. Edwards Deming—the ultimate numbers guy—said that the most important number in any organization cannot be counted. More recently, in his book *A Whole New Mind* Daniel Pink writes about the transition from the information age (left brain) to the conceptual age (right brain). We colloquially use the left-right brain dichotomy to describe personality traits or professional interests: left brain is the logical and linear bean-counter, right brain is the emotional and creative poet. But it's also a useful construct for thinking about culture. For example:



- ✓ *Left brain is linear, right brain is relational.* In sales, left brain is going for the close; right brain is building relationships. In healthcare, left brain is fixing a broken body; right brain is recognizing that we also need to heal a hurting soul.
- ✓ *Left brain is rules, right brain is values.* When people buy into a common set of values, you don't need to have a huge rulebook (for example, the famous two-sentence employee policy manual of Nordstrom that tells employees to use their best judgment in every situation, and states that there will be no additional rules); in the absence of shared values, however, you need to have lots of rules (the IRS comes to mind).
- ✓ *Left brain is management, right brain is leadership.* Management is a job description; leadership is a life decision. Some of the most effective leaders in any organization don't have a management title—they lead through effort, example, and influence. In today's complex and competitive world, we need leadership in every corner, not just in the corner office. In Module #6 we will go in greater depth into the transition from transactional leadership to transformational leadership.
- ✓ *Left brain creates plans, right brain inspires people.* One reason so many SWOT analyses fail to build upon strengths, compensate for weaknesses, pursue opportunities, and protect against threats is that the left-brained managers who put them into those ubiquitous three-ring binders didn't go out onto the shop floor



or up onto patient care units to inspire people to take ownership for “the plan.” For more on this see David Maister’s book *Strategy and the Fat Smoker: Doing What’s Obvious But Not Easy*. Maister says that the challenge of strategy is not so much figuring out what to do—e.g. quit smoking or lose weight; sell great products and give great service—but rather inspiring people to rise to that challenge.

- ✓ *Left brain optimizes, right brain innovates.* Most TQM and productivity improvement processes are of the left brain—making current processes leaner and meaner. Creativity, on the other hand, rests on a foundation of curiosity and courage, which are both attributes of the right brain. As important as process improvement is, without a right brain complement it can very quickly reach a point of diminishing returns.
- ✓ *Left brain can be measured but not seen, right brain can be seen but not measured.* What does ROI or the bottom line look like? That’s a nonsensical question. ROI and the bottom line are just statistical abstractions that can be measured but which have no physical presence. What do pride and caring and enthusiasm look like? You can’t measure them, but you certainly can see them (or their absence) the instant you walk into an organization.
- ✓ *Left brain is a given, right brain is a choice.* You cannot wake up in the morning and decide to be an accountant or a brain surgeon that day. Except over the long term, left brain qualities are fixed. But each of us chooses the attitude with which we approach our work, and the emotions we project onto coworkers. This is essential to understand because you can much more quickly and effectively influence choices (right brain) than you can givens (left brain).
- ✓ *Left brain is inert, right brain is contagious.* I once spent four days traveling with the chief financial officer of a Fortune 500 company; I did not “catch” one iota of chief financial officering ability (though I certainly tried!). But we’ve all seen someone walk into a room and almost instantly infect everyone with their emotions, for better or worse. Most right brain qualities such as enthusiasm, optimism, courage, curiosity, and passion are more contagious than flu bug in a kindergarten class—as are their negative counterparts of sourness, pessimism, fear, mindlessness, and cynicism.



- ✓ *Left brain can be left at work, right brain comes home with you.* You can let a briefcase full of spreadsheets sit unopened in the corner while you read a book or play with the kids, but it takes a real effort to leave behind the exhilaration of a great day or the frustration of a terrible day. Exhilaration you take home and share with your family, frustration you take home and dump on your family.
- ✓ *Left brain is what you do, right brain is who you are.* If someone moves into a new community, they might go to the yellow pages to select an insurance agent. But over time, they will stay with that agent because they know, like, trust and respect him or her as a person—because of who they are. Likewise, a nurse will take a job with a hospital because that hospital happens to have a vacancy in his or her specialty area, but they will decide whether or not to stay with that hospital over time because of the intangibles of the organization’s invisible architecture of core values, corporate culture and emotional environment.
- ✓ *Left brain recruits, right brain retains.* You recruit people with the “honey” of pay and benefits, responsibilities and opportunities for advancement, and other measurable aspects of the job. But you retain them because they’re passionate about their work, they love the spirit of fellowship in their work unit, and because they feel important. A carpenter might leave a construction company for more money, but he won’t walk away from a Habitat for Humanity project in a pay dispute.

An organization in which there was strict accountability without any sense of ownership would be a dreadful place to work. An organization in which everyone had a sense of ownership but in which there was no accountability would be chaotic. Today’s world demands accountability—but in a culture of ownership that accountability is inner-generated. In a culture of ownership, people *hold themselves accountable* because they buy-in to the values, mission and vision of the organization.

Quantum leaps in productivity, customer satisfaction, and employee morale won’t be gained by more effectively executing left brain strategies. Many of these approaches have reached, or are reaching, a point of diminishing returns. In the future, right brain qualities like creativity, passion, connectability, daring, and determination will provide the most important sources of competitive advantage. And these right brain qualities will be substantially influenced by the Invisible Architecture of your organization.



Honey and Glue—because “recruiting and retention” is not just one word

In the subtitle of his book *The Loyalty Effect*, Frederick Reichheld calls employee loyalty “the hidden force behind growth, profits, and lasting value.” In today’s economic climate, where many organizations are looking to reduce employee head count, it’s easy to lose sight of the fact that by all expert accounts, within the next 5-10 years there will be a serious shortage of trained and talented people. These projections are reflected in book titles like *Impending Crisis: Too Many Jobs, Too Few People* (Roger Herman et al), *Workforce Crisis: How to Beat the Coming Shortage of Skills and Talent* (Ken Dychtwald), *The 2010 Meltdown: Solving the Impending Jobs Crisis* (Edward Gordon), and *The Coming Jobs War* (Jim Clifton). Whatever short-term exigencies might be required to manage labor costs, responsible leaders must keep an eye toward recruiting and retention needs of the future.

In considering future needs for recruiting and retention, it is frequently overlooked that these are two entirely distinct processes—a fact often missed even by seasoned HR professionals. At Values Coach, we call this the “Honey and Glue Effect.” Organizations recruit with “honey”—the left brain inducements of pay and benefits, job title and status, opportunities for advancement and so forth. But those things do not earn employee loyalty. An employee who joins an organization only for these sorts of measurable benefits will eventually leave when someone else offers them more. Loyalty is earned with the “glue” of shared values, commitment to the mission and to coworkers, a spirit of fellowship on the job, and other such right brain intangibles.

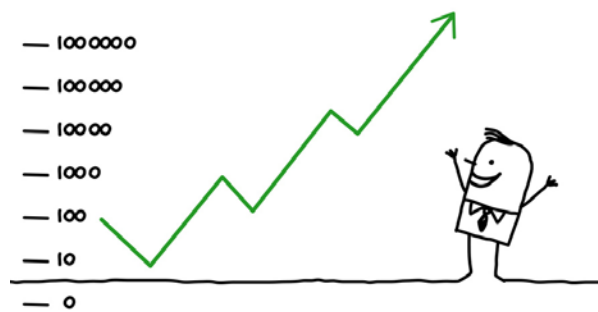
People with pride of ownership, who have bought-in to the values, purpose, and vision of the organization, are held with glue-bound loyalty. People who are only accountable must have their tenure purchased and re-purchased with the honey of pay, benefits, and status or they will eventually be lured by more honey (money) elsewhere.



Toolkit Exercise #1-3: The Culture Assessment Survey

Administering the Culture Assessment Survey to all employees will help you gain a better perspective on what people think of your culture, of the degree to which there is consistency in these perceptions, and areas requiring leadership intervention. A survey can be downloaded from the password protected client page at the **Cultural Blueprinting** website or by clicking on this link. Feel free to modify this survey to more appropriately fit your organization. Encourage as close to 100% participation as possible.

When you get results, how do you compare with results from the Values Coach client organization that are summarized on the second page following?



“ If your culture is clear, positive, and strong, then your people will buy into your ideas and cause and, most important, will believe what they do matters and that they can make a difference. That positive enthusiasm and energy will spread like perfume. On the other hand, if your culture is dysfunctional—chaotic, combative, or indifferent—employees will most likely spend more time thinking about why the people sitting next to them should be fired than getting fired up themselves.”

Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton:

All In: How the Best Managers Create a Culture of Belief and Drive Big Results



Organizational Culture Assessment Survey

This survey is meant to help you assess the cultural environment in our workplace. Please take time to provide an honest response to the statements listed below. Your input is important to us as we think about the “Invisible Architecture” of our organization.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
Our people are creative, productive, and enthusiastic about work and their own personal and professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
Our people are fully engaged in their work and committed to the mission of our organization.	1	2	3	4	5
Our people know the values of this organization, and are committed to assuring that those values are reflected in the way that they do the work they do.	1	2	3	4	5
Our people reflect positive attitudes, treat others with respect, and refrain from complaining, gossiping, or pointing fingers.	1	2	3	4	5
Our people assume informal leadership roles by setting examples of positive team-building and motivation for others.	1	2	3	4	5
Our people help coworkers, friends, and family members deal with frustration and adversity in a positive and constructive manner.	1	2	3	4	5
Our people are role models of positive leadership in representing our organization in a positive light for the community at large.	1	2	3	4	5
Our people reach out as teachers and a role models to the parents and children of our community, helping them develop the practical skills essential to succeed in today’s world.	1	2	3	4	5
Our people effectively manage change and are advocates for progress.	1	2	3	4	5
Our people feel a great sense of pride in being a member of our team.	1	2	3	4	5

This and all other worksheets, schematics, and exercises included in the *Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit* can be downloaded from the client page of the www.culturalblueprint.com website.



Sample Results from a Values Coach Client

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
Our people are creative, productive, and enthusiastic about work and their own personal and professional development. 3.29 (66)	1	2	3	4 5
Our people are fully engaged in their work and committed to the mission of our organization. 3.22 (64)	1	2	3	4 5
Our people know the values of this organization, and are committed to assuring that those values are reflected in the way that they do the work they do. 3.33 (67)	1	2	3	4 5
Our people reflect positive attitudes, treat others with respect, and refrain from complaining, gossiping, or pointing fingers. 2.75 (55)	1	2	3	4 5
Our people assume informal leadership roles by setting examples of positive team-building and motivation for others. 3.23 (65)	1	2	3	4 5
Our people help coworkers, friends, and family members deal with frustration and adversity in a positive and constructive manner. 3.78 (76)	1	2	3	4 5
Our people are role models of positive leadership in representing our organization in a positive light for the community at large. 3.58 (72)	1	2	3	4 5
Our people reach out as teachers and a role models to the parents and children of our community, helping them develop the practical skills essential to succeed in today's world. 3.54 (71)	1	2	3	4 5
Our people effectively manage change and are advocates for progress. 3.37 (67)	1	2	3	4 5
Our people feel a great sense of pride in being a member of our team. 3.56 (71)	1	2	3	4 5

Overall Average 3.39 (68)

Modal response is circled; average and percentile rankings in bold.

You can download this exercise from the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit website.



Interpreting the results

When the leadership team saw the 3.39 overall score, they were disappointed but not surprised. People were especially concerned with average response of just 2.75 on the fourth item that reads: “Our people reflect positive attitudes, treat others with respect, and refrain from complaining, gossiping, or pointing fingers.” They were also concerned that they had not achieved an aggregate score higher than 4.0 on any single category. Here are a few other observations that were made during the debriefing conversation:

- They do best on elements related to being proud of the organization and supportive of coworkers, but still with significant room for improvement.
- The biggest challenges related to attitude in the workplace. In the discussion on this subject they frequently used phrases like “disengaged” and “burned out.”
- This organization has just four core values that spell out a simple and easy acronym, yet based on this survey a substantial proportion of employees did not know those values. (In fact, fewer than half of the participants in a management retreat knew those values by heart!).

This is an organization with an excellent reputation and solid customer satisfaction scores. Just think how much better they would be if their scores on these employee surveys were all in the 4.0+ range!

How do you think the people who work in your organization will rate your culture on these questions, and how will you compare with this organization?



Toolkit Exercise #1-4: Transforming Your Vision of the Ideal Culture into a Memory of the Future

The webinar for Module #1 describes the 6-A's for creating a "Memory of the Future" for your ideal Invisible Architecture. This is an ideal group exercise that can be conducted as follows. In several sentences, how would you describe each of the six "A's" for your organization (or for your part of the organization):

Aspiration: What are the one or two things you most aspire to be great at? Avoiding the use of boilerplate ("We aspire to be Best in Class, blah, blah, blah, . . ."), describe what the culture of your organization would be if you could wave a magic wand and make it happen.

Articulation: How do you use values statements, mission statements, and informal dialogue to articulate that dream? How can you use written documents, graphic images, informal dialogue such as town hall meetings, and other communication methods to articulate that vision and to gain input and ownership for it.

Affirmation: In Module #5 we will discuss the power of affirmation for personal transformation; for purposes of creating the ideal culture for your organization, what communication tools can you use to create positive belief in the inevitability of that vision unfolding? How do you use management reports, town hall meetings, screen savers, and other communication vehicles to affirm that dream? How assertive are you in asking people to participate in fostering a more positive culture, and holding them accountable for it?

Asking: In their book *The Aladdin Factor*, Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen say that the answer will always be yes if you ask the right question of the right person at the right time (this is what they call The Aladdin Factor). Any significant accomplishment will require you to ask others for help. Whose help do you need to achieve positive culture change and how (and when) will you ask them for that help?

Action: What are five actions you can take right now to galvanize cultural transformation, and what are five actions you could take to sustain your momentum (*The Self-Empowerment Pledge* is an excellent tool for both).



Adapting: What challenges, both external and internal, can you anticipate that might affect, in either a positive or negative way, the process of bringing about this transformation? As Yogi Berra reminded us, the future ain't what it used to be!



An affirmation bulletin board featuring The Self-Empowerment Pledge and the Never Fear, Never Quit mini-poster from Values Coach at Alverno Clinical Laboratories in Hammond, Indiana

In the webinar for this module I describe an exercise we often do in workshops to help people turn personal goals and dreams into their own Memory of the Future. I have them use colored markers to draw a picture of that dream on the front of a t-shirt so they can wear it next to their hearts. This exercise can be easily adapted to serve as a catalyst for brainstorming sessions on visualizing the ideal culture of your organization. The back of the t-shirt has good advice for every one of us:

**Define your future by your dreams and not by your memories;
by your hopes and not by your fears**



Questions to spark your thinking on accountability and ownership

“ The way that we pose our questions often illusorily limits our responses... The way we think our thoughts illusorily limits us to a perspective of either/or.”

Gary Zukav: *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*

- ✓ It's not accountability *or* ownership; to be a great organization you need both. As an organization, how good a job do you do of holding people accountable for performance expectations? How good a job do your people do for taking ownership for their attitudes, behaviors, relationships and results?
- ✓ What is the biggest barrier in your organization to enhancing employee engagement?
- ✓ What policies or procedures get in the way of increasing employee engagement, and how can you go about dismantling those that are unnecessary (or not legally required)?
- ✓ Working toward a culture of ownership where people are encouraged and empowered to take initiative is often a chicken-and-egg process in which managers must give up control to people who have not yet shown that they can or will accept responsibility; what are first steps you can take to get that ball rolling?
- ✓ Earlier Gallup chairman Jim Clifton was quoted as saying that doubling the number of engaged workers would eliminate every serious problem in the country; what would be the impact on your organization of doubling the number of Spark Plug people?
- ✓ What is the single most important step you can take to double the number of Spark Plug people in your organization?
- ✓ Do you have a consistent management approach to dealing with people who have acceptable, or even excellent, technical skills but who poison the workplace environment with toxic emotional negativity?



- ✓ Do you have a culture of optionality in which people who do not buy into the values or live according to your cultural expectations are allowed to draw a paycheck because they get the work done (or because they warm a chair in the break room)?
- ✓ How much of your turnover is the result of good people leaving for better opportunities vs. poor performers or people with a poor attitude being asked to leave? What does this tell you about the accountability level in your organization?

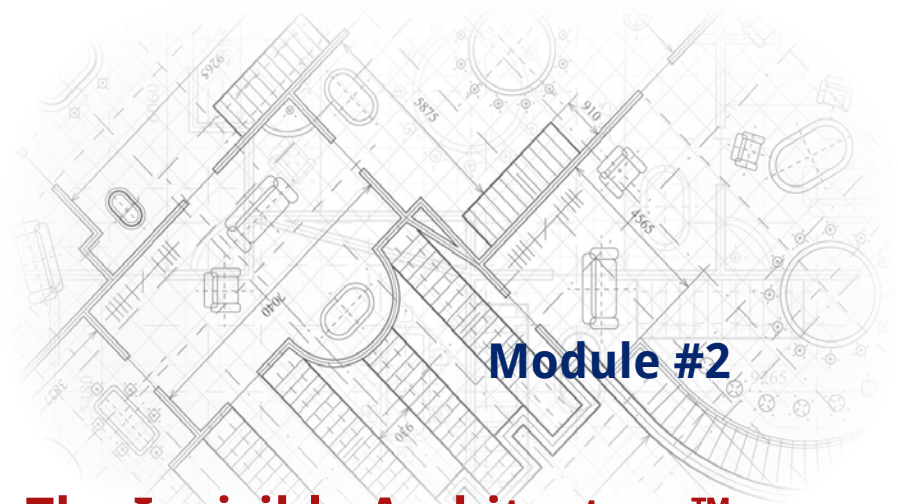
One more thing: How to know if your organization is in decline

In his book *How the Mighty Fall* Jim Collins wrote that you know a company is in Stage 4 decline (the stage just before the slide into oblivion or irrelevance) when “people cannot easily articulate what the company stands for; core values have eroded to the point of irrelevance; the organization has become ‘just another place to work’, a place to get a paycheck; people lose faith in their ability to triumph and prevail. Instead of passionately believing in the organization’s core values and purpose, people become distrustful, regarding visions and values as little more than PR and rhetoric.”

Many if not most of the business scandals of the past decade were not so much technical or strategic failures as they were the consequence of betrayed values and flawed cultures. A slide in the webinar for Module #2 on Core Values lists more than twenty significant corporate scandals that were the result of core values having eroded—and in many cases, as Collins would have predicted, those companies are either no longer in existence (e.g. Enron, WorldCom, etc.) or are struggling to restore their previous luster (e.g. Hewlett-Packard, Johnson & Johnson, etc.).

“ An absence of overriding personal ambition together with shrewd common sense are among the essential components of wisdom... [There are two common] characteristics of folly: it often does not spring from a great design, and its consequences are frequently a surprise. The folly lies in persisting thereafter.”

Barbara Tuchman: *The March of Folly*



The Invisible Architecture™ of Your Organization

Goals for this Module

Objective #1: Discuss why your Invisible Architecture is more important than visible buildings in creating lasting impressions on people.

Objective #2: Overview the foundation of core values, superstructure of corporate culture, and interior of workplace attitudes.

Objective #3: Cover 8 essential lessons for building a culture of ownership from legendary leaders who did it.

Objective #4: Share practical tools for fostering a more positive and productive workplace (in other words, more homework).

Important point: The concepts and strategies we'll cover can apply to a department or division as well as the entire organization. Furthermore, if you substitute the words "family" or "community" for "organization," you will find that they apply in those settings as well.



Invisible Architecture™ is the Soul of Your Organization

Invisible Architecture is to the soul of your organization what physical architecture is to its body. Invisible Architecture, not the buildings, determines whether you are a good organization, a great organization, or just another organization. Visible architecture creates first impressions; Invisible Architecture creates lasting impressions.



“ [Growth outliers—organizations that achieve outstanding growth over an extended period of time] focus management attention on culture and shared values. We found (as have others who study high-performing organizations) that the outliers on our list pay close attention to values, culture, and alignment. What does that mean in practice? We saw significant investments in creating an appropriate corporate culture, in employee training, and in executive development among these companies... These organizations invest seriously in corporate values, which their leaders backup through meaningful symbolic actions.”

Rita Gunther McGrath: *"How the Growth Outliers Do It"*

Harvard Business Review, January-February, 2012

The Blueprint *Behind* the Blueprint

A person's immediate impression upon approaching any organization—be it a business, a school, a hospital, or a government agency—will be created by the physical



architecture. They will have a very different impression if you're located in a fancy new office building with a fountain in the lobby than if you're located in a rehabilitated warehouse down at dockside. Knowing this, you've doubtless put a lot of thought into the design and furnishing of your space, probably with professional help to make sure you get the details just right.

But whether or not they become a loyal customer or employee will not be determined by the design and décor of the building, will it? Quite to the contrary, whether or not they continue to patronize, or work for, the organization, and recommend it to friends and neighbors, will be almost solely determined by things that cannot be seen—by what we call the “Invisible Architecture.” Ironically, we put incredibly detailed attention into the physical design and construction of our buildings—every single electrical outlet, doorknob, and ceiling panel is included in a blueprint—and then allow the invisible architecture to evolve haphazardly, without plan or direction. You would not so much as remodel a bathroom without some sort of blueprint, yet it is a rare organization that has a cultural blueprint as well thought out as the plans they have for a new addition. And while every organization has a strategic plan, it is exceedingly rare to see an organization with an equally detailed culture plan.

When Starbucks got into serious financial trouble several years ago, they recalled founder Howard Schultz to the CEO office. Since then, the company has staged one of the more impressive organizational turnarounds ever. In an article he wrote for the *Harvard Business Review*, Schultz made this comment:

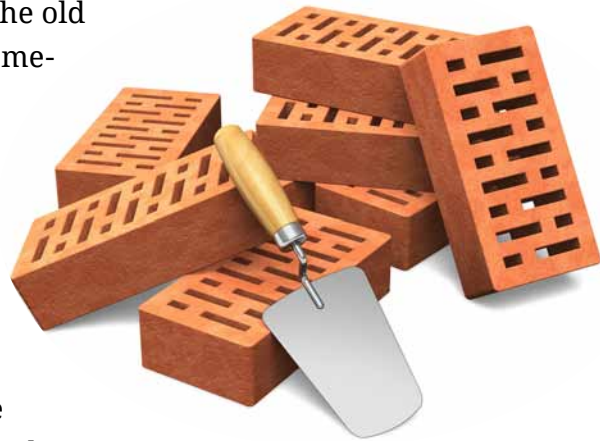
“The only assets we have as a company [are] our values, our culture and guiding principles, and the reservoir of trust with our people.”

Without using the words “invisible architecture” Schultz described the key elements of the approach we take when working with clients to help them define their “blueprint behind the blueprint.” To employ a construction metaphor, the foundation of your invisible architecture is your core values; corporate culture is the superstructure of flooring, walls and ceiling; and the interior decoration is the emotional climate of the workplace.



The Foundation: Core Values

Core values define what you stand for—and what you won't stand for—as an organization. A culture of ownership rests upon a foundation of the organization's core values. Whether it's for an individual or for an organization, a statement of core values should help to define who you are, what you stand for, and what you won't stand for (and as the old country song says, if you don't stand for something you'll fall for anything!). At the personal level, a core value is a deeply-held philosophical commitment that defines and shapes how you think, how you set goals and make decisions, how you develop relationships, and how you deal with conflict. At the organizational level, a core value should define your non-negotiable expectations regarding how your people behave, the goals toward which you direct your collective efforts, and how you work together. People will act upon an organization's values only to the extent that they perceive them to be congruent with their personal values.



The most catastrophic failures in business do not come from failed strategies—they come from a failure of values, as witnessed by the fates of Enron (which has become a cliché for valueless corporate leadership), WorldCom, Tyco, and a long line of corporate crash-and-burn stories. The day the Wal-Mart Mexican bribery scandal hit the news, the resulting stock price decline reduced shareholder wealth by \$12.5 billion; the company has spent more than \$100 million investigating charges of bribery in Mexico and other countries. An April 2012 article in *Forbes* magazine (hardly a socialist publication—*Forbes* advertises itself as “the capitalist tool”) predicted that Wal-Mart would sink “like the Titanic” as a result of ethical scandals that seem to hit the company with some regularity (Sam Walton would be rolling over in his grave!).

“Values infuse the culture in a way that is not only life changing but game changing for the organization.”

Harry Kraemer Jr.: *From Values to Action: The Four Principles of Values-Based Leadership*



The Superstructure: Corporate Culture

The superstructure of your Invisible Architecture is corporate culture. Culture is to the organization what personality and character are to the individual. The core cultural characteristics that you define inevitably become central to the brand image of your organization as it is perceived by the community. United Airlines and Southwest Airlines are in the same business, flying the same planes and recruiting the same professional categories of pilots, flight attendant, and mechanic, but the experience of working for or being a customer of the two airlines could not be more different. That is a reflection of their respective cultures.



Same business, different cultures

On United and most other airlines, as soon as the safety announcement begins passengers zone out. On Southwest Airlines, however, flight attendants turn the announcement into a performance (as does David Holmes, who performs it as a rap song which was videotaped by a passenger and became a sensation on CNN and the internet) as a way of engaging passengers so they will pay attention. These flight attendants are saying the same words, but with an enormously different impact. That is a reflection of culture.

Every organization has a culture, though in many cases that culture has evolved haphazardly rather than by conscious design. Culture is ultimately the only sustainable source of competitive advantage; everything else can be copied (the way a competitor can copy a business model), surpassed (the way a competitor can leapfrog your technology), or stolen (the way a competitor can hire away your best employees). Crafting culture is a paramount leadership responsibility; cultural blueprinting is more important than designing buildings. The core cultural characteristics that you define inevitably become central to the brand image of your organization as it is perceived by the community.



It's a common misconception that culture is not amenable to leadership influence. There are, in fact, many examples of massive and rapid changes being made, for better or worse. Jan Carlzon transformed SAS Airlines from an inefficient, money-losing enterprise into a quality leader by focusing on a culture that put people first (documented in his book *Moments of Truth*).

Dr. Kenneth Kizer oversaw the rapid transformation of the Veterans Health Administration into a first-class system of medical care (for this story see the book *Best Care Anywhere: Why VA Health Care is Better than Yours* by Phillip Longman). Every organization is really a cultural patchwork quilt. Ideally, there are a few overarching themes that define the organization, which are then woven into the subculture of each different unit. This means that not only does the CEO have the ability (and responsibility) to influence corporate culture, so does every other manager have the ability to influence culture in their corner of the organization—again, for better or worse.

The Interior: Emotional Attitude

In recent years, much has been written on the subject of emotional intelligence (see in particular the work of Daniel Goleman). Emotional positivity is essential to a culture of ownership: within the workplace, people with an ownership mindset are cheerful and optimistic. You cannot have a culture of ownership in an environment where people have negative attitudes about their work and pessimistic expectations for the future. One of the key duties of a leadership team—and one that is too often abdicated—is to confront and transform such toxic emotional negativity. They owe it to their customers and to their employees. For that matter, they owe it to the individuals who are toxically negative since in most cases that negativity is a reflection of their own personal unhappiness.

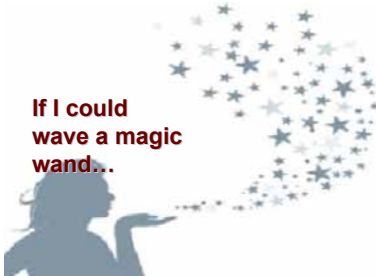
You cannot see toxic emotional negativity, but that doesn't mean it can't harm you. Quite to the contrary—it is contagious and it is malignant: it is the spiritual equivalent of ambient cigarette smoke, as harmful to the soul as smoke is to the body. In fact, there is now conclusive evidence that negative emotions are physically harmful. One toxically-negative person will drag down the morale and the productivity of an entire work unit. We cannot help but be influenced by the people we spend time with. It is a core leadership responsibility to create a workplace environment where toxic emotional negativity is not tolerated. This is especially true in healthcare, where toxic emotional negativity in the workplace can cause iatrogenic anxiety for patients.



“ To the degree that our emotions get in the way of or enhance our ability to think and plan, to pursue training for a different goal, to solve problems and the like, they define the limits of our capacity to use our innate mental abilities, and so determine how we do in life. And to the degree to which we are motivated by feelings of enthusiasm and pleasure in what we do—or even by an optimal degree of anxiety—they propel us to accomplishment. It is in this sense that emotional intelligence is a master aptitude, a capacity that profoundly affects all other abilities, either facilitating or interfering with them.”

Daniel Goleman: *Emotional Intelligence*

The emotional climate of the workplace is defined by what you expect and what you tolerate, and over time what you tolerate will dominate what you say you expect. If leaders say they *expect* cheerful customer service but then *tolerate* toxic emotional negativity, this will become the accepted standard. If leaders say they *expect* respect but then *tolerate* people gossiping about others behind their backs, then respect for the dignity of others become just a good intention. When leaders tolerate toxic emotional negativity, the end result is that the expectation of integrity is perched on a slippery slope that ends with “never get caught” instead of “always do the right thing.” Just as we once eradicated toxic smoke from the workplace, it is now our obligation to eradicate toxic emotional negativity.

 <p>If I could wave a magic wand...</p>	<p>And your organization, and your community, could eradicate toxic emotional negativity for 30 days, people would never tolerate it again...</p>	<p>The way we will never again allow people to pollute the air around us with toxic cigarette smoke.</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

When Dr. C. Everett Koop announced the goal of a smoke-free society in 1986, the notion was laughable. Back people smoked everywhere, and because nicotine is a highly-addictive drug there was a prevailing belief that smoking could not be banned outright. Yet today, the goal of a smoke-free society has almost been totally realized (along with substantial health benefits as the proportion of people who smoke has declined). Today, it is the notion that we would ever again allow people to pollute the air of a public place with toxic cigarette smoke that is laughable. In Module #6 we'll explore how lessons from the



anti-smoking movement can be applied to cultural transformation in organizations, but for now let's make two key points: 1) the same principles and tactics can apply to eradicating toxic emotional negativity (the emotional and spiritual equivalent of toxic cigarette smoke); and 2) once fully internalized, the changes will be permanent because people will appreciate the personal benefits of working in a more positive and productive workplace environment.

This Building is Never Finished

Unlike a physical building, where one day there is a ribbon cutting and the project is officially declared completed, work on the Invisible Architecture never ends. One of the essential responsibilities of leadership is to maintain cultural momentum. Invisible Architecture requires constant maintenance just the way a real building does. New employees must be oriented to the values, culture, and attitudinal expectations of the organization. Policies and procedures that are no longer helpful must be weeded out, and new ones established (as many organizations have recently had to do with regard to use of cell phones and social media). Managers at all levels must be vigilant that their own attitudes and behaviors are setting the right example, and that people in their organization, or their part of the organization, are following that example. Changes in technology, the competitive playing field, and societal expectations will all influence the Invisible Architecture of the organization. And the work is never done.

“ Today if a company doesn't change, not only is it most likely not stable, it is at serious risk of disappearing altogether. Remember that we're talking about tactics and operations, not values. A foundation of values surrounded by those flexible rings of changeable tactics is the strongest basis for stability in business today. You can most successfully change what you're doing and how you do it if you have a clear sense of who you are.”

Joe Calloway: Becoming a Category of One: How Extraordinary Companies Transcend Commodity and Defy Comparison



Exercise #2-1: Use the Invisible Architecture Schematic™ to begin the blueprinting process

The first step in the design of a new building is the schematic design process. This is a very broad brush sketch of what the floor plan will look like. This is where the big questions are asked, which often begin with words like “what if ...” and “why not ...” and “wouldn’t it be great if...” This is also where the big decisions are made, the ones that are most costly to revise later (it’s a lot more expensive to move a foundation wall when it is in the ground than when’s it’s on paper). The process of creating a blueprint for the Invisible Architecture of your organization begins in much the same way—asking the big questions and creating broad-brush sketches of the ideal outcome. The Invisible Architecture Schematic is a tool to spark ideas in group sessions and—just as you would in designing a physical structure—and to refine the ideas through multiple iterations.

Download this simple schematic from the Cultural Blueprinting website to spark people’s thinking about your Invisible Architecture. Start by considering your organization’s core values. If you already have a statement of values that is carved in stone, this step is simple—just write them down in the boxes at the bottom of the schematic. But if you don’t have a formal statement of values, or if you are open to having a dialog about whether they should be reconsidered and potentially revised, then engage people in the dialog. While there are four boxes for the foundation in this schematic, there is no need to limit yourself. The Baxter corporation has three core values; Catholic Health Initiatives has four; the Mayo Clinic has eight; Zappos has ten. Simply draw a line dividing a box into sections to add additional values.

In a multi-unit operation (e.g. the various departments of a hospital) have managers in each area conduct the exercise, asking the question “What does our current Invisible Architecture look like?” and “what would our ideal Invisible Architecture look like?”—going through multiple iterations until there is at least some level of consensus if not unanimity. Collect all of the schematics from each area and analyze them: the degree of consensus or divergence will give you a feel for the extent to which there is a common vision of what your values, culture, and attitudes are and should be, and will provide valuable input into creating the next draft of a master schematic. Just as you would for the schematic design of the physical building, send this back out for review and comment. Repeat the process until the leadership and the Cultural



Blueprinting Team are confident that everyone has had a chance to participate in the design process. Even if an individual's ideas aren't directly accepted, they are more likely to take ownership for something they had a chance to help create.



The Values Foundation of Alverno Clinical Laboratories

Alverno Clinical Laboratories, headquartered in Hammond, Indiana, is a major reference lab that serves 26 (as of this writing) Catholic hospitals in Indiana and Illinois. While the organization is solidly values-driven, prior to 2012 they had not formalized their values. At a leadership retreat they began the discussion about what their core values are, which led to a process of engaging the entire organization in the dialog over a period of months. Ultimately, they refined their values down to the four values that proclaim *this is who we are and what we stand for*, which are illustrated in the schematic. They are now engaged in the process of defining the superstructure of culture and the interior of attitude.

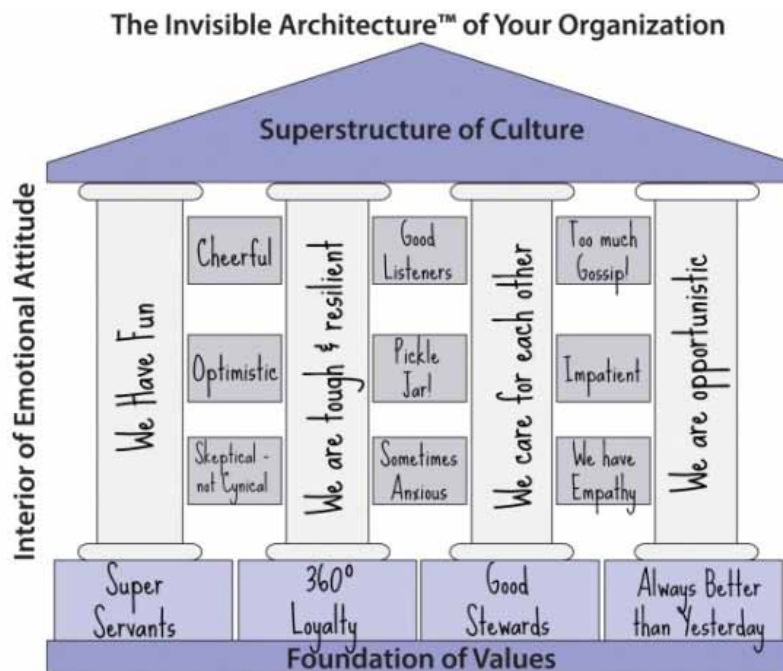
The second schematic, below, is a hypothetical example of how the dialog might evolve, perhaps in a group brainstorming session or a leadership retreat. The group has decided that the things they most value are customer service (being Super Servants), a strong spirit of fellowship within the organization (360° Loyalty), being



effective managers of their organization’s resources and good stewards of Mother Earth (Good Stewards), and continuous improvement in every dimension (Always Better than Yesterday).

Then they move on to fill in the superstructure of corporate culture. Again, in this hypothetical example the group decides that the essential pillars of their culture are that they laugh, have fun, and enjoy their work; that they face challenges with courage and determination, plow through obstacles and bounce back from setbacks; that they are caring and compassionate; and that they are entrepreneurial and opportunistic.

Finally, the group asked about the emotional attitudes reflected in the workplace. Note that here we have a mix of the ideal (e.g. cheerful and optimistic, skeptical but not cynical) with attitudes that they would like to change (they sometimes let anxiety get the best of them and too often talk about other people behind their backs). Workplace attitude is where the rubber hits the road, and in some ways is the place to start working on your Invisible Architecture because, as the old saying goes, attitude really is everything. It is much easier to clarify and solidify values, and to foster and honor culture, when people have positive attitudes. Conversely, pervasive negative attitudes inject a toxic amount of cynicism into values and culture exercises.





Important Note: At each of the three stages, participants are being forced to make choices. There are literally hundreds of different words or phrases that could go into a statement of values, a description of the ideal workplace culture, or the attitudinal and behavioral expectations established by those values and cultural norms. This exercise requires the group to make tough choices and set key priorities.

“ Identifying the core values that define your organization is one of the most important functions of leadership. The success or failure of this process can literally make or break an organization.”

Ken Blanchard: *The Heart of a Leader*



You don't need an architectural degree to design the Invisible Architecture of an organization: Shawneen Buckley led the team that created this Cultural Blueprint at Saint Francis Hospital and Health Center in Poughkeepsie, New York. You can order children's blocks like those used by Shawneen and her team at this Amazon.com link: [Children's cardboard block set at Amazon.com](#)



Toolkit Exercise #2-2: Diagram the Invisible Architecture of role models and competitors

Use the Invisible Architecture schematic to diagram the Blueprint Behind the Blueprint of organizations that you admire from outside of your industry. This will help you think outside of your usual mental box since one of the best ways of falling into industry boilerplate is to fail to look beyond your industry. It will also help you to better differentiate yourself from other organizations in your market by helping you define the ways in which your customer service and employee experience is different (and presumably better).

This is easier than ever with resources like Google and Wikipedia. Ask members of the Cultural Blueprinting Team and the management team to identify organizations they admire and research them enough to be able to sketch out an Invisible Architecture schematic to share with the rest of the group and discuss what lessons can be learned from that organization—or what traits might be emulated (T.S. Eliot said that good poets borrow but great poets steal—there are occasions when it is appropriate to do both!).

Another enlightening exercise is to sketch out an Invisible Architecture Schematic for your toughest competitors. How would a prospective employee, or potential customer or patient, evaluate its options if the Invisible Architecture Schematics were placed side-by-side? What are their comparative strengths that you need to bolster your organization against? What are your comparative strengths and how can they be more effectively communicated in your recruiting and promotion?

After all of the projects have been completed and the presentations have been made, have a sub-group of the cultural Blueprinting Team compile key lessons and recommendations.



Questions to Ask about Your Organization's Invisible Architecture

“Answers are closed rooms; and questions are open doors that invite us in.”
Nancy Willard: Telling Time: Angels, Ancestors, and Stories

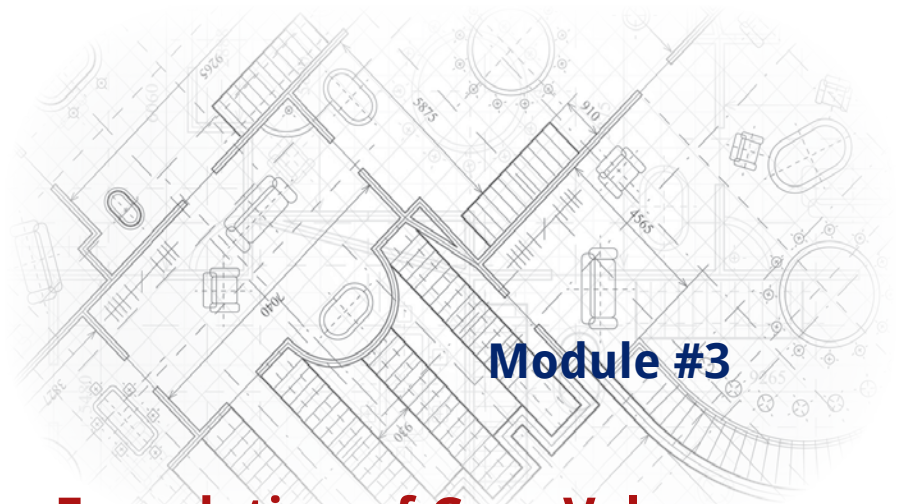
- ✓ *Question #1:* Are we who we say we are? Do our culture and the attitudes and behaviors actually seen in the workplace reflect our stated values, vision, and mission? How big is the gap? (If we're being honest with ourselves we must acknowledge that there is a gap of some magnitude: there always is, and it's usually bigger than we think it is.)
- ✓ *Question #2:* What percent of our employees are truly engaged with the work and with the people they work with, and how many are either not engaged or are aggressively disengaged?
- ✓ *Question #3:* If we were designing our Invisible Architecture from the ground up, the way we would design a new building, what elements of our culture and attitudes would we take with us and which parts would we discard, the way we would sort out which fixtures should go into the new building and which should go to the dump?
- ✓ *Question #4:* On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all and 5 being completely, how committed is our middle management team to our values, mission, and vision? What actions can we take to enhance that commitment and to lower our tolerance for middle managers who reflect disengaged or toxically negative attitudes?
- ✓ *Question #5:* Who should be designated to lead the effort of creating a Cultural Blueprint for our Invisible Architecture, and how can we engage all of the right people (up to and including every employee and other important constituencies such as customers), without creating an overly cumbersome process?
- ✓ *Question #6:* Do our values, culture, and attitudes in the workplace serve to differentiate our organization from the competition, and what more can we do to build these into a sustainable source of competitive distinction?



- ✓ *Question #7:* As we move forward with the process of Cultural Blueprinting for our Invisible Architecture, who are the key individuals or groups that need to be engaged from the start; how can we identify and nurture the hidden leaders within the organization to serve as our Spark Plugs; and how do we embrace the skeptics while marginalizing the cynics?
 - ✓ *Question #8:* How do we position Cultural Blueprinting as we present it to our employees, and show how it is related to other priorities in such a way as to prevent the perception of this being just another “program of the month”?
 - ✓ *Question #9:* Do we have the “failure is not an option” fortitude and stamina to plow through the inevitable resistance as we work toward defining and fostering the optimal Invisible Architecture for our organization?
 - ✓ *Question #10:* How do we build a higher level of trust between senior leadership and middle management, so there is a clear understanding of areas where middle managers can “proceed until apprehended” versus those areas where decisions must be made at the top or in consultation with senior leaders?
- “ From working with eight hundred executives over the past twenty-five years, we make a prediction: Successful corporate leaders of the twenty-first century will be spiritual leaders. They will be comfortable with their own spirituality, and they will know how to nurture spiritual development in others. The most successful leaders of today have already learned this secret. Corporate Mystics know that an organization is a collective embodiment of spirit, the sum total of the spirits of the individuals who work there. Those who think spirituality has no place in business are selling themselves and those around them short... Genuine Corporate Mystics live life from a spiritual base. They are in business for their hearts and souls as well as their wallets. They are in business to support the hearts and souls of the people with whom they work.”

Gay Hendricks and Kate Ludeman:

The Corporate Mystic: A Guidebook for Visionaries with Their Feet on the Ground



The Foundation of Core Values

Goals for this Module

1. Outline the key functions of an ideal statement of organizational values.
2. Understand the implications of the Values → Behaviors → Outcomes Continuum
3. Know when and how to conduct a 3-Rs exercise with your statement of values: Review, Revise, Revitalize
4. Help people make the link between their personal values and the core values of the organization, and create an expectation that people will know by heart the organization's values.
5. Provide an overview of the Values Coach course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*.

Defining Values Forces You to Make Choices and Set Priorities

Defining an explicit statement of values forces you to make choices and set priorities. One personal improvement website has a list of 463 different words that could be used in a personal values statement. Defining those values that are “core” goes right to the heart of your organizational (or personal) authenticity. This forces the question of why you include some things and exclude others. More important, if taken seriously, the exercise helps you define specific expectations and the strategies by which those expectations are met.



“Committable core values that are truly integrated into a company’s operations can align an entire organization and serve as a guide for employees to make their own decisions.”

Tony Hsieh: *Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose*

Caveat: There are authorities who say that the number of core values in a statement of values should be limited to no more than 3-5, but I disagree. Some of America’s best organizations have ten or more values in their statements—*plus* additional commentary defining the expectations created by those values. If something is important enough for you to consider it a core value, don’t arbitrarily dumb-down your statement of values by eliminating things that are important, or by cramming multiple values into fewer bullet points and running the risk of making them incomprehensible. And don’t assume that your people don’t have the intelligence or the commitment to know those values by heart. They will learn them if they consider it to be sufficiently important to do so.

Review, Revise, Revitalize

Even if your organization’s core values are not open to revision (the core values of John Deere have not changed since they were first written down by John Deere himself 185 years ago), they should be reviewed at least every three years. As Joseph A. Michelli wrote in his book *The Zappos Experience: 5 Principles to Inspire, Engage, and WOW*: “Refining values is a big deal, but not refining them may be a deal breaker.” The question is, are your core values like The Ten Commandments, carved in stone and never to be changed, or are they more like the U.S. Constitution, which can be amended over time to account for changes in the environment, the organization, and the mission.

Within the past several decades, we have seen more organizations include as a core value such things as diversity (in response to changing social, cultural, and demographic trends); stewardship (in response to the global environment crisis, and the need to “do more with less” within the organization); and continuous learning (in response to the ever-accelerating accumulation of new knowledge); I predict that a growing number of enlightened organizations will define loyalty as a core value (in response to what demographers widely predict will be a serious shortage of talented and highly-educated workers in the years to come).



The Ideal Statement of Values

The ideal statement of values should serve three purposes: establishing your organizational identity; defining key functional parameters; and creating a focus on operational and societal relevance. Let's look at examples for each...

1. Organizational identity

A statement of values should help you define, either implicitly or explicitly, who you are, what you stand for, and what you won't stand for. Your statement of core values should be the most important document in your organizational library because it is, or should be, first and foremost a statement of identity that addresses these three key questions:

1. *Who you are:* Everything Disney does is intended to reinforce its self-defined identity as “the happiest place on earth.” Volvo identifies itself as maker of the world's safest cars. Proctor & Gamble includes “Winning” as a core value to undergird its identity as a tough competitor.
2. *What you stand for:* The guiding principle of Mary Kay Ash in starting her company was to provide women with opportunities where they could set their priorities as God first, family second, and career third. The guiding principle behind Habitat for Humanity is that no one anywhere on earth should have to live in a shack. Catholic Health Initiatives includes “Reverence” as a core value to define expectations about the spirit with which employees treat patients, and each other.
3. *What you won't stand for:* Two of the ten core values of Auto-Owners Insurance are honesty and loyalty—the company will not stand for dishonesty and insists upon bilateral loyalty; in its almost 100-year history, it's never had a layoff and is committed to creating opportunities for its associates, but also insists that associates be loyal to the company. Cypress Semiconductor's statement of values insists upon zero returns (e.g. intolerance for product defects).

Being able to answer the question “Are we who we say we are?” requires first of all being able to say who it is that you are. A statement of values should first and foremost help to answer that question of organizational identity: not just what you do, but the essential elements of who you are.



“The values within an organization derive from the people, to be sure, but it is a primary and essential responsibility of the servant leader to help guide the development of these values into a long-term framework of behavior that will benefit the organization and everyone in it... Values are fundamentally about interpersonal relationships or social architecture of culture. I think of values in an organization as having two closely interrelated aspects: organizational values and personal values.”

James A. Autry: *The Servant Leader: How to Build a Creative Team, Develop Great Morale, and Improve Bottom-Line Performance*

2. Functional parameters

An ideal statement of values should also address these functional parameters: 1) establish performance expectations; 2) create an emotional connection between employees and customers and the organization, 3) inspire people to take action to enact those values; and 4) promote personal values alignment. Let's look a bit more closely at each parameter.

1. *Create performance expectations:* SSM HealthCare is one of the nation's largest healthcare systems, and was the first healthcare organization to be given the Baldrige Award. One of their five core values is “Excellence” and it states: “We expect the best of ourselves and one another.” In her book *On Becoming Exceptional: SSM Health Care's Journey to Baldrige and Beyond* (quoted below) SSM's now-retired CEO Sister Mary Jean Ryan describes how raising the bar on performance expectations was crucial to achieving that award. As one example, she describes how living another of their other values—Stewardship—led to banning Styrofoam products throughout their facilities.

“Real leadership is not about authority, control, or giving orders. It's not about titles or executive benefits. Leadership is about taking the initiative to do a job in a more efficient way or a better way, treating others with respect and compassion, and thinking of ways to be helpful. Leaders assume responsibility for what happens in their area of work. They ‘own’ their work and perform a job with integrity, as an expression of themselves, their creativity, and their commitment.”

Sister Mary Jean Ryan: *On Becoming Exceptional: SSM Health Care's Journey to Baldrige and Beyond*



2. *Establish emotional connection:* Proctor & Gamble’s core value “Passion for Winning” is clearly intended to attract and motivate people with a strong competitive spirit. Southwest Airlines captures the essence of their organization with these six words: *Warrior’s Spirit, Servant’s Heart, Fun-Loving Attitude.*
3. *Catalyze action:* The first of Zappos ten core values is “Deliver WOW through service,” which is reinforced by such policies as no time limit or quota being imposed on their call center. In my presentations over the past several years, I have asked thousands of people if they’ve ever had a bad experience at Zappos—to date, not one single person has raised a hand in response to that question.
4. *Align with personal values and inspire pride:* The Southwest Airlines mantra “hire for attitude, train for skill” (which has been widely emulated) creates alignment between the values of the individual and of the organization during the interview process. One of Patagonia’s core value reads: “Environmentalism (serve as a catalyst for personal and corporate action)”—this helps the company attract people who share its bone-deep commitment to environmental activism.

3. Operational and societal relevance

The ideal statement of core values will have operational and societal relevance. It is in these two areas that a statement of values often does most to differentiate your organization from the competition because a higher degree of specificity is required when talking about relevance (as opposed to feel-good boilerplate).

Operational Relevance: Cypress Semiconductor has five core values with 23 defining statements. Their core value “We Make Our Numbers” makes these commitments: “1) we measure our performance based on customer requirements; 2) we grow faster than our industry; 3) we make 20% profit; 4) we each set goals and achieve them; 5) we ship 100% on time and get zero returns; 6) we don’t tolerate waste.” Cypress Semiconductor did not create a feel-good, touchy-feely set of values; their statement is precisely focused on the operational requirements for creating the “Marine Corps of Silicon Valley” culture that defines the company.

Societal Relevance: The Coca-Cola Company, which operates around the world and must be ever-aware of local cultural norms, includes diversity as one of its



seven core values, including the statement: “Our diversity workplace strategy includes programs to attract, retain, and develop diverse talent; provide support systems for groups with diverse backgrounds; and educate all associates so that we master the skills to achieve sustainable growth.” Their website goes on to describe some of the specific ways that they promote diversity.

Toolkit Exercise #3-1: Write a values definitional statement

Whether or not your current statement of values is open to revision, answering the three questions described above will help you put a greater depth of meaning into that statement:

Who are you? In a sentence or two how would you capture the essence of your organization’s identity (and would your employees and customers agree with that assessment—or would they laugh at it)?

What do you stand for? Make a list of the most important things that your organization stands for. It doesn’t matter if that list has one item or a hundred, just that they be authentic and they be important. Would your employees agree with that list, and would your customers see it in the way they are treated?

What won’t you stand for? Make a list of the things that your organization won’t stand for. Again, it doesn’t matter if that list has one item or a hundred, just that they be authentic and they be important. Would your employees agree with that list, and would your customers see it in the way they are treated? Are people who violate that standard disciplined, or do managers look the other way?





Toolkit Exercise #3-2: Clarify the functional parameters of your statement of values

Describe how your statement of values meets these functional parameters, either explicitly or implicitly:

1. *Create performance expectations:* How specifically does your statement of values define expectations of attitude and performance? If they are not explicitly stated, what performance expectations can be imputed from that statement?
2. *Establish emotional connection:* How does your statement of values create an emotional connection with employees and with those you serve. Here's a hint: if a typical 12-year-old would find anything in that statement to be incomprehensible, it is probably not creating an emotional connection.
3. *Catalyze action:* What are the most important actions you expect employees to take as a result of living your values? At Zappos it's creating WOW by encouraging call center employees to spend as much time on the phone as the customer wants to spend, and talk about anything the customer wants to talk about.
4. *Align with personal values and inspire pride:* What are you doing to make sure that you are recruiting people whose personal values align with the organization's core values, and through training, performance appraisal, and other procedures helping to assure that connection?

Document values with commitments

Virginia Mason Health System in Seattle has pioneered Japanese techniques of lean management in healthcare, and achieved substantial enhancements in operational efficiency as a result. But it has also coupled all of this work with a no-layoff policy, assuring employees that their participation in making the organization more efficient will not jeopardize their livelihoods. In this way, Virginia Mason simultaneously honors its commitment to provide the most highly cost-effective health-care possible and honors the security and loyalty of the people who provide those services.



Toolkit Exercise #3-3: Specify the operational and societal relevance of your statement of values

Either implicitly or explicitly, describe the operational and societal relevance of your core values statement.

Operational Relevance: What are the five most important operational outcomes included in your organization's goals and strategies, and how do your core values tie into those outcomes? If there is not a connection, how can you revise the values statement to more accurately reflect what you truly value?

As one example, most hospitals include something about "compassion" in their values statements, but few hospitals explicitly embrace "productivity" as a core value. Yet if you were to poll employees as to what they believe "the suits" in the executive suites value most, compassion or productivity, the overwhelming response is likely to be productivity. This does not mean that productivity is unimportant, but it does suggest that perhaps productivity should be more explicitly recognized in that hospital's statement of values.

Societal Relevance: What are the most important societal issues impinging upon, or being impinged upon, by your industry and how do your values relate to those? In recent decades, increasing numbers of organizations have recognized that such things as diversity, stewardship, and social equity should play into their core values.

Important! Avoid the ultimate sin of boilerplate (or "boringplate")

If your values could be taken down and posted in the lobby of competing organizations without anybody knowing the difference, chances are that rather than having an authentic and identity-defining statement of values, you have resorted to boilerplate that describes characteristics that you think people expect of you rather than who you really are. If your values look like they were created by a Dilbert Core Values Statement Generator, they are probably doing little to create competitive differentiation, to inspire pride among your employees, and to earn the loyalty of customers (or patients in healthcare).



Boilerplate is boringplate, and there is no greater communication sin than to be boring! Here's a simple test to see whether your statement of values fails that test: imagine a typical employee going home and sharing those values with a child who is considering multiple possibilities for a first job: and when it comes to attracting the bright young superstars of the future, no matter what industry you happen to be in you are competing against the likes of Google, Zappos, HubSpot, and other dynamic organizations that take values and culture very seriously. If that conversation would go like this from an employee of a hypothetical hospital, you are probably going to have trouble differentiating your organization from competitors and

Hey Mom, what are the core values at Gotham City Health System?

Well, Billie, just a minute—let me look at the back of my nametag. Hmm, it says we serve our communities with Integrity and our patients with Compassion in an environment of Accountability and Respect to achieve Excellence in everything we do.

Oh. I think I'll apply for a call center job at Zappos. Their values are WOW!, Fun, Humility, and a little Weirdness.

You can laugh at the prospect that an online shoe store would out-recruit a medical center based on what their core values say and the way they promote those values (which are prominently featured in videos on the company website), but the fact is that Zappos has more than 400 people apply for every call center job opening (making it harder to get a job there than it is to get into Harvard). Very few hospitals have that sort of record, though most will envy it if demographic projections of a serious shortage of workers as baby boomers retires plays out (which they ineluctably will).

“ Whatever we value, we need to let people know about it. If employees are in alignment with the company's values—that is, if they commit to them in everyday life (not only at work)—the culture they create will eventually attract more like-minded employees. Like attracts like. If the employees walk the talk and talk the talk, it will attract more employees like them. And ultimately the culture will attract loyal customers who appreciate the values, service, and experience that the employees share.”

David Vik: *The Culture Secret: How to Empower People and Companies No Matter what You Sell*



Toolkit Exercise #3-4: Do a Values Reality Check

Enron had an elegant statement about integrity in their values statement, but there was a huge gap between that ideal and the reality. Enron is an extreme case, but there is always a gap between the idea and the reality. Furthermore, organizational researchers have shown that the higher one is on the organizational chart, the rosier the glasses and the less aware of the gap. The example I use in the webinar is how the core value of integrity is violated any time a culture tolerates people talking about co-workers, customers, or patients behind that person's back. Here are several ways to assess the gap in your organization:

- When managers make rounds, simply have them ask people if they know what the organization's values are, and how they see those values being reflected, or not reflected, in daily behaviors.
- Use Survey Monkey or a similar tool to ask people if they know the organization's core values, if they think they are relevant, and the extent to which they see them being lived or not lived.
- Have an outside expert or consultant conduct interviews and focus groups to provide a more objective and authoritative assessment.

Toolkit Exercise #3-5: Conduct a three-minute values clarification drill

In the webinar, I describe how in leadership retreats we will often ask small groups to come up with the values that would make them most proud to be a part of that organization, and then collect common themes. Then we compare those with the current official statement of values. A high level of coherence indicates substantial alignment with the organizational values, but when there is substantial incoherence, as in the example referenced in the webinar, it is a strong indication that either a revision is warranted or there needs to be some sort of initiative to revitalize those values.

In that example, the existing statement of values for a client hospital conveniently created the supposedly easy-to-remember acronym CARE, yet when I asked managers in a leadership retreat how many people knew those four values by heart, only a



few hands went up (and even these were tentative). We separated people into small groups and I gave them just three minutes to brainstorm the values they would be proud to have represent their hospital, then report out. A volunteer kept track of common themes. The table below shows the official CARE values on the left and the most common themes to come out of the three-minute drill on the right.

Official version	Group's version
Compassion	Integrity
Advocacy	Enthusiasm
Respect	Loyalty
Excellence	Stewardship
	Ownership
	Fun

Then we took a vote on which set of values people would rather have—the ones that had been posted in the lobby for no one knew how long, or the ones we had just come up with. It was unanimous for the new ones. Then I asked, if we could in just three minutes come up with something superior to what was on the wall now, might happen if they engaged the entire hospital—and perhaps even the broader community—in a dialog about values. Over the next year, the Cultural Blueprinting Team at Memorial Hospital of Converse County conducted a process that engaged the entire organization in that dialogue about values and culture, and ultimately came up with the statement that is reproduced below. Think about what has happened here! By engaging everyone in the organization from top to bottom, they ended up discarding a simplistic acronym that did nothing to differentiate MHCC from any other hospital, and transform that into a very robust statement of seven core values, each of which has a defining statement of principle and 5-6 statements of behavioral expectation.

“Values are guides. They supply us with a moral compass by which to navigate the course of our daily lives. Clarity of values is essential to knowing which way, for each of us, is north, south, east, and west. The clearer we are, the easier it is to stay on the path we’ve chosen. This kind of guidance is especially needed in difficult and uncertain times. When there are daily challenges that can throw you off course, it’s crucial that you have some signposts to tell you where you are.”

James Kouzes and Barry Posner: *The Leadership Challenge*



Final Revised Document

“Invisible Architecture”

Memorial Hospital of Converse County is more than a place, it is a culture, built upon our seven essential values. These values, as described by America’s Values Coach, Joe Tye, are our organization’s Invisible architecture, the unseen support of our hospital’s culture. They are what define us, molding the behavioral standards we choose most important as an organization.

Integrity

We hold ourselves accountable to the highest ethical and performance standards, demonstrating honesty, professionalism and sincerity. Therefore ...

- I will always speak honestly & tactfully
- I will talk with, and not about, others
- I will do what I say and say what I do
- I will treat everyone with dignity
- I will own and work to correct my mistakes

Respect

We believe respect for one’s self and for others is the foundation of honor and the basis of integrity. Such respect is essential for nurturing the innovative spirit of our hospital. Therefore ...

- I will seek to make all people feel valued & appreciated
- I will be professional, courteous, honest & thoughtful in all my interactions
- I will protect confidentiality – knowing my audience
- I will protect others privacy – knocking before entering

Ownership

We believe in taking ownership for ones responsibilities and goals. As owners we recognize it is our responsibility to do what is right for our patients, our hospital and our coworkers. We understand each of us plays a critical role in fulfilling our mission. Therefore ...

- I will not say, “It’s not my job” or “we are short-staffed”
- I am available to assist, encourage and help others
- I will be a good steward of all resources
- I will take responsibility for my actions and behavior
- I will think “team,” sharing successes & failures together

Patient-Centered

We provide care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values. We will remember that people are our reason for our being here, not an interruption of our work. Therefore ...

- I will actively “see” and “listen to” others
- I will rush to meet their needs, exceeding their expectations
- I will genuinely care for others as I want to be treated
- I will respect others dignity and privacy
- When we fail to meet expectations, I will acknowledge, apologize, and make amends

Compassion

We recognize every person as a whole human being with different needs that must be met through listening, empathizing and nurturing. Therefore ...

- I will be hospitable, anticipating others needs
- I will listen attentively and act on what I hear
- I will strive to relieve fears and anxieties
- I will advocate for my patients and co-workers
- I will use AIDET:
Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation, Thank you

Competency

We are dedicated to employing, training, and providing staff with the appropriate tools needed to respond to the unique needs of our patients, our coworkers, and our community. Therefore ...

- I will make sure that I am well-trained in all aspects of my job
- If I do not know what to do or how to do something I will ask
- I will always practice safety, and use best practices with confidence
- I will seek to continually improve my job skills and people skills
- I will provide private, constructive feedback for inappropriate behaviors
- When interviewing, I will strive to hire only the best

Joy

We believe employees who enjoy their role within the organization and their relationships with one another create a healthy environment for all. We look for both fun and humor, when appropriate, in our daily work. Therefore ...

- I will make an honest effort to always be positive
- I will look for the best in people and situations
- I will smile while greeting everyone – whether in person or on the phone
- I will seek to see the positive in stressful situations
- I will seek to lift the spirits of all around me





Make Your Values Statement a Thing of Beauty

Your statement of values is (or should be) the most important document in the organization, yet most of us put more graphic design creativity into a promotional flyer than we do that foundational values document. Even a great statement of values might look like boilerplate (boringplate) if the words are just posted in a frame on the wall.



When Values Coach worked with Tucson Medical Center to review, revise, and revitalize their statement of values, they created one of the most graphically beautiful and functional values statements I've ever seen. Let's look at some of the features:

- The statement "Our Values... Honor Tradition, Nourish Dreams" reflects both historical continuity and progressive vision. At the time the TMC leadership team had substantial plans for program development and new facilities and wanted to spark new aspirations in an organization that was perhaps too much interest in history.
- The slogan "Proud to be TMC" was meant to create a personal connection with every employee (pride is one of the three essential qualities defined by the Great Place to Work Institute, with the other two being connection and trust).
- Each of the four core values are further defined by three statements that create attitude and behavior expectations.



- The color scheme and the Saguaro Cactus plant capture the feel and the spirit of the great American Southwest.

When TMC President and CEO Judy Rich presented this new statement of values with its beautiful graphic design to her board, the board chairperson exclaimed: “That really is who we are!” and suggested that this statement of values could easily become a billboard promoting the hospital.

Isn’t that the sort of response you want to have when you share your statement of values with people?

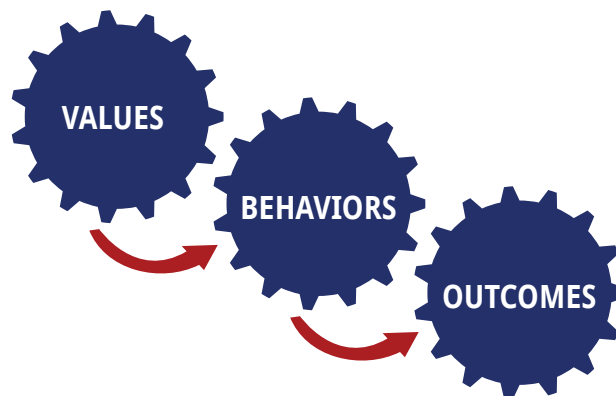
“ When organizational and personal values are brought to life, employee engagement often follows. This is because following values—walking the talk—builds trust, and that trust produces leaders who are respected and followed. Then, it’s a short trip to employee engagement because of the positive work environment that is created. With few exceptions, all employees want to contribute to and be part of something special, noble, good and right. And they want to work for people whom they respect. Being values-driven... will help you meet both of these employee needs.”

Brian Gareau and Al Lucia: *180 Ways to Build Employee Engagement*



Toolkit Exercise #3-6: Apply the Values → Behaviors → Outcomes Continuum Test

As mentioned in the webinars, most values that are included in organizational statements of values are actually valued outcomes such as excellence, quality, safety, etc., or valued behaviors such as professionalism, compassion, respect, stewardship, etc. There is nothing wrong with this, but understanding that these qualities are outcomes and behaviors, not core values, will help you help your people relate those desired behaviors to their own personal values. These actually form a continuum: values inspire behaviors, which in turn create outcomes. Beginning with the desired outcome can help you identify the required behaviors, and the underlying values that inspire those behaviors. For example, if the desired outcome is trust (trust is an outcome because it must be earned), the required behaviors include honesty and reliability. The underlying value that inspires those behaviors is integrity.



Read your organization’s statement of values. Chances are that, like most values statements, it’s actually a blend of values, behaviors, and outcomes. There’s nothing wrong with this, but understanding how these three interact can help you do a better job of operationalizing the values that drive (or should drive) your organization. Let’s take a look at each.

Values: Core values are universal and eternal, and they are always personal. When the values statement includes “integrity,” what the organization is really saying is that it expects people to be honest and reliable, to treat other people with respect and dignity, and to have the courage to confront people or practices that violate integrity.



Behaviors: “Professionalism” is sometimes included in organizational values statements, but this is not a value, it is a behavior. Behavioral expectations can be built into job descriptions, performance appraisals, reward systems, and the fabric of corporate culture. They help to define what the organization means by the words used in the statement of values.

Outcomes: These are, of course, how we ultimately evaluate the performance of organizations and the people who work there. Excellent customer service, outstanding patient care quality, and superior financial performance are not values, they are outcomes that derive from professional behaviors.

Understanding this continuum—from values to behaviors to outcomes—can help you be a more effective leader, and be more successful at achieving your desired outcomes. For example, one reason that so many “customer service” programs fail to achieve a sustained impact is that they seek a desired outcome by focusing at the level of employee behaviors, without tapping into the power of underlying core values.

As the late Zig Ziglar often said, everyone listens to the same radio station: WIIFM, What’s In It for Me? If you really want to improve customer service, show people how being more enthusiastic can help them be better parents. If you really want to improve productivity and financial performance, show people how being more focused can help them do a better job of managing their personal finances; they’ll do more to help your organization “do more with less” if you first help them do the same thing on the home front. As workers change their attitudes and behaviors because it’s in their own personal interest to do so, they will inevitably contribute to the accomplishment of these important organizational outcomes.

Toolkit Exercise #3-7: Help individuals make values-based choices

Two of the biggest problems people face at a personal level, and that our nation faces collectively, relate to finances and health. At root, these are usually caused by people not living their values: people get into deep debt because they want everything now and want to put off paying for it into some indeterminate future date; they have health problems because—at least metaphorically speaking—they would



rather eat a donut than go to the gym. Here are two specific actions you can take to help your people improve their lives by more effectively living their values:

- Organizations are asking people to “do more with less,” but most individuals are struggling with the same challenges at home. Sharing courses on personal finance such as Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace University will show people that you care about them personally, and will teach them skills that can be applied both at home and in the workplace setting.
- Incorporate personal values into employee health and wellness programs. We’ve seen people make impressive changes in health status (quitting smoking, losing weight, committing to exercise programs, etc.) by taking to heart the tenets of *The Twelve Core Action Values*. We’re also pleased when we hear from people who have been able to quit taking medication for depression and anxiety, because values training has helped them be more engaged in their work and in their personal lives. As just an example, one VA Medical Center has found that tools like The Pickle Challenge and The Self-Empowerment Pledge have helped some Veterans deal with long-standing mental health issues by beginning to ferret out some of the ways their own negative thinking contributes to their problems. Values Coach is now partnering with Health Solutions, Inc., which provides health coaching for corporate clients, to include *The Twelve Core Action Values* and other proprietary tools into their health coaching regimen.

I often have the opportunity to ask people about their personal values. While most people (at least the people I talk to) intuitively have good solid values, very few have actually thought about what those values are, much less how they can be better reflected in their own attitudes and behaviors. And if you ask to see their calendar and checkbook register for the past month, those documents will tell a different story about their values than what they have just described. Helping people clarify and act upon their values in a way that helps them take control of their lives is one of the best investments you can make in the culture of your organization.

“If people could understand their core values, they would save years of doubt, confusion, and misplaced energy as they try to find direction for their lives.”

Laurie Beth Jones: *Jesus CEO*



Overview of *The Twelve Core Action Values*

“The *Twelve Core Action Values* is like graduate school for the seven habits. This course is a great way to cultivate and nurture leadership talent at every level of your organization.”

David G. Altman, Vice President and Managing Director,
Europe, Middle East and Africa, Center for Creative Leadership

The Twelve Core Action Values is a 60-module course on values-based life and leadership skills. The purpose of this course is to help people use those skills to be happier and more successful at home as well as at work; to be better parents, better time and money managers, and more effective at setting and achieving goals for the things that most matter to them.

You can download the eBook edition of the 400-page workbook on *The Twelve Core Action Values* at the [Cultural Blueprinting website](#).

The Twelve Core Action Values

And the Cornerstones that Put Action into those Values

<p>I. Laying a Solid Foundation The first six Core Action Values and associated cornerstones develop inner strength of character.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>1. Authenticity Self Awareness Self Mastery Self Belief Self Truth</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>4. Courage Confrontation Transformation Action Connection</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>2. Integrity Honesty Reliability Humility Stewardship</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>5. Perseverance Preparation Perspective Toughness Learning</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>3. Awareness Mindfulness Objectivity Empathy Reflection</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>6. Faith Gratitude Forgiveness Love Spirituality</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>1. Authenticity Self Awareness Self Mastery Self Belief Self Truth</p>	<p>4. Courage Confrontation Transformation Action Connection</p>	<p>2. Integrity Honesty Reliability Humility Stewardship</p>	<p>5. Perseverance Preparation Perspective Toughness Learning</p>	<p>3. Awareness Mindfulness Objectivity Empathy Reflection</p>	<p>6. Faith Gratitude Forgiveness Love Spirituality</p>	<p>II. Taking Effective Action The second six Core Action Values and associated cornerstones catalyze action and contribution.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>7. Purpose Aspiration Intentionality Selflessness Balance</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>10. Enthusiasm Attitude Energy Curiosity Humor</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>8. Vision Attention Imagination Articulation Belief</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>11. Service Helpfulness Charity Compassion Renewal</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>9. Focus Clarity Concentration Speed Momentum</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>12. Leadership Expectations Example Encouragement Celebration</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>7. Purpose Aspiration Intentionality Selflessness Balance</p>	<p>10. Enthusiasm Attitude Energy Curiosity Humor</p>	<p>8. Vision Attention Imagination Articulation Belief</p>	<p>11. Service Helpfulness Charity Compassion Renewal</p>	<p>9. Focus Clarity Concentration Speed Momentum</p>	<p>12. Leadership Expectations Example Encouragement Celebration</p>
<p>1. Authenticity Self Awareness Self Mastery Self Belief Self Truth</p>	<p>4. Courage Confrontation Transformation Action Connection</p>												
<p>2. Integrity Honesty Reliability Humility Stewardship</p>	<p>5. Perseverance Preparation Perspective Toughness Learning</p>												
<p>3. Awareness Mindfulness Objectivity Empathy Reflection</p>	<p>6. Faith Gratitude Forgiveness Love Spirituality</p>												
<p>7. Purpose Aspiration Intentionality Selflessness Balance</p>	<p>10. Enthusiasm Attitude Energy Curiosity Humor</p>												
<p>8. Vision Attention Imagination Articulation Belief</p>	<p>11. Service Helpfulness Charity Compassion Renewal</p>												
<p>9. Focus Clarity Concentration Speed Momentum</p>	<p>12. Leadership Expectations Example Encouragement Celebration</p>												

Copyright © 2008, Value Coach Inc.



In putting together the course on *The Twelve Core Action Values* we started with this question: “What are the human values that transcend political opinion, religious belief (or non-belief), socioeconomic background, job title, and every other external factor?” We identified a dozen universally-honored values. For each value we identified four cornerstones that put action into the value, and then built the course around this structure. The first six values lay a solid foundation of character strength while the second six are the catalyst for effective action. Here’s a summary:

Core Action Values 1-6: Laying a Foundation of Character Strength

Core Action Value #1, Authenticity: This value is the ultimate source of personal motivation—after all, who wants to be a phony? We ask course participants to contemplate this question: “What would you do if every job paid the same and had the same social status?” At one session, a nurse answered by saying she would write poetry; while quitting her job to become a poet was not an option, the thought she put into that question inspired her to write and share poems with patients and co-workers. *The cornerstones of Authenticity are Self-Awareness, Self-Mastery, Self-Belief, and Self-Truth.*

Core Action Value #2, Integrity: Every organization either implicitly or explicitly states integrity to be a core value (even Enron claimed it), but there is always a gap between the words and actual behaviors. For example, if an organization’s culture tolerates gossip, bullying, and other forms of toxic emotional negativity then the integrity bar has been lowered. *The cornerstones of Integrity are Honesty, Reliability, Humility, and Stewardship.*

Core Action Value #3, Awareness: In *Notes on Nursing*, Florence Nightingale said that the ability to acutely observe is more important than compassion or clinical skills in determining quality patient care. Awareness is the essential ingredient of employee engagement and the antidote to most medical mishaps caused by disengagement and carelessness. Awareness is also a fundamental ingredient of emotional intelligence and personal happiness. *The cornerstones of Awareness are Mindfulness, Objectivity, Empathy, and Reflection.*

Core Action Value #4, Courage: Fear is a reaction, courage is a decision. It takes courage to confront a bully, it takes courage to innovate, and it takes courage to make significant personal change. Most of our problems can be solved if we approach them with courage. Fortunately, courage is a learnable skill. *The cornerstones of Courage are Confrontation, Transformation, Action, and Connection.*



Core Action Value #5, Perseverance: Fear is a reaction, courage is a decision—perseverance is making that decision every day no matter how tough things are. In his beautiful book *The Last Lecture*, Randy Pausch wrote, “Brick walls are not there to stop you. They are there to make you prove how much you want something.” Perseverance is the skill that keeps us focused on the end goal which lies on the other side of the brick walls. *The cornerstones of Perseverance are Preparation, Perspective, Toughness, and Learning.*

Core Action Value #6, Faith: When we speak of Faith as a value, we’re not talking about religious belief; everyone needs faith. Faith in oneself is essential to personal and professional accomplishment, faith in other people is essential to bringing down silo walls, and faith in the future inspires us through the difficult times of today. *The cornerstones of Faith are Gratitude, Forgiveness, Love, and Spirituality.*

Core Action Values 7-12: Taking Effective Action

Core Action Value #7, Purpose: In his book *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren reminds us that “it’s not about you.” Helping people identify and act upon a personal sense of purpose that transcends making a living is often the first step toward fostering a culture of ownership in your organization. *The cornerstones of Purpose are Aspiration, Intentionality, Selflessness, and Balance.*

Core Action Value #8, Vision: Vision is the art of seeing into an invisible future, of making one’s purpose real and tangible (at Values Coach we talk about creating “memories of the future”). Shared vision has built great organizations, put a man on the moon, and conquered dread diseases. *The cornerstones of Vision are Attention, Imagination, Articulation, and Belief.*

Core Action Value #9, Focus: Focus is the essential discipline of transforming the vision of tomorrow into the reality of today. It is a particular challenge in today’s ADD world, which makes it all the more important that leaders teach people the skills required. A blending of Focus plus Enthusiasm (the next value) constitutes a left-brain, right brain formula for enhanced productivity. *The cornerstones of Focus are Target, Concentration, Speed, and Momentum.*

Core Action Value #10, Enthusiasm: Enthusiasm is a master value. Being enthusiastic makes it easier to live the other eleven values; it’s difficult if not impossible to live them without enthusiasm. People who are highly enthusiastic get a lot done, while people who lack enthusiasm simply don’t. As shown by companies such as Texas Road-



house, Southwest Airlines, Zappos, and Les Schwab Tires, an enthusiastic workforce is an incredible source of competitive advantage. An organization filled with enthusiastic people will beat one staffed with bored drones every time. *The cornerstones of Enthusiasm are Attitude, Energy, Curiosity, and Humor.*

Core Action Value #11, Service: Service is a value; it's not just "what you do," it is the *attitude* with which you do what you do. Last year I was asked to speak at a conference of operating room managers whose theme was: "It's Not Florence's OR Anymore." While agreeing with that theme in a technical sense, my central message was that when it comes to compassionate service, most of our hospitals need to be *more* like Florence's. *The cornerstones of Service are Helpfulness, Charity, Compassion, and Renewal.*

Core Action Value #12, Leadership: Management is a job description, leadership is a life decision. Anyone who practices Core Action Values 1-11 will become the kind of person who influences and inspires others, which is the best definition I know of being a leader. *The cornerstones of Leadership are Expectations, Example, Encouragement, and Celebration.*

Leadership challenge authors Kouzes and Posner say that their research proves what we all intuitively know: the more clear people are about their *personal* values, the more committed they will be to the values of their organization. While most people intuitively have good solid values, very few have actually defined exactly what those values are, much less the behavioral and attitudinal expectations they create. They are even less likely to have thought about how they would make a decision if they could choose one value or another but not both, as any parent who's ever been faced with a choice of "tough" or "love" can attest. Because these values and cornerstones are universal, the 60-module course on *The Twelve Core Action Values* helps people both clarify their own personal values and make the connection between those personal values and the core values of their organization (as we shall see in the next exercise).

“ People want to be part of something bigger than themselves, something they can believe in... It has become commonplace to assert that organizations need shared meaning, and this is surely so. But shared meaning is about more than fulfilling your mission statement—it's about forging and maintaining powerful connections between personal and organizational values. When you do that, you foster individuality and a strong culture at the same time.”

Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones: *"Creating the Best Place to Work on Earth,"*
Harvard Business Review, May 2013



Toolkit Exercise #3-8: Help people correlate their personal values with the values of the organization

This is one of the exercises we often do with organizations that have adopted *The Twelve Core Action Values*. We give them a template of a matrix that has *The Twelve Core Action Values* and the 48 cornerstones that put action into those values down the left side and list the official values of the organization across the top. The example below cross-tabulates the personal values of our course with the I CARE values of the Veterans Administration; the twelve personal values and the five organizational values create a 60-box matrix. As in this example, we “seeded” the matrix with several ideas for how the personal and organizational values reinforce one another. You can download a blank form to be customized for your organization at the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit website.

How The Twelve Core Action Values Reinforce the I CARE Values of the VA

	Integrity	Commitment	Advocacy	Respect	Excellence
Authenticity 1. Self-Awareness 2. Self-Mastery 3. Self-Belief 4. Self-Truth					Excellence requires building on authentic strengths, coupled with unrelenting self-reflection and self-honesty.
Integrity 1. Honesty 2. Reliability 3. Humility 4. Stewardship	Trust is not a value <i>per se</i> , it is an outcome that is earned by people who are honest, reliable, and humble.		A commitment to integrity is the foundation of an ethical organization - and an effective risk management strategy.	One earns the respect of others by being honest, reliable, humble, and by being a good steward of common resources.	
Awareness 1. Mindfulness 2. Objectivity 3. Empathy 4. Reflection					As Florence Nightingale said in <i>Notes on Nursing</i> , the ability to carefully observe is the heart of clinical excellence.
Courage 1. Confrontation 2. Transformation 3. Action 4. Connection	It takes courage to stand up to attitudes and behaviors that violate the spirit of integrity.				
Perseverance 1. Preparation 2. Perspective 3. Toughness 4. Learning			Perseverance is the personal value that transforms commitment from mere good intention to real action.		
Faith 1. Gratitude 2. Forgiveness 3. Love 4. Spirituality	Forgiveness of past grievances, real and imagined, is essential to fostering a culture of trust.				
Purpose 1. Aspiration 2. Intentionality 3. Selflessness 4. Balance		Selflessness catalyzes respect at work and balance is essential for the emotional stability of a respectful home life.			Aspiration is the source of all human progress; selflessness reinforces team commitment to the larger vision.
Vision 1. Attention 2. Imagination 3. Articulation 4. Belief			The ability to articulate a vision so powerfully that it inspires belief is the spark for all achievement.		
Focus 1. Clarity 2. Concentration 3. Speed 4. Momentum					Real compassion isn't just a warm fuzzy feeling—it's moving with alacrity to help people who need compassion.
Enthusiasm 1. Attitude 2. Energy 3. Curiosity 4. Humor				A lively curiosity leads us to learn about other people rather than to judge them.	
Service 1. Helpfulness 2. Charity 3. Compassion 4. Renewal	Service as a personal value is the antidote to “what’s in it for me” thinking, which is essential to building team trust.			<i>The Pickle Challenge</i> is a great way to eliminate toxic emotional negativity that poisons community spirit.	Showing people the personal benefits of consistent enthusiasm, and teaching them to achieve it, creates service excellence.
Leadership 1. Expectations 2. Example 3. Encouragement 4. Celebration			The leader’s role as story-teller, ritual-maker, and cheerleader is a powerful community builder.	Workplace culture is defined by what you expect and what you tolerate (over time what you tolerate will dominate).	

You can download the blank template at the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit website.



Toolkit Exercise #3-9: Establish expectations for attitudes and behaviors

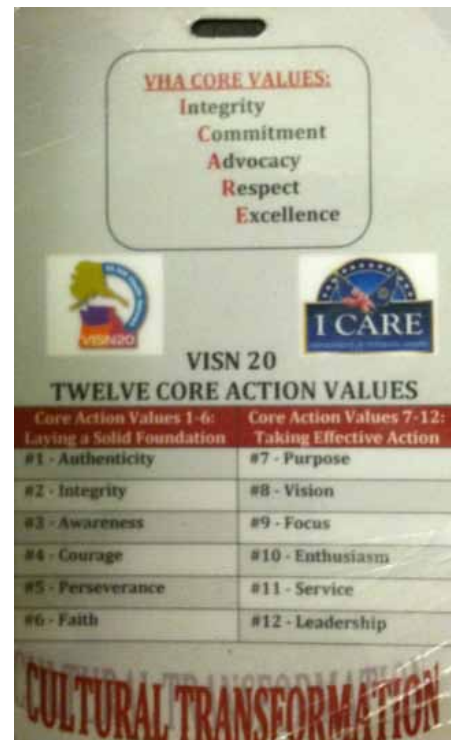
The best values statements don't stop with simply reciting the values; they go on to define behaviors that are essential to reinforcing those values—for example, the 53 total statements that comprise the values and principles of P&G. When Values Coach worked with the Alaska VA Healthcare System, one of our activities was working with the management team to define behavioral expectations. From an original list of more than 50 items, the leadership group defined six non-negotiable expectations, then coupled each with a commitment on the part of the organization to help people act upon those values. This document is included in the illustration below.

Alaska VA Healthcare System Behavioral Expectations and Commitments

This statement outlines the behavioral standards that managers and employees of AVAHS are expected follow to honor the VA Core Values of compassion, commitment, excellence, professionalism, integrity, accountability, and stewardship.

We expect excellent performance in every employee's work, and are committed to exceeding VA performance measures to provide the highest quality service to our veterans while also being effective stewards of our resources.

We expect every VA employee to project a positive and professional image in their attitudes and behaviors, and are committed to holding people accountable for treating patients and coworkers with respect and dignity, and for reflecting a high level of pride and ownership in our shared mission of serving veterans.



The nametag used by employees at VISN 20 of the Veterans Health Administration features both the I CARE values of the VA and The Twelve Core Action Values



We expect open communications within our organization, *and are committed to* a visible leadership presence and assuring our communications have been fully and accurately conveyed.

We expect that VA employees will take responsibility for their ongoing education, *and are committed to* providing staff with the time, tools, education and training they need to be successful in their jobs.

We expect VA employees to make efficient and productive use of their time, and *are committed to* keeping a focus on key priorities, minimizing unnecessary meetings and assignments, planning our work so as to reduce stress levels for support staff, showing up for meetings on time and fully prepared for the agenda, and being attentive and courteous during meetings.

We expect every VA employee to act with integrity, and are committed to a zero tolerance policy for dishonesty, abusive or unethical behavior, sexual harassment, discrimination, or theft, and to creating a safe environment where employees can report problems without fear of reprisal.

Toolkit Exercise #3-10: Expect people to learn the values of your organization—by heart

If we can expect kindergarten children to learn The Pledge of Allegiance by heart, there's no reason you can't expect your employees to know your organization's values by heart, and to know the expectations that are created by those values. Auto-Owners Insurance has ten core values, and expects its associates to know all ten; over a five-year period, I asked hundreds of associates to prove that they knew them and, almost without exception, everyone did. To help people with this expectation, think creatively about how you can provide memory aids. In VISN 20 of the Veterans Health Administration, they created a laminated card with the VA's I-CARE values, which are *organizational* values, and *The Twelve Core Action Values* from the Values Coach course, which are *personal* values. As I mentioned in the webinar, Beryl Health has its values prominently posted throughout their facility.



10 Great Ideas to Help People Learn *Their* Organization's Core Values

Great Idea #1: Make sure that the values are authentic and are worded in a way that inspires and does not sound boring or generic (avoid boilerplate!).

Great Idea #2: Establish an expectation that anyone with a management title will know your values by heart (that does not mean rote memorization of the words but rather that they have internalized the essence), and that they can intelligently discuss why those values were chosen to the exclusion of other possibilities, and describe the attitudinal and behavioral expectations that those values create.

Great Idea #3: Require prospective employees to read and sign your statement of values even before the first interview. Include your values on the recruiting page of your website, perhaps with a video of current employees talking about what those values mean to them.

Great Idea #4: Discuss each value during new employee orientation asking people to discuss some of the ways they would expect to see those values enacted within the organization. Have longer-tenured employees—including senior managers!—share personal stories about what those values mean to them. At the end of orientation administer a test, or randomly ask people to describe (not just recite) the values, and the expectations they create.

Great Idea #5: Make checking on people's knowledge of your organization's core values a part of management rounds. Do something nice for people who know them (e.g. a Starbucks card or having their name entered for a monthly drawing of some sort).

Great Idea #6: Think of creative ways to post your values around the facility: you could name corridors for various values ("Take a left at Integrity Way and you'll find the elevators just past Enthusiasm Trail."). You could give each value a mascot (you could also make this a fun exercise to help people think about how to make decisions when values conflict—when does the mascot for honesty prevail over the mascot for loyalty?) The only limit is the imagination of your people. Especially for



this one, senior leadership might have to collectively bite its tongue as it listens to great ideas generated by the Cultural Blueprinting Team.

Great Idea #7: Share your values with customers (e.g. in packaging) and patients (e.g. in the patient admission kit). This will have the added benefit of enhancing people’s accountability to the organization’s core values because another set of eyes will be watching to see whether you really do walk your values talk.

Great Idea #8: Videotape customers (patients in healthcare) sharing brief stories about how people living the values affected their experience in a positive way. Post these on You Tube and on your website (after having gotten permission from individuals being shown).

Great Idea #9: Ask employees to write about what the organization’s core values mean to them in their own words and then—after editing for reasonable accuracy and appropriateness—print what each individual has written on quality paper. Then give them a framed copy so that they can put these personal reminders up in their work area or take home with them.

Great Idea #10: Identify each value with a piece of candy and have supervisors hand them out to staff: a Payday candy bar to represent financial performance; a Hershey’s Kiss to represent compassion; a Jawbreaker to represent perseverance; Good & Plenty to represent diversity, etc. For a more health-conscious alternative substitute fruit, nuts, and vegetables.

“Employees who can say they know and understand their organizational values are **30 times more likely** to be fully engaged than those who can’t say the same. A simple thing like well-communicated organizational values is foundational to creating a culture of engagement.” (emphasis added)

Don MacPherson: *Who really owns employee engagement?*
A special report from Modern Survey
(<http://www.modernsurvey.com/accountability-engagement>)





Questions to Ask about Your Organization's Core Values

“ A world of questions is a world of possibility. Questions open our minds, connect us to each other, and shake outmoded paradigms.”

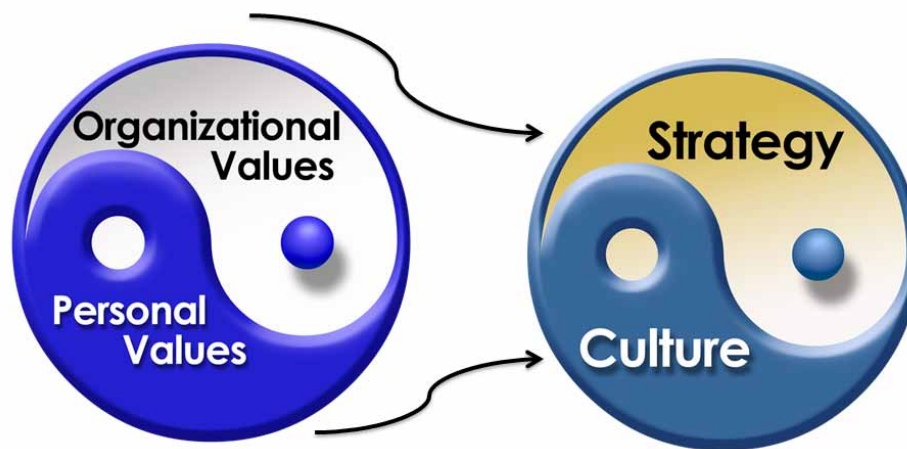
Merrilee Adams: *Change Your Questions Change Your Life*

- ✓ Question #1: Why did we choose these values and do people buy into them?
- ✓ Question #2: Does our statement of values have heart—is it authentic—or is it generic boilerplate (boringplate)?
- ✓ Question #3: How does our statement of values differentiate our organization in a competitive environment? Or could it just as well be hung on the wall of anyone else in our industry without anyone knowing the difference?
- ✓ Question #4: Are the values we have chosen operationally relevant? Are they societally relevant?
- ✓ Question #5: How often should we revisit our values? Is now a good time for a thorough review?
- ✓ Question #6: Do we have the courage to enforce our values with managers, employees, suppliers, others?
- ✓ Question #7: Do members of our executive team use values to instill the mental and emotional toughness to thrive in the competitive environment?
- ✓ Question #8: What training and development can we undertake to help our people do a better job of living their personal values as a way of enhancing commitment to our organizational values?



And finally—your core values should lay the foundation for culture

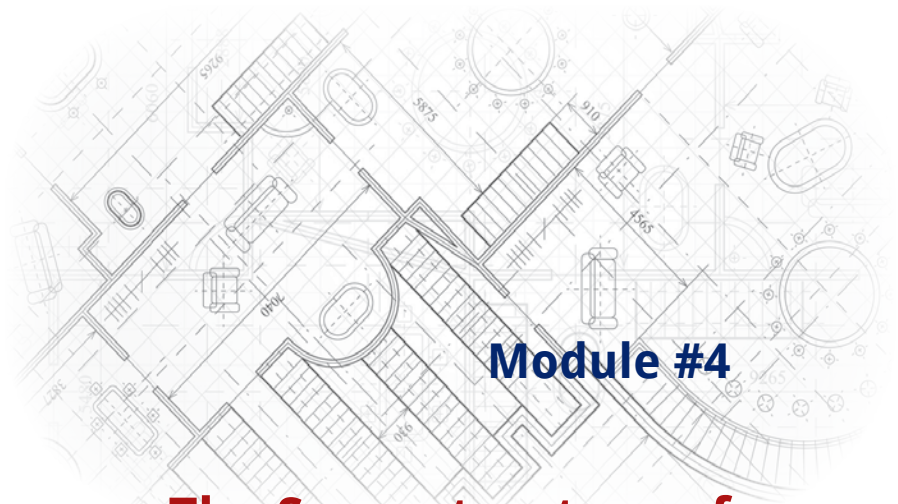
Your core values are the foundation for the invisible architecture of your organization, and such they should support your desired super structure of organizational culture. For example, if you want to have a culture characterized by fun in the workplace, like the one at Texas Roadhouse or Zappos, at least one of your values should inspire that culture.



Organizational values define strategy

Personal values define culture

“ If we lose sight of our vision and bury our values, then we have lost our soul.”
David Whyte: *The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of Soul in Corporate America*



The Superstructure of Organizational Culture

Goals for this Module

1. Understand how culture builds on values, and why it is important for an organization to have a culture plan to reinforce its strategic plan.
2. Describe why Peter Drucker—and many others since him—said that culture eats strategy for lunch, and the implications for your organization.
3. Describe the essential characteristics of a culture of ownership and why it is so important.
4. Share key lessons and strategies for cultural transformation and for building a culture of ownership.

Culture is the superstructure of your organization's Invisible Architecture. It's ironic that, while almost every organization has a strategic plan; very few have a culture plan. But a great culture will rarely evolve spontaneously. Hubspot is a young internet marketing company that as of this writing has about 300 employees. Like a number of other tech-intensive startups (e.g. Zappos and Netflix) Hubspot has defined its desired culture in what they call The Hubspot Culture Code (you can see the 152-slide PowerPoint describing at the [Hubspot website](#)). One of the slides asks why a company should work on culture, and subsequent slides answer by saying that culture is to recruiting



what product is to marketing, and that the interest rate on “culture debt” is much higher than it is on financial or technological debt. People have changed, it says, but many companies act culturally as they have for the past 50 years. The slide show details what they mean by their culture code, but these are the headlines:

THE HUBSPOT CULTURE CODE

1. We are as maniacal about our metrics as our mission.
2. We obsess over customers, not competitors.
3. We are radically and uncomfortably transparent.
4. We give ourselves the autonomy to be awesome.
5. We are unreasonably selective about our peers.
6. We invest in individual mastery and market value.
7. We defy conventional “wisdom” as it’s often unwise.
8. We speak the truth and face the facts.
9. We believe in work+life, not work vs. life.
10. We are a perpetual work in progress.

Hubspot has been recognized as being a great place to work, and many of the comments posted on the online slide show say things like “I wish my company was like this” and “I would love to work for this company.” One of the most important investments you can make in the competitive stature of your organization is to clearly define your culture: the personality and the character of the community where your people work.

“ Every organization has a culture. Unfortunately, many, if not most, cultures develop by happenstance. They are the result of a myriad of actions, experiences, decisions, and personalities that determine, over a creative time, how people think and behave while at work. Successful organizations do not leave their culture to chance. They deploy mechanisms to evaluate the current workplace and then strategically plan for the changes that need to take place. A culture that promotes ordinary greatness must be carefully cultivated, monitored, and supported on an ongoing basis. Cultures that embrace ordinary greatness are associated with higher employee engagement, higher productivity, better talent retention, and innovative approaches to issues and challenges.”

Pamela Bilbrey and Brian Jones:

Ordinary Greatness: It's Where You Least Expect It... Everywhere



Eight essential characteristics of a culture of ownership

A culture of ownership is unlikely to evolve spontaneously, but it can be fostered through deliberate management effort. The book *The Florence Prescription: From Accountability to Ownership* describes eight essential characteristics for a culture of ownership (the eBook edition can be downloaded—along with PowerPoint study guide, webinar, and other complementary materials—for no charge at www.TheFlorenceChallenge.com). Following is a summary of those characteristics and a test to assess how your organization fares.

- 1. Commitment:** People who think like owners are committed to the values, vision and mission of their organization, and are committed to their own development in their professional roles. It is this sort of commitment that led the CareTech Solutions employees that I described in Webinar #2 to don hazmat suits and wade through garbage at the dump to retrieve several lost laptops that might have had sensitive patient information. You cannot write commitment like this into a job description—it comes from a sense of personal ownership for the work.
- 2. Engagement:** People who think like owners are actively engaged in their work and feel a sense of connection with their coworkers and with their organization. At one insurance agency, everyone has the same job description: *First and foremost a salesperson, last but not least a janitor, and in between whatever needs to be done*. After being warmly greeted by the receptionist, a visitor can expect her to begin the process of evaluating their needs and suggesting insurance products that can help meet those needs. Values Coach has worked with more than a dozen hospitals that are members of Planetree, the leading proponent of patient-centered care. The *sine qua non* for patient-centered care is caregiver engagement with the patient (something that Florence Nightingale emphasized in her classic book *Notes on Nursing*). Planetree caregiver retreats are one way that hospitals re-engage people with the spirit of purpose and mission that should be the driving force behind the healing professions.
- 3. Passion:** People who think like owners believe their work is important, and they do it with great enthusiasm. Southwest Airlines is a great example of a company that has fostered a culture of ownership with their hiring mantra of “hire for attitude, train for skill” (hopefully not for pilots!), and by expecting that people will have fun on the job. In the case of long-term employees who



are experiencing “burnout,” the challenge is often resparking the initial passion and enthusiasm that attracted them into their professions in the first place.

4. **Initiative:** People who think like owners anticipate problems and seek opportunities, then have the gumption to take action and seek help if they need it. In *The Florence Prescription* I call this the “Proceed Until Apprehended” principle. One of the core values of West Central is innovation; as a result of a culture that encourages initiative they became one of the nation’s most successful value-added agricultural cooperatives and world’s largest producers of biodiesel fuel, eventually spinning that business off into a new corporation—Renewable Energy Group.
5. **Stewardship:** In a culture of ownership, people are as careful with the organization’s resources as they are with their own, in part because they know that the organization’s leaders are concerned with helping them optimize their own resources. Real stewardship, though, is more than just being judicious with existing resources—it is also thinking creatively about how to create value.
6. **Belonging:** People who think like owners are given the inside story regarding operations and finance; hired hands are told only what they need to know to get their own jobs done. Jack Stack and his team at Springfield ReManufacturing (a company that rebuilds diesel truck engines) invented “open book management” to assure that every line worker understands the company’s finances in detail, including how their own work impacts the bottom line—and their paychecks. At Pixar, the weekly staff meeting covers technology, finance, competition and other key operating issues; every employee, from CEO to housekeeper, attends the entire meeting.
7. **Fellowship:** The Gallup study mentioned previously showed that a leading indicator of employee engagement is whether people have good friends at work. A culture of ownership, where people are truly engaged in the work, is characterized by a spirit of fellowship that encourages friendly collegiality. *The Pickle Challenge* is one of the exercises we prescribe to diagnose the level of toxic emotional negativity in an organization, which is the first step toward eradicating it. A spirit of fellowship cannot grow in an emotionally toxic workplace environment. I’ll have more to say about that in Module #5.



- 8. Pride:** People who think like owners take pride in their jobs, in their professions, and in their organizations, and in themselves. One of the exercises I often conduct in my workshops is challenging people with having a great answer for the universal icebreaker question “What do you do?” The ideal answer will convey this: I love what I do, I’m good at what I do, I’m proud of what I do, and what I do makes a difference.

“ Why is so much time and energy being invested in showing product differentiation instead of sharing who the company is and their unique story? To me that defines an opportunity lost.”

Dave Carroll: United Breaks Guitars: The Power of One Voice in the Age of Social Media

Toolkit Exercise #4-1: Rate your organization on the eight essential characteristics of a culture of ownership

Think about the eight essential characteristics of a culture of ownership I just described. For each of the eight, circle the phrase that best captures the culture of your organization. For each “1” you circle give yourself one point; for each “2” you circle give yourself two points; and for each “3” you circle give yourself three points. Engage the management team, the Cultural Blueprinting Team, and employee groups in this exercise. I’ll share the scoring after you review the characteristics...

Commitment

- 1.** Most of our people are here for the paycheck, and would quickly jump ship to make more money elsewhere.
- 2.** Our people are reasonably loyal and hardworking, but most could be enticed away by a better offer.
- 3.** Our people are like barnacles on a ship, totally committed to the organization and its mission.



Engagement

1. For most of our people, every day is pretty much like the day before, and they go through their work on autopilot.
2. We are slightly better than the 25-60-15 Attitude Bell Curve distribution described by national studies, but fall well short of the highly-engaged workforce in organizations that consistently make “best places to work” rosters.
3. You frequently hear statements like “above and beyond the call” and “proceed until apprehended” to describe our people’s approach to their work.

Passion

1. The workplace environment is substantially dominated by toxic emotional negativity, and there are minimal consequences for chronic complaining, gossiping, and other acts of the emotional vampire.
2. Our organization is characterized by a reasonable level of cheerful optimism, but you would never go a whole day without hearing somebody complain about something, and would certainly never see and impromptu pep rally in a cafeteria.
3. Zappos got nothing on us, baby!

Initiative

1. You might as well talk to a rock as try to get our people to take initiative for doing something they aren’t absolutely required to do.
2. People are generally willing to take initiative along well-worn paths, but usually ask for permission before acting and are quick to defer to any semblance of authority.
3. Around here it really is better to ask for forgiveness than permission.

Stewardship

1. Compared to competitors, our productivity is on the low end and our cost per unit is on the high end; we have a few radicals trying to push us into recycling but most of our waste ends up in the landfill.
2. People are reasonably careful about not wasting resources, and we are working toward LEED certification.



3. We all treat organizational resources as if they are our own, and care deeply about the world we are passing along to our great grandchildren.

Belonging

1. Our people think and act like hired hands and not like partners in the enterprise because that's how we treat them: the “mushrooms in the dark” metaphor might have been invented here.
2. We share financial information and other operating details in newsletters, town hall meetings, and if people ask.
3. Members of our leadership team have studied the Great Game of Business, and we take open book management very seriously.

Fellowship

1. This place reminds people of scorpions trapped in a bottle.
2. For the most part we treat each other with respect and dignity, we have cake to celebrate people's birthdays, and last year we did a fund-raiser when one employee's house burned down.
3. Think of the world's most supportive support group. That's us.

Pride

1. If you read a twitter post blasting our company, chances are it was written by an employee.
2. Our people generally say nice things about the organization, and will usually come to its defense in the face of criticism.
3. Our people are as passionate about the organization as they are about their college football team.

Pride is one of the three most important characteristics that make for a great workplace, according to the Great Place to Work Institute.



How do you rate your organization?

Once you have an average of all responses—where the minimum number of points will be 8 and the maximum will be 24—give your organization a rating:

1-12: Your organization might already be in what Jim Collins calls stage 4 decline, the irreversible slide into obsolescence, irrelevance, or bankruptcy. You have probably lost and continue to lose your best people while Vampires and Pickle-Suckers haunt the hallways looking for new employees to suck into the quicksand of toxic emotional negativity with them. You already have a hard time recruiting great talent, and that problem is about to get a whole lot worse because whether you admit it or not, your organization is circling the cultural drain.

13-19: Your organization is probably holding its own, benefitting from the fact that the economic recession has kept skilled older workers from retiring when they had planned to, and possibly from one or more cash cow products and services. You spend more money on recruiting and advertising than you would if your employees really were your best salespeople. Every new job vacancy creates problems because “not my job” and “I don’t get paid for this” attitudes prevent other people from picking up the load. The loss of a small number of “Spark Plugs” would be seriously disruptive if not catastrophic.

20-24: Congratulations, you already have a very positive culture (which is probably why you are still working on it!). Just make sure you are not wearing rose-colored glasses—especially if the only people completing the survey were managers and members of the Cultural Blueprinting Team.

“ You don’t have to be a famous ‘great person’ to lead change and transformation, but you do need to have and convey intentionality. That comes from your inner wellspring of hopes, desires, and visionary beliefs. As a change guide, you have to tap into spirit, lend it to others, and put heart and soul into your organization.”

John McGuire and Gary Rhodes: *Transforming Your Leadership Culture*



Essential Lessons for Cultural Transformation

Our work helping organizations work on cultural transformation actually began as an offshoot of our work teaching courses on values-based life and leadership skills (especially *The Twelve Core Action Values*) at the personal level. Over time, we started seeing that when people began to change their attitudes and behaviors, they gradually had an impact on the culture of the workplace. Here is a summary of some of the most important lessons we have learned through our experience about what makes for successful culture change.

Lesson #1: Senior Leadership Example

The most common excuse we hear from people as to why they are not buying into any initiative meant to create a more positive and productive workplace environment is that they don't think senior leaders are walking the talk. And while in many cases it is just that—an excuse for not getting on board—there are simple things executives can do to take away that excuse. A few strategic symbolic actions can have a powerful impact. A few strategic symbolic actions can have a powerful impact, as can sharing personal stories of the leaders, the way that Dave Thomas' story of having been an orphan and his support for adoption has influenced the culture of the Wendy's corporation.

A letter from the CEO to all employees explaining the project and how it reinforces previous undertakings (we call this “initiative coherence”) can preempt criticisms of “program of the month” syndrome. In our most successful rollouts, members of the senior management team (sometimes including the CEO) have gone through the training to become Certified Values Coach Trainers themselves. They participate in a daily group reading of each day's promise from **The Self-Empowerment Pledge**, and in other ways show they are supportive of and committed to the culture change process.

Lesson #2: Middle Management Engagement

This will make or break any cultural transformation effort. If middle managers understand the need for and are committed to the success of the initiative, a positive outcome is virtually guaranteed. On the other hand, if they roll their eyes and present it to their people as another flavor of the month being foisted upon the organization by out-of-touch executives, you're swimming upstream against a very strong current. When we work with individual organizations, one of our first steps is to make sure that we have middle management on-board, because this is where the rubber meets the road.



A note to middle managers: When you accept the job title “manager” or “supervisor,” you give up certain freedoms. You give up the freedom to criticize and second-guess the direction that leadership has set for the organization. Before decisions are made, by all means make your arguments for or against the program—but once the commitment has been made, you have an ethical responsibility to do everything you can to assure the success of that program. If you cannot get behind a decision as if it were your own, then you have a duty to step down from the management role and let someone else take the lead who really does believe in the effort. That is the “courageous support” side of the courageous follower formula described by Ira Chaleff in his book of that title.

Lesson #3: Embrace Skeptics and Marginalize Cynics

Skeptics are the people who ask you why and how something will work because they really want to know. They ask challenging questions like “why are we spending money on this rather than something else” and “where else has this worked and why do we believe it can work here?” These are legitimate questions that deserve thoughtful answers. Once their questions have been answered, skeptics often become your biggest supporters. You should do anything you can to engage the skeptics in the process—even those (especially those!) who challenge you with the most difficult questions.

Cynics, on the other hand, are people who ask such questions because they don’t want something to work—or even to stop it dead in its tracks before it even starts. They don’t want things to change because they are happy (or more often, comfortable with being unhappy) with things just the way they are. Their biggest fear is that the workplace environment will become so positive that no one will listen to their complaining and participate in their gossip anymore. You should do everything you can to marginalize the cynics, because they will have a toxic influence on the culture change process.

Lesson #4: Plow Through Resistance

Transforming the culture of an organization is a lot like running a marathon, and there will almost inevitably come a point where you hit a wall of resistance. Paradoxically, this is often just prior to the point where the organization is about to make a quantum leap forward. There are many reasons for this, among which is the fact that the people who don’t want to see the change are increasingly afraid that it will happen (because they are seeing it happen). It is at this point that leadership commitment is tested, and where the team must be unwavering in its support. That does not mean



midcourse corrections can't be made, only that you don't give in to the forces of inertia and entropy. Adapt, always; quit, never.

Lesson #5: Hit the Right Motivational Buttons

As Zig Ziglar says, everyone listens to the same radio station—WIIFM, or What's In It For Me? When we kick off a Values Collaborative project, we encourage the CEO to tell people that it's not really about customer service or patient satisfaction, productivity or the bottom line, that first and foremost it is a course of values-based life and leadership skills that will help them manage their own time and money more effectively, be better parents, and be happier people. Of course, when people make those sort of changes, it cannot but help to promote a more positive and productive culture within the organization.

Lesson #6: Achieve Escape Velocity and Critical Mass

Escape velocity is the speed that a rocket must achieve in order to escape the earth's gravitational pull. Effective culture change requires a sense of urgency: you need enough people who are moving fast enough to escape the negativity, pessimism, cynicism, and inertia of the past. A closely-related concept is the notion of critical mass. Research has shown that once about one-third of a given population becomes committed to a change, that change becomes all-but inevitable. A great real-world example is the movement to ban smoking in public places. Once one-third of us became intolerant to being poisoned (and allowing our children to be poisoned) by other people's cigarette smoke, the movement to outlaw public smoking gained irresistible force. One of the first steps to building a culture of ownership is fostering cultural intolerance to toxic emotional negativity (which is the emotional and spiritual equivalent of toxic cigarette smoke).

Lesson #7: Stories are the Vector for Culture Change

At least until recent years, the most celebrated corporate culture in the business world was The HP Way at Hewlett-Packard, which was one of the featured companies in the first breakthrough business bestseller *In Search of Excellence* by Tom Peters and Bob Waterman. The HP culture was largely shaped through the telling of "Bill and Dave" stories. Stories are incredibly influential, and the more personal the better. Every year, Catholic Health Initiatives (a large not-for-profit healthcare system) publishes *Sacred Stories* in which employees from their various hospitals share their care experiences. These stories tell prospective patients and employees more about what it's like to work for and to be cared for at one of the system's hospitals than all the advertising money can buy.



Unfortunately, unless there is a systematic process for capturing and remembering stories, like the one used by Catholic Health Initiatives, they are quickly forgotten. People must be encouraged to share their stories. They will often feel like their story isn't worth sharing because they were "just doing the job." And there must be a system for editing and archiving stories, if they are to be optimally used in the cultural transformation process.

Lesson #8: Make it Fun

Southwest Airlines and Zappos have been widely recognized for their amazingly positive corporate cultures, and one characteristic they both incorporate is fun. You can be very serious about the work of cultural transformation, and still make it fun. In the Values Collaborative, for example, we share The Pickle Challenge, a lighthearted approach to confronting toxic emotional negativity in the workplace. A story from the early days of the Cray supercomputer company illustrates the creative power of simple fun. During a particularly stressful time when the engineering staff could not resolve a difficult technical challenge, company founder Seymour Cray came into the lab and—instead of encouraging people to work harder and stay later—took them all to the river to go tubing. When they returned, the problem was quickly solved.

Culture Really Does Eat Strategy for Lunch

Enron had a brilliant strategy; what brought the company down was a fatally-flawed culture. Each of the legendary companies I wrote about in my book **All Hands on Deck: 8 Essential Lessons for Building a Culture of Ownership** has, over the years, pursued seriously flawed strategies (does anyone remember the McDonald's Hula Burger or HP's butterfly personal computer?); what saved these companies time and again was an incredibly powerful culture.

“The visionary companies translate their ideologies into *tangible* mechanisms aligned to send a consistent set of reinforcing signals... This finding has massive practical implications. It means that companies seeking an 'empowered' or decentralized work environment should first and foremost impose a tight ideology, screen and indoctrinate people into that ideology, eject the viruses, and give those who remain the tremendous sense of responsibility that comes with membership in an elite organization.” (emphasis in original)

Jim Collins and Jerry Porras: *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*



Toolkit Exercise #4-2: Diagram Your Culture Plan with the Culture Mapping Schematic Tool

This circular diagram is one of the tools we use to help our clients think about what they need in order to promote a stronger culture of ownership—which in today’s world is really the only sustainable source of competitive advantage when it comes to recruiting and retaining great people and earning “raving fans” customer loyalty. You can download this diagram from the Cultural Blueprinting website and make copies for everyone who is engaged in the exercise. It is a great way to engage people in the dialog: what are the benefits of having a culture of ownership (the why), what are the specific characteristics that we want to promote in our culture (the what), and what actions can we take to foster those characteristics (the how).





Someone at a Values Coach client likened this tool to the lock on a bank vault: You start with the inside circle of the specific outcome you wish to achieve by promoting a culture of ownership. Then you line that up with one specific cultural characteristic that will help you achieve that outcome, and from there move on to a particular strategy that will help you build that characteristic. The power of this tool is in the fact that it helps you focus on specifics. Unlike a bank vault lock, however, there is not one single combination that opens the door—rather using a range of combinations will give you multiple options for defining the action steps that will help you achieve the goal.

Start with the inner ring and identify the salient reasons why you need to foster a stronger culture of ownership by drawing a circle around it (if your primary purposes are not included here, simply write them in). In the second ring, circle a characteristic that must exist in order for you to achieve that quality of a culture of ownership. Then, in the outer ring circle one or more specific actions that can help you cultivate that characteristic, and discuss how you would go about implementing that action in your organization. Now repeat the process for any of the other reasons you have for wanting to promote a culture of ownership from the inner ring. I will illustrate with an example.

1. Defining the “Why” You Need a Culture of Ownership (Loyalty)



Let’s say that you’ve been reading the latest book by Fred Reichheld on the importance of employee, customer, and stakeholder loyalty and decide that is a quality you want to promote in your organization. I’ve highlighted it in yellow. If you’re working with a small group, lead a discussion on why loyalty is important, including the costs and benefits. If you are in a fast food restaurant with characteristically high turnover that conversation will be quite different than if



you're managing the intensive care services of a hospital where the loss of a single experienced ICU nurse can result in a five-figure cost for recruiting and training a replacement. For the fast food restaurant achieving annual turnover of 25% might be nothing short of miraculous—for the intensive care unit of a large hospital a 25% turnover rate could be disastrous.

Now consider the factors that are contributing to turnover—both of employees and of customers. Employee engagement and customer satisfaction surveys, results of focus groups, and other data can help you get a handle on what your challenges are, as can comparing your organization with industry benchmarks.

2. Identifying Characteristics You Need to Promote to Foster that Culture (Pride)



Having identified loyalty as one of the key qualities you want to enhance in your culture of ownership, look at the second ring for the cultural characteristics you need to promote in order to build that quality. (This ring features the 8 essential characteristics of a culture of ownership that are described in the book *The Florence Prescription: From Accountability to Ownership*). Any one of those characteristics will help you promote loyalty. The beauty of this tool is that it helps you focus your

attention on one thing at a time. So for this exercise we select “pride” which, along with connection and trust, is one of the three essential variables identified by the Great Place to Work Institute to make such a list. Circle that word and repeat the discussion you had about loyalty: how would the proverbial Man from Mars rate your organization on the pride scale? At Values Coach, we think of pride along these four dimensions:

- Pride in your work
- Pride in your profession



- Pride in your organization
- Pride in yourself

Being as objective as possible consider the collective pride in your organization along these four dimensions (keeping in mind that substantial research shows that the higher you are on the organization chart, the more likely you are to overestimate how wonderful things are).

3. Taking Action to Promote a Culture of Ownership (Values Integration)



This is, of course, where the rubber hits the road. Action is the difference between wishful thinking and positive thinking, between mere good intentions and effective interventions. So in the outer ring, circle one action you can take to improve your performance on the characteristic you circled in the second ring. (These are the strategies described in the book *All Hands on Deck: 8 Essential Lessons for Building a Culture of Ownership*). In my example, I've highlighted helping your people make

the connection between their personal values and the values of the organization. Kouzes and Posner, coauthors of *The Leadership Challenge*, say that their research shows the more clear people are about their personal values, the more likely they are to buy into the values of the organization.

When it comes to action steps, you might well decide that you should take a multifaceted approach. In the case of enhancing loyalty, each and every one of the blocks in the outer ring can apply—as well as others you might think of that are not included in this schematic. But since you can't do everything all at once, the key is to prioritize the most important strategy (e.g. values integration or creating rituals or defining attitudinal expectations) and then specify the particular steps you will take.



“ People want guidance, not rhetoric. They need to know what the plan of action is, and how it will be implemented. They want to be given responsibility to help solve the problem and authority to act on it.”

Howard Schultz, *Pour Your Heart Into It: How Starbucks Built a Company One Cup at a Time*

Toolkit Exercise #4-3: Do the 6-word culture clarification drill

The webinar describes this exercise, the inspiration for which was actually author Ernest Hemmingway. He was once challenged to write a short story in six words. His six words met all the criteria of a short story—it had a beginning, a middle, and an end, and it had an emotional impact while leaving unanswered questions in the reader’s mind. Him being Hemmingway it was, of course, a sad story so brace yourself: “For sale, baby shoes, never worn.”

The editors of *Smith Magazine* took this inspiration and invited people to write a 6-word memoir on their website, and then published the best of them in a book with the subtitle of “Not exactly what I was planning.” My favorite was from a 10-year old child with cancer who wrote: “Cursed with cancer, blessed with friends.” Adults with toxic negative attitudes of entitlement and victimhood could learn a lot from this brave little kid!

Having small groups work on a 6-word description of your corporate culture will give you a feel for how consistent their perspectives are, and how positive or negative they are. Collect all of the responses and use them as raw material to work toward a powerful unifying statement. Values Coach worked with one global medical products company where managers and salespeople in different groups at an all-day leadership workshop came up with descriptions like these:

> Positive

- global company driven by motivated individuals
- passionate people leveraging continuously evolving technology
- people power, performance best in class
- responsibility, excellence, innovation, achieving cultural ownership
- exceed customer expectations, whatever it takes



— Neutral

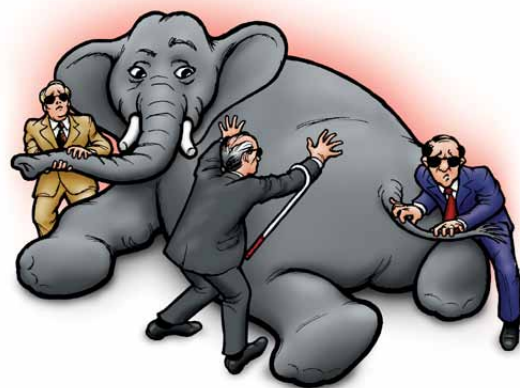
- achieving goals in spite of ourselves
- superior technology—corporate hates sales
- we will regain what we've lost
- despite our processes we will overcome
- quick to change, slow to adjust!

< Negative

- process driven crisis management creating dysfunction
- process driven innovation limited by processes
- great company, often own worst enemy
- centralized decision, compartmentalized communication, field confusion
- admonished to cooperate; incentivized on silos

These are people who work in the same division of the same company! And this is fairly typical of the results we see. There is obviously a broad range of perceptions (like the parable of the blind men feeling the elephant that I mentioned in the webinar)—from highly positive to thoroughly critical. One thing this exercise makes very clear is that while people are clearly proud of their company, their products, and the difference they can make, there is a high level of frustration with what is perceived to be excessive bureaucracy, processes that hinder rather than help, and an incentive structure that inhibits teamwork. One could also surmise that salespeople were more likely to perceive a process dysfunction than were managers, who were probably more positive about the culture. This exercise highlights perceived cultural deficiencies, and the degree to which there is and is not consensus on what that culture is.

After conducting this first, diagnostic, round do a second, prescriptive, round in which participants are asked to describe the *ideal* culture in just six words. This will help you diagnose the extent to which there is a shared vision of the organization at its highest potential, and serve as a springboard to start making necessary changes to foster that culture.



Will the people describing the culture of your organization be like the blind men feeling the elephant, each having completely different impressions based upon where they work and the people with whom they work?

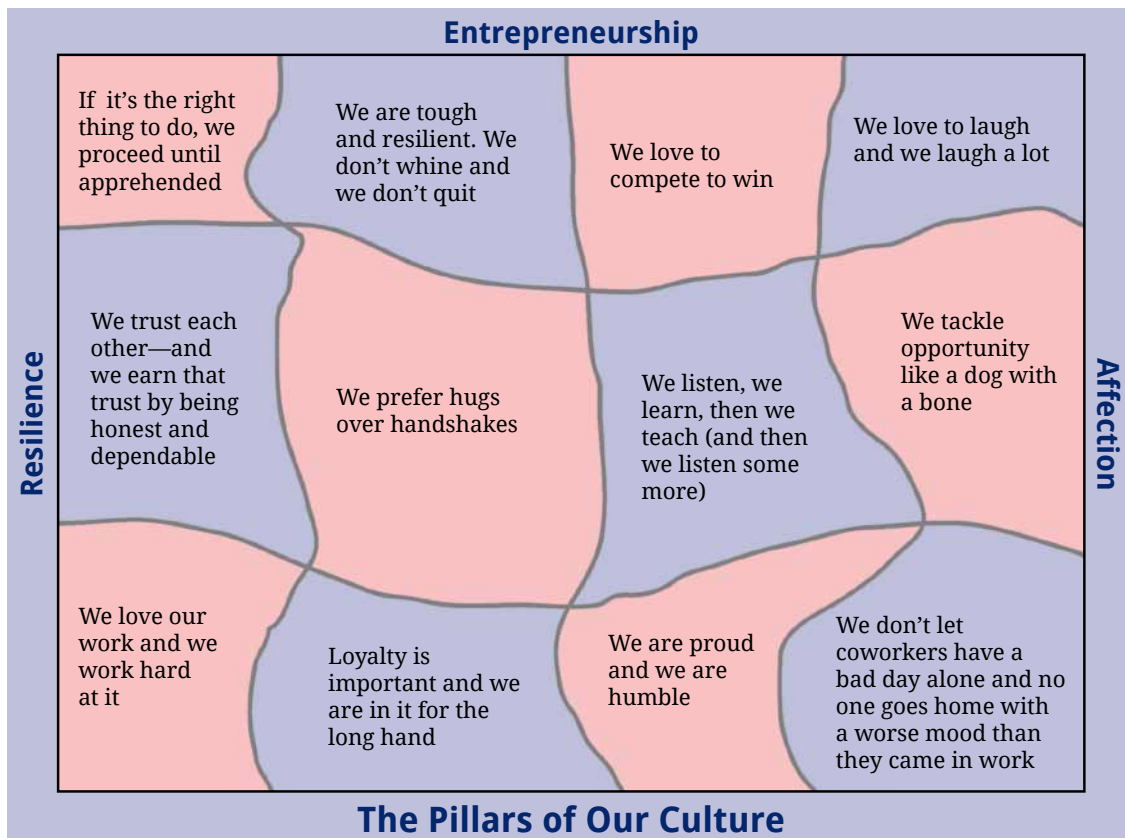


Toolkit Exercise #4-4: Recognize that culture is like a patchwork quilt

Any organization does not have a single culture; rather, it is a patchwork of cultures. Let's look at a typical hospital. There is a nursing culture and a food service culture and a pharmacy culture and a housekeeping culture (and so forth). And within each culture, there are many subcultures. So in Nursing, there is a med-surg culture and an emergency department culture and an intensive care unit culture—and within the intensive care unit there is a night shift culture and a day shift culture. This is a contributing factor to “the silo effect” in which the various divisions (“divisions”—the very word implies to divide) within the organization act in ways that are disconnected. Culture can bring down silo walls and promote more effective communication—or it can make the walls higher and thicker.

The leadership challenge is thus to impose those core elements that are to be required of every subculture, and then to honor those elements that make each subunit special and unique. Returning to the mixed metaphor of silos and patchwork quilts, great organizations bring down the silo walls with shared values and common cultural expectations, weaving together many disparate subcultures into a larger pattern that is both beautiful and functional. For this exercise, imagine that you have a box full of fabric pieces, each labeled with qualities you want to see in the culture of your organization. Have your group engage in a dialog about the personality and the character of your organization. What are the qualities and characteristics that make working for the organization a great experience? What are the attitudes and behaviors you expect of each other? How do you want customers (and patients in healthcare) to perceive the personality and the character of your organization?

Note several things in this hypothetical example. First is the absence of boilerplate—participants in the exercise have used real world language that is obviously from the heart. Second, there is quite a bit of paradox (work hard and laugh a lot, humble and proud, competitive and mutually supportive)—as previously described, great cultures often have paradoxical qualities. Third, note how the three overarching pillars really spring from the elements within the borders. Finally, imagine how much fun the people engaged in this exercise must have had—and how great their organization will be if they really can foster a culture that reflects those qualities.



What would be the essential cultural pillars of the “quilt” in your organization, and what characteristics would the individual pieces of “fabric” describe

If you have a quilt maker on staff, that person can actually create a quilt that can be hung in the cafeteria or other location where it will be a visible (and hopefully beautiful) reminder of the ideal culture—the personality and the character of your organization.

“ Changing a culture takes time. It requires positive and constructive reinforcement to keep going in the right direction. It’s easy to get off track and slip back into the old way of doing things. We live in a society that wants change to happen instantly. We want to see immediate results from our efforts. Lasting change doesn’t work that way. Patience is required.”

Dennis Snow and Teri Yanovitch:

Unleashing Excellence: The Complete Guide to Ultimate Customer Service



Toolkit Exercise #4-5: Know and tell your Big Story and the little stories that give it life

Stories are the oldest and most powerful form of human communication, and are the single-best way of gaining buy-in to the organization's culture. In the glory days of Hewlett-Packard, "Bill and Dave" stories shaped what became known as The HP Way; the Nordstrom culture of decentralized empowerment is reinforced by stories of associates taking it upon themselves to do things that would get them fired in companies with a more rigid culture. Almost anyone who has ever flown Southwest Airlines can tell a story about how the crew went out of their way to make passengers laugh (for example, see flight attendant David Holmes doing the pre-flight instructions as a rap song on YouTube).

In my book *All Hands on Deck: 8 Essential Lessons for Building a Culture of Ownership*, I share stories that involve the founders of organizations with cultures that, albeit with ups and downs, have stood the test of time. Telling and re-telling the founder's story, including the values that inspire the founder to start the organization can foster pride in and alignment with those values.

Every year, Catholic Health Initiatives asks employees to submit stories that reflect the spirit and values of the organization. These are then edited and published online as *Sacred Stories* (you can see an archive of the first twelve editions at this link: [CHI Sacred Stories](#)). Like the Bill and Dave Stories that shaped The HP Way, the stories that foster the fun-loving culture of Southwest Airlines, and the stories that companies like Mary Kay use to motivate people, these stories can be a powerful method of transmitting values and culture. Every organization has stories, but in many cases we are moving too fast to stop and collect them.

I once had lunch with the CEO of one of the world's largest producers of corporate training videos. I'll never forget how at one point he said, "Joe, if you really want to reach an audience you have to have sex with them." I laughed and said, "All of them?" He went on to say that the only way to reach an audience at an intellectual level was to first touch them at an emotional level—to create a Significant Emotional eXperience. The best—often the only- way to do that is with a story. The ability to select, craft, and tell a relevant story is an essential leadership skill (that also applies to sales, caregiving, parenting, and other areas of life). Every manager,



every salesperson—for that matter every employee—should know a few key stories that they can tell about their organization. These include:

The Founder's Story: Hewlett-Packard started in a garage; Mary Kay founded her cosmetics company when she got tired of seeing more junior and less qualified men being promoted ahead of her; Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital (in Hastings, Nebraska) was founded by the bereaved parents of a woman who died of an illness that could have been treated if only there had been a hospital in the community—that story is memorialized by a statue of young Mary at the hospital entrance.

Stories that answer anticipated questions: In any business there will be questions that repeatedly come up, and answering them with a great story is often the most effective response. When I'm asked about the ROI of values training we've proposed for a healthcare organization, I'll often start by sharing the story of an intensive care unit nurse at a client hospital. This nurse had great clinical skills but a toxic negative attitude, and was on the verge of being terminated. After going through the course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, she made a 180-degree change in the attitude she brought to work every day. The CEO subsequently told me that this nurse's personal transformation saved the hospital about \$200,000—the estimated cost of terminating the nurse then recruiting and training a replacement. Even more important, he said, she had become a role model and a mentor for others. After I've shared the story, I'll go on to talk about ROI in terms of more measurable criteria.

When I speak for groups of insurance agents, I'll ask which approach is more likely to get a young father who has just insured a new motorcycle to also get life insurance: mortality statistics for Harley riders or a story about how the agent was able to take care of a young widow and her children because he had talked her now-deceased husband into buying life insurance. Without exception, the unanimous response is that the story is far more likely to get a young motorcyclist to do the responsible thing for his family than sharing factual statistical data.

In Module #6 we will go in greater depth into the art and skill of crafting and telling a story that moves people.



Toolkit Exercise #4-6: Reinforce culture with rituals

Rituals were among the first signs of human civilization. In his book *The Reinvention of Work*, Matthew Fox writes that one of the most effective actions we can take to revitalize our careers and our organizations is to restore and renew rituals. Rituals foster a culture of ownership—and they are a good investment. Think of rituals as being stories without words—they help to define who you are as an organization. Simple rituals can have a big impact on culture if they are sustained over time. In its early days, the culture of IBM was influenced by men in blue suits and starched white shirts singing the IBM fight song; the early days of Wal-Mart was influenced by Sam Walton leading employees in the Wal-Mart cheer. Today, the culture of the Texas Roadhouse steakhouse chain is influenced by “alley rallies” in which employees sing and cheer before heading out to line dance with customers. The culture of the Les Schwab tire empire is influenced by the fact that their tire technicians do not wait in the showroom for customers to come in—they *run* out to greet them as soon as they pull into the parking lot.

Rituals have always been an important way for humans to bring a sense of structure and purpose to their work, yet in today’s organizations we’re too busy for rituals (we’ve replaced them with meetings). What can you do to restore the spirit and practice of rituals? Not having the time is a poor excuse: the Texas Roadhouse alley rally takes less than 2 minutes.

“Of all the ways to create work one is more crucial to our time than all the others. It is crucial because it has been most roundly neglected during the industrial era. I am speaking of ritual.”

Matthew Fox: *The Reinvention of Work*



Toolkit Exercise #4-7: Utilize the power of symbols

When we reach the module on *The Four Dimensions of Values-Based Leadership* I will say more about the leadership lessons that are implicit in *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien, but this one has particular relevance to designing the Invisible Architecture of an organization—the deliberate use of symbols. In his quest to regain the throne of his ancestors, Aragorn was acutely aware of the power of symbols. Though it was useless in combat, he carried “the sword that was broken” as a symbol of his heritage. His simple Ranger’s cloak was a symbol of the trials and dangers he would endure to protect his subjects from evil. The flag with the white tree and seven stars that he carried into the climactic battle before the gates of Minas Tirith was a symbol that the King had returned.

People will impute a great deal of meaning to a symbol; leaders can use this fact to their advantage or ignore it at their peril. The Hewlett-Packard garage, the Berlin Wall, the Golden Arches, the Swoosh—each conveys a depth of meaning that goes beyond the symbol itself. Jeff Bezos used the homemade desk as a symbol to instill a sense of frugality at Amazon.com (he also bought a house with a big garage when he moved to Seattle to start the company so that someday he could, like Bill and Dave at Hewlett-Packard, say that his company was started in a garage). Mary Kay Ash used the bumblebee (which according to aerodynamic theory should not be able to fly) as a symbol to encourage her representatives to set and achieve “impossible” goals. Like Aragorn, these and other effective leaders consciously utilized the power of symbols to convey their corporate identity and goals.

If you’re not attentive, symbols can also work against you. I was once at a large hospital that was in the midst of a bitter union campaign. One day I was in the cafeteria when the CEO strolled through en route to the private doctors’ dining lounge without acknowledging a single one of the worker bees to his left or right. He wasn’t wearing a suit jacket and you could see his diamond-stud cuff links glittering from across the room. At that very moment I knew the hospital would lose the election—which they did. Had that CEO been more attentive to the power of symbols, he would have gone to Sears and purchased an off-the-rack suit and left the diamond-stud cuff links in the drawer, at least until the election was over.



Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard were masters of leveraging symbols. Don't for one second think that the similarity between this photograph and the iconic painting American Gothic was a coincidence: Bill and Dave were reminding their employees of the American Dream embodied in the painting—hard work and dedication come before success.

Toolkit Exercise #4-8: Celebrate successes and good faith failures

One day an engineer at Hewlett-Packard had a Eureka moment that solved one of his department's most pressing technical challenges. At a loss for something to immediately recognize the accomplishment, the engineer's boss reached into his desk and pulled out a banana. In the succeeding years, "the golden banana" became one of the most coveted awards given out for innovative accomplishments. At Mayo Medical Ventures, one of the most prestigious awards one can receive is "the queasy eagle." This is awarded for the most spectacularly failed investment as a way of reinforcing the fact that venture capital firms, by their very nature, must accept and encourage risk-taking (though people don't want to earn too many of them!). Southwest Airlines is the most productive airline in the business, but it also has more parties than all of the other airlines put together. Celebrations—ranging from golden bananas and queasy eagles to the company picnic to spontaneous eruptions of joy—can have a highly positive cultural impact.



Toolkit Exercise #4-9: Mind (and mend) the physical environment

The physical environment profoundly influences corporate culture, often in ways that are not desired by the leadership. For example, if the CEO says that he or she expects people to put customers first and to do “whatever it takes” to exceed their expectations, but then looks the other way at paper signs saying such things as “You can have it fast or you can have it right—choose one” or “The beatings will continue until morale improves” it sends a strong message to both employees and customers that the expectation is not really meant seriously.

Michael Levine, whose book is quoted below, makes the case that the “broken windows” theory of law enforcement (when there are broken windows in a neighborhood, crime goes up because there is a perception that no one cares and no one is in control) to the business setting. He says that the physical environment will, for better or worse, influence the organization’s culture and that will, again for better or worse, have an impact upon both employee and customer (or patient) experience.

“ A broken window can be a sloppy counter, a poorly located sale item, a randomly organized menu, or an employee with a bad attitude. It can be physical, like a faded, flaking paint job, or symbolic, like a policy that requires consumers to pay for customer service.”

Michael Levine: *Broken Windows, Broken Business*

Toolkit Exercise #4-10: Conduct a Metaphorical Move-In

When you move into a new building, you end up discarding a lot of junk—old furniture that goes to Goodwill or the Salvation Army, old files that get shredded and recycled, and stuff that is not salvageable goes to the landfill. You also bring in new furniture, new processes, and new systems. When we work with clients who are planning a new facility or preparing for a move, we adapt this phenomenon into an exercise for creating the desired Invisible Architecture. Ask people to think about the attitude and behaviors they want to leave behind and not bring into the new facility. Be creative: have them draw a picture of it (for example, a scowling face to represent toxic emotional negativity) and have a ritual bonfire or paper shredding where they can in a literal sense get rid of things that cannot be seen with the eye.



Or take everyone to a golf course driving range and get several buckets of balls. Let everyone pick out a ball, then tell others what it represents, and then smack it as hard as they can. Give prizes for longest, shortest, and most hilarious drives.

Then do something similar for new attitudes and behaviors that you want to cultivate. Give people a Chia Pet and ask them to “grow” new attitudes and behaviors to bring with them into the new facility. Do a variation of the Dream t-shirt exercise I described in the first webinar by drawing a picture that represents the new attitudes and behaviors and then encouraging them to wear it under whatever they wear to work—or to sleep in it. More than once I have seen people having mounted their Dream T-Shirts on the wall of their offices, cubicles, or break rooms.

Toolkit Exercise #4-11: Know when to be penny-foolish and pound-wise

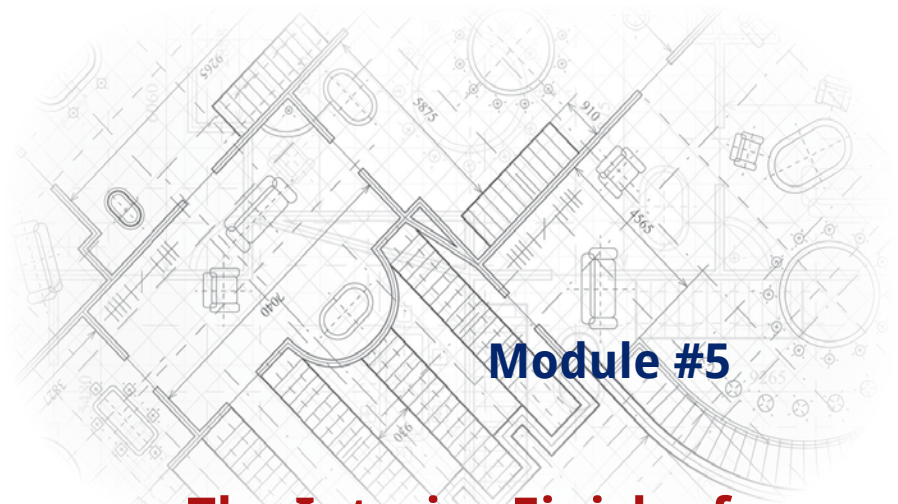
Several years ago I was traveling with a marketing rep from Auto-Owners Insurance who told me that he still remembered his first day with the company more than 18 years earlier. He’d been scheduled to begin on January 4, but the corporate vice president for human resources called him at home and asked him to move the start date up to December 27. Why? They wanted to make sure he was eligible for the Christmas bonus that year! That’s not an uncommon sort of story at Auto-Owners. One of their ten core values is “prudence,” and they are *very* prudent when it comes to spending, but they also know when to spend in a way that other organizations might consider to be extravagant in order to earn loyalty (another of Auto-Owners ten core values).

In a tough economic environment when many organizations are cancelling the annual (fill in the blank: employee picnic, holiday party, whatever), doing something *extra* really stands out, and might be the thing people remember 18 years later, when they are still loyally serving the organization and its customers.



Questions to Ask about Your Organization's Corporate Culture

- ✓ Question #1: Do we have a culture plan that complements our strategic plan?
- ✓ Question #2: Does our culture tolerate behaviors not consistent with our values (e.g. gossip is inconsistent with integrity)?
- ✓ Question #3: Does our culture tolerate management by fear and intimidation (despite Deming's warning that to be successful you must drive fear out of the workplace)?
- ✓ Question #4: How do we invoke rituals, traditions, celebration, and executive visibility to foster culture?
- ✓ Question #5: How do we screen out cultural misfits and inculcate new people?
- ✓ Question #6: Since culture in an organization is like a patchwork quilt—a conglomeration of lots of mini-cultures rather than one monolithic structure—how do we make sure that the most important elements of our desired culture are present in every area of the organization? How do we make sure that our “quilt” is beautiful and functional, and not just a collection of pieces of cloth?
- ✓ Question #7: If we asked people across our organization to define our culture in just six words, would we see a reasonable level of consistency in the responses—or would it be like the parable of the blind men trying to describe an elephant, with different departments seeming to be on completely different cultural planets?
- ✓ Question #8: What are the cultural characteristics of our toughest competitor and what can we learn from them?
- ✓ Question #9: How do you define the elements that are expected to be present in every area (for example, no tolerance for toxic emotional negativity), and those elements that may be created, or allowed to evolve, uniquely within each department (for example, rituals for birthdays or to welcome new employees).



The Interior Finish of Emotional Attitude

Goals for this Module

- ✓ **Objective #1:** Appreciate that toxic emotional negativity places an invisible ceiling on the performance potential of your organization.
- ✓ **Objective #2:** Understand that enhanced employee engagement is the solution to (almost) every problem in your organization.
- ✓ **Objective #3:** Assess your organization's collective ranking on the Passion-Performance Matrix™.
- ✓ **Objective #4:** Most important—share strategies to promote a more positive, cheerful and optimistic workplace attitude.

The emotional attitude in any organization is a reflection of the attitudes and behaviors of people who work there. Simply put, positive attitudes are a reflection of happy and productive people; negative attitudes are a reflection of unhappy and disengaged people. For that reason, many of the exercises in this module focus more on personal than on organizational improvements—with the understanding that culture does not change unless people do.



During my speaking engagements, one of the most frequent questions (usually one-on-one during a break or at the end of the speech) I'm asked is some variation of this: "How do I prevent the negative attitudes of people around me from sucking the joy out of my working day?" If someone wants to come to work, be enthusiastic and productive, and go home physically tired but emotionally uplifted, but the organization tolerates toxic emotional negativity to deprive them (and their coworkers and your customers) of this joy, it reflects a failure of leadership and a sick culture.

If I could wave a magic wand over your organization (and your community) and for 30-days there would be no toxic emotional negativity—no whining and complaining, no passive-aggressive victim behavior, no gossiping and rumor-mongering—you would never go back, the way we will never go back to allowing people to smoke on airplanes. Why? Because people will quickly appreciate just how caustic those behaviors are when they are not subjected to them day in and day out. They will become increasingly insistent that their leaders provide them with an emotionally positive workplace experience, the way we once demanded a smoke-free workplace. The movement will become self-sustaining as you see employee engagement, customer (and in hospitals patient) satisfaction, and productivity soar. And as the benefits become clearer and more manifest, the movement will become unstoppable.

The Invisible Ceiling on the Potential of Your Organization

Imagine two organizations that are in the same business, selling the same product, paying the same wages and employing the same professional categories of people. One organization is staffed by people who believe in themselves, have a positive self-image,



don't listen to negative self-talk, who have high self-esteem and are confident in their ability to survive and thrive no matter what the world throws at them (these are elements of *The Pyramid of Self-Belief*[™]). The other organization is staffed by people who have a poor self-image and who see themselves as victims and martyrs; who not only listen to negative self-talk but translate it out-loud in the form of chronic complaining, gossiping and rumor-mongering; who engage in passive-aggressive



resistance to getting any real work done; and who see their own destiny and that of their organization as being subject to forces beyond their control.

Which organization would you bet on to win the competition for recruiting and retaining great talent and for earning loyal customers?

There is an invisible ceiling on the performance potential of your organization that is formed by the collective self-talk, self-image, and self-confidence of the people in your organization. As we shall see in the next section, there is a strong correlation between being disengaged in the workplace and being depressed and dysfunctional outside of the workplace. One reason this toolkit includes a strong emphasis on *personal* skills and strategies is that *organizational* strategies are more likely to be optimally implemented by people who have confronted their own inner emotional barriers.

Michelangelo said that he did not carve statues—he found big rocks and liberated the forms that were always within. That is a beautiful metaphor for self-transformation, at both the personal and the organizational levels. To become one’s authentic best self (Authenticity is Core Action Value #1 in the Values Coach course on **The Twelve Core Action Values**) requires carving away those parts of lesser self that cause you to become Your Own Worst Enemy, and to build up those elements of your best self.

This metaphor is beautifully captured in the statue “Self Made Man” by Colorado artist **Bobbie Carlyle**. In this statue, a man with a hammer and a chisel is carving himself out of a big rock. Throughout life, we are given tools—the hammers and chisels—with which to carve out the individuals we become, and to create the organizations in which we work. We get these tools at home, at school, in church, in the workplace—and from this toolkit. It is then our choice whether and how to use them.



I have this poster mounted in my workout room—you can see this and more of Bobbie Carlyle’s work at <http://bobbiecarlylesculpture.com/>



The same metaphor holds for the organization. It is our choice whether to have a culture that tolerates people talking about coworkers behind their backs, chronic pessimism and complaining, abusive and bullying behaviors, and other forms of toxic emotional negativity—or to foster a culture using the tools provided in this toolkit to “carve away” these behaviors and replace them with personal pride and self-belief, and with cultural toughness and resilience in the organization.

“ The foundation of your mental high ground is in areas such as moral beliefs, personal integrity, and motivation towards success... Much of life is a battle of the mind because the best entries to the mind are often through the motions. Logic can sound great to the persuader, but emotions play a powerful role in determining courses of action.”

Gerald Michelson: *Sun Tzu for Success: How to Use the Art of War to Master Challenges and Accomplish the Important Goals in Your Life*

Three important distinctions

When considering the emotional attitude, it’s important to consider three important distinctions—terms that are often used interchangeably but which really mean very different things.

Complaining and Problem Identification: To promote a more positive workplace attitude does not mean that people don’t identify real problems and confront inappropriate behaviors. Quite to the contrary, it means they don’t take the passive-aggressive approach of just complaining and gossiping about them without taking action.

Skeptics and Cynics: Skeptics are people who ask tough questions, who want to see evidence, and who challenge assumptions; once they are convinced, skeptics often become your biggest allies and supporters. Cynics are people who criticize everything, who truly don’t want things to work and who revel in nothing greater than being able to say “I told you that wouldn’t work” after having done everything in their power to sabotage success. Cynics rarely change their negative attitudes no matter what evidence they are confronted with. Cynics tend to see the organization as they are and not as it is.



Problems and Predicaments: Problems have solutions, predicaments do not have solutions. A problem is an alcoholic neighbor making too much noise—you can call the police. A predicament is an alcoholic family member living in the basement. You can solve a problem but you must—at least in the short term—live with a predicament. This is, of course, the underlying rationale of the famous serenity prayer. Inculcating this understanding into one’s personal life and into the culture of an organization will replace complaining and criticizing with equanimity and determination.

The Solution to (Almost) Every Problem in the World

What if one of the nation’s leading authorities on organizational culture and one of the leading authorities on personal achievement could agree on the one thing that would change everything for the better. This one thing would help people be happier and more successful at achieving their personal and professional goals; it would help organizations be more effective at being positive, productive, and profitable; and it would help to solve some of the most pressing problems facing the nation and the world. Would you sit up and take notice? Would you take action?

Jim Clifton is CEO of Gallup and author of *The Coming Jobs War*, which I have previously quoted. Edward Hallowell is a leading psychiatrist whose books include *Driven to Distraction* and *Delivered from Distraction* (two of the best works on ADHD) and the book *Worry* (the best book I’ve seen on managing anxiety personally and in the organization). Well, those two authorities have agreed. And the solution they have agreed up on is increased employee engagement in the workplace. This would, they say, go a long way toward solving the biggest problems of the world, and of your life.

The Solution to (almost) Every Problem in Your Organization

As we’ve already seen, every organization that studies employee engagement comes up with substantially the same conclusion: in the typical organization about 25% of people are really engaged in the work: they take pride in their organizations, find great meaning and reward in the work they do, and often go above-and-beyond the basic requirements of the job description. At Values Coach we call these people Spark Plugs because that’s what they do—they spark life into an organization and the people around them. They think and act like owners, like partners in the enterprise.



Researchers find that about 60% of people in a typical organization are not engaged. That doesn't mean they are doing a bad job, necessarily, but all they are doing is what's in the job description and anything else is "not my job." We call these people Zombies because that's often how they go through their work day—on autopilot, "another day another dollar." They think and act like renters, occupying a spot on the organization chart until something better comes along.

And in the typical organization about 15% of people are aggressively disengaged. They are the negative, bitter, cynical, sarcastic pickle-suckers who pollute the emotional climate of a workplace the way someone lighting a cigarette pollutes the air. We call them Vampires because that's what they do—they suck the life out of an organization and the people around them. They think and act like squatters, getting paid for work they don't do, or don't do well. The greatest joy seems to be criticizing the Spark Plugs, calling them names like overachiever and quota-buster. "Best place to work" companies like Southwest Airlines or Zappos have 90+ percent engaged workers and a culture that quickly rejects Vampires. On the other hand, companies like the recently-failed Hostess lack engagement and commitment from top to bottom (what destroyed that company was a culture where everyone put their own interests ahead of the welfare of the organization, the ultimate symptom of disengagement).

You don't need a consultant to come in and tell you where your organization, or your part of the organization, falls on the Attitude Bell Curve. Most of us already have a pretty good feel for who the Spark Plugs, Zombies, and Vampires are. Except when it comes to ourselves—we usually rate our own attitude farther to the right on the Attitude Bell Curve than an objective observer would. Jim Clifton, says that doubling the number of highly-engaged workers in the country—from the current average of 25% to 50%—would eliminate every major problem in the world today. I agree. Not overnight, to be sure, but such an infusion of attitudinal positivity would profoundly transform our approach to challenges and our response to obstacles.

And if that's true for the world, imagine the impact on your organization if you could simply double the number of people who came to work every day with commitment to the organization, engagement with their coworkers and customers, and passion for the work itself (the first three characteristics of a culture of ownership described in the book [**The Florence Prescription.**](#))



The Solution to (Almost) Every Problem in Personal Life

In the previously-quoted article he wrote for the *Harvard Business Review*, psychiatrist Edward Hallowell said that being disengaged in the workplace results in people not achieving their own *personal* and *professional* goals and is a leading cause of depression. Again, you don't need a consultant to verify this—just look around: the most caustically negative people where you work are also the ones who are over their heads in debt, stuck in bad relationships, and feeling helpless and victimized in life. And they are also the most likely to be taking antidepressants (antidepressants are the #1 medication being prescribed for employees by employee health programs in almost every organization). Motivational speaker Les Brown says that every morning when he wakes up he looks around his body—if he doesn't see a chalk line, he knows it's going to be a great day! That attitude would go a long way toward helping people achieve personal and professional goals, and would make for a more pleasant work experience. Indeed, the only losers would be pharmaceutical companies because a lot fewer of us would be choking down antidepressants.

The Solution to (Almost) Every Problem in the World

Every problem that ends in the word “crisis” is at root the result of a failure of values. We have a debt crisis because so many of us want everything now but don't want to pay for it until some distant date in the future. We have an obesity crisis because so many of us would rather sit in front of the TV super-sizing ourselves than go to the gym. We have an education crisis because so many students would rather be entertained than educated, and so many teachers refuse to accept that in order to educate you must entertain (that doesn't mean you have to tell jokes in class—it means you have to be passionate about and engaged in the subjects you teach). We have an environmental crisis because we prioritize our own comfort and convenience over the quality of the world we will pass along to our great-grandchildren.

Ultimately, the best way to live your values is to be engaged in your work. Not just the work you do to make a living—also the work you do on behalf of your family and your community. The more engaged you are the happier and more successful you will be. In his beautiful little book *The Prophet*, Khalil Gibran wrote that “work is love made visible.” I can't think of a better definition of what it means to be engaged. The Bible asks why anyone would light a candle and put a basket over it. That's what being engaged is all about—letting that inner light shine. Spark Plugs share that inner light through the work they do. Zombies cover up their inner light by going through the motions,



just doing what they need to do to get by. And Vampires aren't satisfied with putting a basket on their own lights, they want to put baskets over the lights of everyone else. The best thing you can do for your organization, and for yourself, is help to shift your Attitude Bell Curve to the right—to have more Spark Plugs and fewer Vampires, and to make your own work become love made visible.

“ One toxically-negative person will drag down the morale and productivity of an entire work unit. Just as we once eradicated toxic smoke from the workplace, it is now our obligation to eradicate toxic emotional negativity.”

Joe Tye (with Dick Schwab): *The Florence Prescription: From Accountability to Ownership*

Toolkit Exercise #5-1: The Passion-Performance Matrix™

The Passion-Performance Matrix

		PERFORMANCE	
		LOW	HIGH
PASSION	HIGH	Attending a sporting event	Doing your best on work you love to
	LOW	Watching sitcoms on TV	Doing your taxes

The Passion-Performance Matrix is a tool we use in courses on *The Twelve Core Action Values* to help people identify their authentic goals and personal identity. You are most likely to be your authentic self where you are engaged in work that you are passionate about, and that you do well and are committed to doing even better. You are least likely to be authentic when you are not engaged and not performing. In fact, the amount of time that you spend in each quadrant each day is probably about as good a predictor of your success and happiness as you will find.

Not only that, understanding this matrix is essential to business success. Organizations dominated by people in Quadrant 4—High Passion, High Performance—will always out-compete those where employees are less engaged. This is the secret of superstar companies like Southwest Airlines, Zappos, Disney, and the Pike Street Market. Let's look more closely at each quadrant.



The Passion-Performance Matrix



Download this exhibit from the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit website to assess your own organization, or your part of the organization (or you personally)

Quadrant 1—High Passion, Low Performance: This is the cheerleader quadrant. Every year, hundreds of millions of people around the world watch the Super Bowl. Many of them are very passionate about the game—wearing cheesehead hats and waving terrible towels and screaming themselves to hoarseness—but with the exception of a handful of people actually out on the field, nothing was expected of them, they were not accountable for any level of performance, and their passionate cheering had no impact whatsoever on the final score of the game. Quadrant 1 activities play an important role. Bowling leagues, company picnics, dinner and movie dates, kids’ soccer games—bring joy and zest to life. But as everyone for whom college parties were life’s highpoint eventually realizes, living in the High Passion, Low Performance Quadrant does not make for a very rewarding or profitable life.

Quadrant 2—Low Passion, Low Performance: This is the drudge quadrant. Most television watching falls into this quadrant. This is the quadrant where Dilbert and the denizens of his comic strip live out their lives—doing a lousy job at work they hate. Although no one on their deathbed ever says “I wish I’d watched more television,” according to AC Nielsen, that is precisely where many Americans spend the biggest chunk of their “leisure” time—plugged into the boob tube, the plug-in drug. We all need some downtime, and TV can be relaxing and (so I’m told, though I’ve never personally found this to be the case) rejuvenating. But every hour spent lounging around in this quadrant should be with the acute recognition of what economists call the “opportunity cost”—that time is lost and gone forever and can never be invested in one of the other three, more profitable, quadrants.



Quadrant 3—Low Passion, High Performance: This is the Rutledge Quadrant, named for the character Sarah Rutledge in my book **The Florence Prescription**. Sarah was a highly competent nurse who was also a negative, bitter, cynical and sarcastic pickle-sucker. We all know people like Sarah Rutledge, and truth be told have all fallen into this quadrant ourselves. According to Gallup, HR Solutions, Press-Ganey, and every other company that studies employee engagement, this is unfortunately the quadrant where most people spend most of their working lives. This is really a tragic situation because, as Dr. Edward Hallowell wrote in the *Harvard Business Review* article referenced above, disengagement is a leading cause of underachievement and depression. In other words, most people would get a lot more done and be a lot happier if they were to just be more passionate about their work.

This is really ancient wisdom. In the book of Ecclesiastes, we learn about a man who tried everything and found fulfillment in nothing. Neither wine, women and song nor scholarly pursuits nor public service nor spiritual introspection brought the man joy or peace. And what, in the end, did he find to be the secret of a meaningful life? Whatever your hand finds to do, he said, do it with all your might.

Quadrant 4—High Passion, High Performance: This is the sweet spot. People who work to be in this quadrant most often enjoy the experience of optimal achievement, self-actualization, and flow (a word coined by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi for the state of total absorption in one's work, which he says is the highest form of human motivation and satisfaction).

This is the key: There are three critical choices to be made in reaching Quadrant 4. First is the choice of the work you do. Choosing work that you could never possibly be good at or that you could never bring yourself to enjoy sets the stage for a lifetime of frustration and unhappiness. On the other hand, choosing work you love so much that you are constantly amazed that you are actually being paid for doing it is the foundation for a successful career and a fulfilling journey through life.

Second is the choice between continuous improvement and stagnation. Even if you choose work you love, you'll slip back into one of the other quadrants if you aren't consistently working to be better at that work. This kaizen approach to your own work is the source of the confidence and pride that mark every top performer in every field, from parenting and personal money management to sales and leadership.

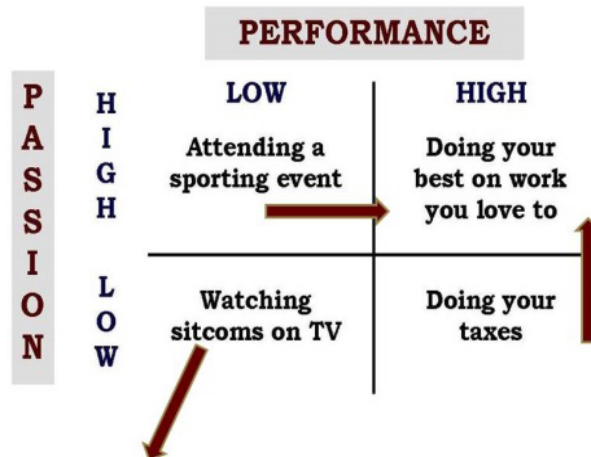


The third and most important choice is the attitude with which you do your work. In our work with hospitals, I've met housekeepers and food service aides who have clearly chosen to work with pride and passion in Quadrant 4. And I've met senior managers who, despite their generous paychecks, come across as martyrs and victims.

Accountability and Ownership: If you've read *The Florence Prescription*, you know that in one chapter consultant Carol Jean Hawtrey talks about the interaction of left-brain and right-brain qualities in an organization. Left brain is accountability—holding a nurse accountable for giving patients the correct medications, holding a manager accountable for meeting a budget. You can hold people accountable for the performance dimension of the Passion-Performance Matrix. But you cannot hold people accountable for passion, pride, caring, loyalty, trust, compassion, and the other right-brain qualities that characterize all great organizations. These must come from within.

The motivation of accountability is extrinsically imposed; the motivation of ownership is intrinsically driven. What percentage of your employees would you estimate fall into each of the four quadrants of the Passion-Performance Matrix? How about for the management team? How about for you personally—which quadrant do you fall in most days?

The Passion-Performance Matrix



The leadership challenge—filling up the upper right quadrant right quadrant and emptying the lower left quadrant



Your leadership challenge is to move people from Quadrant 1 (high passion, low performance) into Quadrant 4 (high passion, high performance) through a combination of training, coaching, higher expectations, and so forth; to move people from Quadrant 3 (low passion, high performance) into Quadrant 4 by engaging them in the work and in the organization (if they don't make this shift they will ultimately and inevitably slip back into Quadrant 2 as their negative attitude causes their performance to suffer); and to give people in Quadrant 2 (low passion, low performance) a chance to improve both their attitude and performance before giving them the opportunity to go to work for your toughest competitor.

Toolkit Exercise #5-2: The Self-Empowerment Pledge™—Seven Simple Promises that Will Change Your Life and Transform Your Organization

“No empowerment is so effective as self-empowerment... In this world, the optimists have it, not because they are always right, but because they are always positive. Even when wrong, they are positive, and that is the way of achievement, correction, improvement, and success. Educated, eyes-open optimism pays; pessimism can only offer the empty consolation of being right [because it creates a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure].”

David Landes: "Culture Makes All the Difference" in Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress (edited by Samuel P. Huntington and Lawrence E. Harrison)

Download the slide show and all of the posters for *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* at the [resources page of the Values Coach website](#).

One of the most overused and misused buzzwords in the English language is the word “empowerment.” The word implies that somebody other than you can give you power. If someone else can give you power, they can also take it away—and loaned empowerment is not real power. In truth, no one can empower you but you. The only genuine empowerment is self-empowerment. Once you empower yourself, though, nobody can take that power away. Empowerment is a state of mind—not part of a job description, a set of delegated tasks, or the latest management program brought in by the boss. *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* includes seven simple promises that will change your life, if you are willing to invest one minute a day for a year. Read these seven promises, and then ask yourself these two questions:



Question #1: If I were to take these promises to heart and act upon them, would I be better off in every way—personally, professionally, financially, and spiritually—in one year than where my current life trajectory is taking me?

Question #2: If everyone where I work were to take these promises to heart and act upon them, would we do a better job of serving our customers and supporting each other, and would this be a better place to work?

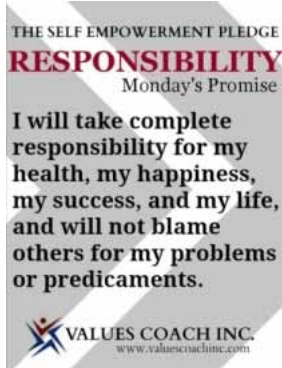
If you're being honest, the answer will be absolutely yes—how could it be anything else? The promises themselves are simple, but keeping them will require desire and determination. Fortunately, you don't have to do it all at once. Focus on one promise each day, so that you make all seven promises to yourself each week. Do this each day for one year—it will be the best daily one minute you ever invest in yourself.

Repeat each day's promise to yourself at least four times—morning, afternoon, evening, and right before bed. Each reading will take you about 15 seconds—so four times a day is one minute. At first, you'll hear a negative little voice in the back of your head telling you that you look ridiculous and you could be watching a TV commercial instead of wasting this minute. Ignore it—the inner critic is easily bored and will eventually go away. But now it's going to get even tougher, at least temporarily. You'll begin to experience what psychologists call cognitive dissonance, which is trying to hold two incompatible beliefs simultaneously. Cognitive dissonance is a painful emotional state, a form of mental illness.

When you've been promising yourself to be responsible, accountable, and determined, but then catch yourself procrastinating, making excuses, and giving up, you're experiencing cognitive dissonance. At that point, one of two things *must* happen. Either you take the easy way out and stop making the promises, or you change your attitudes and behaviors in such a way as to start keeping the promises. When you do that, you will start to get better results. Now you're over the hump, and repeating the promises becomes an easy and pleasurable habit, because it's self-reinforcing. Let's look at each of these seven life-changing promises.

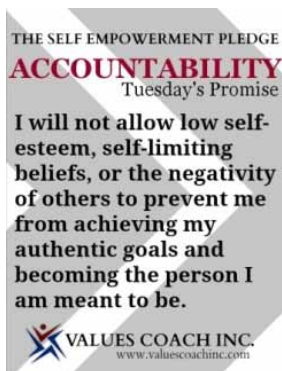


Monday's Promise: Responsibility



Monday's promise says you will take complete responsibility for your life and refrain from blaming other people for your circumstances. Legendary basketball coach John Wooden told his players that no one is a loser until he blames someone else for the loss. Life-altering success only begins when you take complete and absolute responsibility for your circumstances and your outcomes. When you stop playing the "blame-and-complain game" and take responsibility for your life, you're on the road to achieving your goals. I previously described the distinction between a problem and a predicament: a problem has a solution while a predicament does not. Monday's Promise says that you will deal with problems and live with predicaments, but not complain about either.

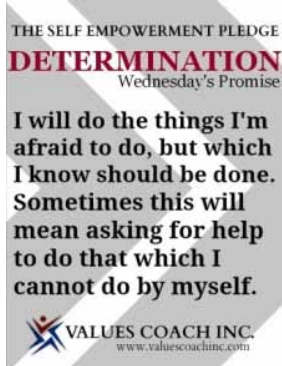
Tuesday's Promise: Accountability



On Tuesday, you promise to hold yourself accountable—not just for meeting your obligations, but for fulfilling your true potential. In his book *The War of Art* Steve Pressfield describes Resistance (he capitalizes the word to denote that it is a real and visceral presence, like cancer or a great white shark) as the inner accumulation of fears and doubts that blocks us from expressing our creativity. "The more important a call or action is to our soul's evolution," he says, "the more Resistance we will feel toward pursuing it." The key to conquering Resistance is internalizing and operationalizing Tuesday's Promise. Pressfield says that Resistance is like cancer. It's a fight to the death, and every time you let it beat you, a little part of your soul dies.

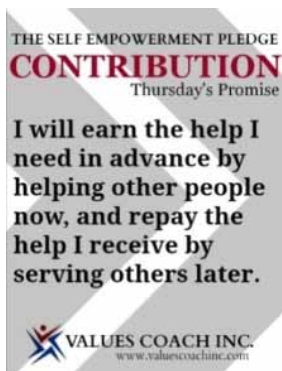


Wednesday's Promise: Determination



On Wednesday you promise to bravely confront your fears. Every great accomplishment was once the “impossible” dream of a dreamer who simply refused to quit when the going got tough. For the person starting a new business, it takes time to get the product and the marketing right, to get word-of-mouth working for you, and to find the right people for the team. There will be frustration and failure along the way—it’s all part of the game. The difference between winners and losers is that winners are determined to do what it takes to stay in the game, no matter what the score happens to be at halftime. And they know that in order to stay in the game, they must be willing to ask for the help they need, since no one can achieve big goals all alone.

Thursday's Promise: Contribution



With Thursday's promise, you commit yourself to paying forward as well as to paying back. As you internalize Thursday's Promise, you will begin to appreciate the ancient wisdom of the Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu, who said you can never become happy and successful by trying to achieve happiness and success, but only by helping others to be happier and more successful. One of the great paradoxes of life is that the more you devote yourself to service to others, the richer and more rewarding (and eventually rewarded) your life will be. If you read the book or saw the movie *Pay It Forward* you'll recognize that philosophy.

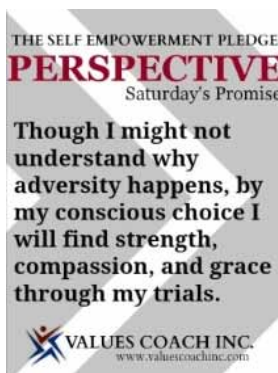


Friday's Promise: Resilience



You often hear figures quoted about business failure—i.e. eight of every ten new businesses fail within the first five years or something like that. Not only is that inaccurate (excluding people who are just sticking a toe in the water the five-year survival rate for new businesses is much greater than that), it is also just not true. Businesses do not fail—owners quit. For every business that has “failed” there is another where, in the very same dire straits, the owner(s) put in one more late night, made one more sales call, did whatever it took to survive that dark night of the business soul and went on to build a very successful enterprise. In his book *The Last Lecture* (with Jeffrey Zaslow), Randy Pausch said that brick walls are not there to stop you, they are there to make you prove how much you want something. Internalizing Friday’s Promise will help you bounce back every time you fall and blast your way through every brick wall.

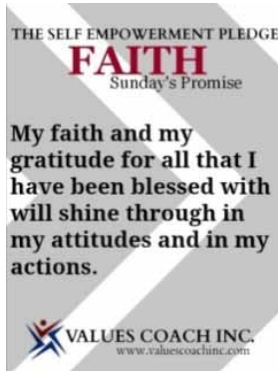
Saturday's Promise: Perspective



On Saturday you make the “silver lining” promise of seeing the best in every situation. One of my favorite sayings is “Thank God Ahead of Time” (the title of a book by Father Michael Crosby). Bad things do happen to good people: when they happen to you, you can play the victim or you can say “thank you” and plumb the experience for its lessons. Almost everyone who has ever lost a job will eventually say that it was the best thing that could have happened (the exception being people who choose to play the lifelong victim role); the sooner you internalize Saturday’s Promise, the more quickly you will find the silver lining in every dark cloud. I’ve spent many evenings with support groups, and am always impressed with how people choose to find hidden blessings in apparent tragedy. If they can find blessings in cancer, addiction, or even the loss of a child, what can happen to you or me that we can’t immediately say “thank you—I don’t know why yet, but I’ll figure it out.”



Sunday's Promise: Faith



On Sunday you promise yourself to be faithful. This isn't a promise about religion—everyone, regardless of their religious belief or non-belief, needs faith: faith in oneself, faith in other people, faith in the future, and hopefully faith in things unseen. On the wall of my home office is a shadow box that's home to a delicate handmade paper angel. A dear friend gave it to me several days before she died of cancer, at much too young an age. During her last year on earth, her faith and her gratitude for the blessings of her life radiated outward like sunshine pouring through a stained glass window. She was a constant inspiration to her family, members of support groups she stayed with to the end, and many others, including me. Ending your week with Sunday's Promise will remind you to be thankful for all that you have been blessed with. And if you live in the America of today, you have been blessed indeed.

Taking The Pledge as a group

In a growing number of organizations across the country, people are gathering in groups to take each day's promise from *The Self-Empowerment Pledge*—promising themselves and each other to make the effort to live those promises. This group reading has a double benefit. First, people are more likely to stick to the promises they have made if they've been made publicly (and if coworkers gently remind them of the promises when they break them). Second, when a critical mass of people within an organization internalize and act upon the promises, they inevitably have a positive impact on culture.

Roger Steinkruger, CEO of Tri Valley Health System in Cambridge, Nebraska says that group readings of each day's promise have had a highly positive impact on the culture of the organization, and on the lives of many of the people who work there. Watch a 2-minute video of the team at Tri Valley Health System as a group reciting Wednesday's Promise on Determination—and if you look closely you will notice that more than half of the people in the group are not reading the promise—they have memorized it! [The Self-Empowerment Pledge at Tri Valley Health System.](#)



All over the country groups are gathering in staff meetings, conference rooms, nursing unit huddles, and other locations for the daily reading of that day's promise from The Self-Empowerment Pledge.

Toolkit Exercise #5-3: Take The Pickle Challenge™

An essential first step toward promoting a more positive and productive culture is confronting and eradicating toxic emotional negativity in the workplace. The emotional climate of your organization is determined by what you say you expect (in values statements, job descriptions, and other documents) and by what you tolerate. Over the course of time what you tolerate will dominate what you expect. Whatever is included in your organization's statement of values, toxic emotional negativity is a violation of those values. Gossip—talking about people behind their backs—violates fundamental principles of integrity, respect, and compassion. Chronic complaining—playing victim because the world has not bent over backwards to make your life easy and convenient—violates fundamental principles of personal responsibility and self-empowerment. And when gossip and complaining come to dominate the informal dialogue within an organization, teamwork becomes little more than a management buzzword.



The emotional climate of the workplace is determined by what you expect and what you tolerate, and what you tolerate will dominate what you say you expect.

In a typical organization about 25% of employees are fully engaged, 60% “show up” for work but are not really engaged, and 15% are aggressively disengaged. These disengaged workers have a disproportionately negative impact on the culture and emotional environment of your organization. One toxically negative person can drag down an entire work unit the way one person lighting a cigarette pollutes the air breathed by everyone else in the room. Just as we once eradicated toxic cigarette smoke from the workplace, we should now work to create a cultural intolerance for whining, gossiping and rumor-mongering, passive-aggressive finger-pointing, and other toxic emotional behaviors. It is a leadership responsibility to protect the people who want to be committed to and passionate about their work from the baleful effects of emotional vampires.

One of the most practical and immediately effective tools in *The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit* is The Pickle Challenge (so-called because chronic complainers look like they’re walking around with a dill pickle stuck in their mouths). It begins with the simple promise of The Pickle Pledge—a promise that people make to themselves and to each other: I will turn every complaint into either a blessing or a constructive suggestion. By taking **The Pickle Pledge**, I am promising myself that I will no longer waste my time and energy on blaming, complaining, and gossiping, nor will I commiserate with those who steal my energy with their blaming, complaining, and gossiping.

Cultivating a habit of turning complaints (“I had to park six blocks away and walk all the way into the mall!”) into blessings (thank God you have legs and a mall in which to shop) or constructive suggestions (if you’d exercise more a six block walk wouldn’t be so taxing) can be a life-changing discipline. It certainly has been for me. After Lasik eye surgery left me with severe double vision, impaired visual acuity, and chronic eye pain I fell back upon this promise to make something constructive come of the experience. I started asking questions and discovered that thousands of others suffer permanent eye damage every year as a result of Lasik. I’ve now become an activist warning people (especially young people who are guinea pigs in an uncontrolled medical experiment about the long-term complications of surgical



cornea sculpting) of the serious risks that are played down by the Lasik industry and by eye surgeons who have a profound financial conflict of interest in recommending the procedure. I'm much happier being an activist than I would have been playing the victim role.

Joe's presentation on The Pickle Challenge

Watch this 6-minute excerpt on *The Pickle Challenge* from Joe's keynote presentation about building a culture of ownership on a foundation of values for the annual leadership conference of Select Medical, the premier provider of inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services.



The “Pickle” has taken on a life of its own. At client organizations, we’ve seen pickle piñatas, singing pickles, and pickle door-hangers (LYPAD: Leave Your Pickles At the Door). We’ve designed a sign people can use to designate their work area to be a “Pickle-Free Zone” the way we once posted no-smoking signs. The Pickle Challenge has taken on a life of its own! We have seen singing pickles, dancing pickles, pickle piñatas, Pickle Pledge bulletin boards, and pickle jars to collect fines from people who engage in toxic emotional negativity. People are setting out pickle jars to which coworkers can contribute each time they bitch, moan, whine, and complain (the other BMW club!). As people see the quarters pile up, it is a powerful awareness-raising tool for combatting emotional negativity in the workplace. Having groups of people take the Pickle Challenge together can have an immediate positive impact on the workplace environment in a light-hearted and fun way.



The Pickle Challenge has taken on a life of its own!

Across the country we are seeing people implement The Pickle Challenge in amazingly creative ways. The Pickle Challenge has taken on a life of its own both because everyone can visualize the chronic complainer with a dill pickle stuck in his or her mouth, and because we all intuitively appreciate the personal benefits of a workplace that is free from toxic emotional negativity. Here are some of the great ideas we have seen implemented:

The Pickle Challenge is spreading like a virus of emotional positivity!



People are putting up “This is a Pickle-Free Zone” signs and hanging “Leave Your Pickles at the Door” doorknob hangers to declare their workplace off-limits to toxic emotional negativity the way we once declared our workplaces to be off-limits to toxic cigarette smoke.



People are using singing pickles, dancing pickles, hula pickles, and all sorts of other creative ways to remind coworkers that chronic complaining is for victims and losers.



An employee at White River Health System in Arkansas created Mr. Pickle the Piñata; he travels around the health system in various costumes. I was so impressed that we commissioned Mr. Pickle Jr. for the Values Coach office!



People are gathering in groups to make a daily commitment to The Pickle Pledge, and having Pickle Parties to celebrate a commitment to emotional positivity.



One of the most powerful interventions is the Pickle Jar, in which people place a quarter every time they bitch, moan, wine, gossip, play the blame game, act like a victim or engage in other forms of toxic emotional negativity. As the quarters pile up, it is a visible manifestation of the level of toxic emotional negativity within that workplace.



Engage people creatively: At Star Valley Health System in Afton, Wyoming employees participated in a Pickle Jar decorating contest (the one on the red brick was declared the winner).

It takes courage to confront toxically negative people, who often have intimidating personalities. If you do, however, you will achieve significant enhancements in employee engagement, productivity, and customer satisfaction. Paradoxically, the real beneficiaries are often the very people who are required to change their attitudes and behaviors. By insisting that they break their addictions to emotional negativity you will help them, and often their friends and family members, achieve happier and healthier lifestyles.

If you could get everyone in your organization to take *The Pickle Pledge*, just imagine how much more pleasant it would be to go to work every day! Imagine: no bitching, moaning and whining; no finger-pointing, no blame-gaming, no rumor-mongering. Now, before you tell me I'm crazy, that it could never happen, let me remind you that not long ago a vast majority of people believed it would be impossible to achieve a smoke-free society, yet look how far we have come in just the past ten years or so. Toxic emotional negativity is as corrosive to the soul as toxic cigarette smoke is to the body. Why can't we expect our workplaces to be pickle-free the way we now expect them to be smoke-free?

“ When someone dumps their toxic feelings on us—explodes in anger or threats, shows disgust or contempt—they activate in us circuitry for those very same distressing emotions. Their act has potent neurological consequences: emotions are contagious... Like secondhand smoke, the leakage of emotions can make a bystander an innocent victim of someone else's toxic state.”

Daniel Goleman: *Social Intelligence*



Key success factors for The Pickle Challenge

We work with many organizations to help them implement The Pickle Challenge, and the following four factors almost always characterize the most successful initiatives:

Make it fun: The Pickle Challenge is rarely successful as a top-down mandate, and almost always successful when people see it as something that's fun and a light-hearted way to raise mutual expectations for attitudes and behaviors.

Emphasize the WIIFM Factor: The late Zig Ziglar said that everybody listens to the same radio station: WIIFM (What's In It For Me?). Emphasize the *personal* benefits of a more positive workplace that is free from toxic emotional negativity for the individual, including how it can help them be better spouses and parents on the home front.

Engage people creatively: As seen above, there is no end to the creative thought people can put into The Pickle Challenge. I never cease to be amazed at the incredible ideas I hear about—about how people are adapting *The Pickle Challenge* to their organizations, and in many instances at home with their families.

Stick with it: This is most important. The Pickle Challenge needs to be more than just a passing fad or program of the month if you want it to have a lasting impact. Remember how the movement to eradicate toxic cigarette smoke from the workplace took years. The same thing will be true of eradicating toxic emotional negativity. But if we stick with it, miracles can and do happen.

Metaphorical Visualization™

It is hard to confront, much less change, what you cannot see, which is one of the main reasons people have a hard time conquering fear and setting aside emotional baggage. Metaphorical Visualization is a technique that we developed to help people create a tangible metaphor to represent emotional barriers and barbs that hold them back and cause them pain. Here's how it works: you start by identifying the mental anguish or emotional baggage that is causing the pain or resistance. This might be, for example, negative self-talk that contributes to low self-esteem; the fear of failure and humiliation that cause procrastination; or painful past memories that cast a dark cloud over what should be the joys of the present.



Then think of a metaphor that helps you give a name and a shape to these otherwise formless thoughts and emotions. In the next three exercises, we will cover the three just mentioned: negative self-talk, fears of failure and humiliation, and painful memories and emotions. For each, we will create a Metaphorical Visualization exercise.

Important point: We call the training we conduct on personal values “the gift to your people that is also an investment in your organization.” Some of the most powerful tools we share—the ones that most often help people bring about personal changes that elicit words like “miraculous” and “life-changing”—are variations of these Metaphorical Visualization techniques. That is the gift. The investment comes about as people make constructive changes in their own attitudes and behaviors, which in turn help the organization create a more positive and productive workplace culture.

But first, the story of “Bob”

“Values can both motivate employees to behave in a desired way and provide employees with the meaning that can make work fulfilling and worthwhile.”

Andrew Campbell and Linda L. Nash: A Sense of Mission

“Hi Joe, my name is Bob, and I’m your worst nightmare.”

It was the morning of the first day of a 3-day training session on *The Twelve Core Action Values*. I remembered having seen “Bob” at one of the orientation sessions, though I had not personally met her. Shaking her hand, I said: “So tell me, ‘Bob,’ why are you my worst nightmare?”

She replied that she was an intensive care unit nurse, and that B-O-B stood for “Bitter Old Bitch,” a name she said she’d been proud to earn during her years at that organization. She told me she was the “tough old bat” who was always looking for things to complain about, who made sure that “the suits downstairs” never got away with anything, and who made sure new nurses on the unit had to endure the same hazing she’d been subjected to more than 25 years earlier.



“What are you doing in this class?” I asked. Since participants in our Spark Plug groups had to fill out an application form and agree to the terms of a “job description”—the terms of which were quite the opposite of being bitter and bitchy—I was curious why she would have taken the time to complete an application form, and why she’d been accepted by the hospital team that was charged with reviewing applications.

She thought for a moment, and then admitted that she wasn’t terribly happy at home (the words “imagine that!” went through my mind). A friend of hers from the ICU had dragged her “kicking and screaming” down to one of the overview sessions that are generally open to all staff. “At first, I thought you would be just another stuffed shirt motivational speaker,” she said, “but what you said about values really made sense. Then it was like I heard this little voice in the back of my head saying, ‘Bob, maybe it’s time for a name change.’ So I thought I’d apply—and much to my surprise, they admitted me to the program.” We agreed that she could stay in the class, so long as “Bob” stayed home and didn’t disrupt the experience for everyone else. She honored that commitment, and at the end of the course simply said, “Thank you, I’m convinced.”

About a year later, I ran into the CEO of that hospital. We talked business for a while, and then I asked about “Bob.” He said that at the time of our training, he’d been working with his HR department to remove her from the organization. Now, he continued, he would hate to lose her. She had become a real informal leader on her unit and within the Spark Plug group, and a role model of self-transformation for the entire organization (because the changes she’d made had not escaped the attention of anyone in that hospital). Instead of receiving complaint letters from patients, now they were singing her praises. Not only that, he continued, he’d also heard that things had improved for “Bob” in her personal life. The word he used to describe the transformation he had seen was “miracle.” Miracle is a word we hear fairly often from people who have taken our courses.

The CEO went on to note that the real cost of replacing a single ICU nurse (typically figured at 1.5 times annual salary—more than \$100,000 for an ICU nurse) was substantially higher than the investment he’d made in our Strategic Values Initiative, and that even had he recruited another ICU nurse, there was no assurance the new person would have been a positive leader and not another “Bob,” or a nurse who would have had her excellent clinical skills.



Toolkit Exercise #5-4: The Janitor in Your Attic™

“ You can’t afford the luxury of a negative thought.”

Peter McWilliams

Toxic emotional negativity is almost always an outward projection of inner negative self-talk and low self-esteem (co-miserate = be miserable together). Psychologists tell us that the human mind automatically gravitates toward negative, frightening, and depressing thoughts unless it is consciously steered in a more constructive direction. Ironically, that negative voice in the back of your head isn’t even yours: it is a malignant echo of things heard in the past that probably aren’t even true.

Unfortunately, most of us were never taught how to give the most important speech we ever give—the one we give to ourselves all day every day. This is both a serious problem and a tremendous opportunity for organizations, because the collective self-talk and self-image of people within the organization forms an invisible ceiling on the performance potential of that organization. People suffering from low self-esteem and an overdose of negative self-talk (which describes most of us, at least on occasion) are not as optimistic, productive, or service-oriented as they could be. And, quite likely, not as happy at home as they would like to be. So helping people replace negative self-talk with more constructive, positive, and nurturing inner dialogue is the gift while a more positive and productive culture is the investment.

The Janitor in Your Attic is a creative way of standing up to your inner critic and re-scripting negative inner dialogue. You begin by recognizing negative self talk for what it really is—mental graffiti. It is not your authentic voice. Rather, you are listening to the malignant echo of things that others have said—or that you imagined others to have said—in the past. Much of this caustic mental chatter is below the level of self-awareness; it’s like graffiti on a subway car: over time, you stop even noticing that it’s there.

There are three essential steps to putting *The Janitor in Your Attic* to work cleaning up the mental graffiti of negative self-talk:

Step one: Pay careful attention to everything that goes on your mind. You’ll find that much of your negative self talk falls some variation of these two categories:



You're not good enough (or smart enough, thin enough, rich enough, pretty enough, popular enough, etc.) and don't deserve to be successful.

You're not capable (of starting your own business, of standing up to an abusive partner or boss, of getting in shape or getting out of debt, etc.)

Keep track of and categorize all of this negative self-talk to get a better feel for what the voices in your head are saying.

Step two: Visualize every episode of negative self-talk as mental graffiti—and I mean that quite literally. Close your eyes, center yourself emotionally, and visualize a vandal painting abusive and toxic graffiti up there on the walls of your mind. I visualize my vandal as Gollum, the character from J.R.R. Tolkien's classic novels *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Gollum has a split personality: there's Gollum the whiner who is always moaning and complaining and feeling sorry for himself, and there's Gollum the screamer who is always criticizing and berating. That is, for me, the best metaphor imaginable for the toxic voice of negative self-talk, which will exploit any self-perceived weakness to make you feel inadequate.

Step three: Create a mental cartoon character of the janitor (mine is named Spike). Make the picture as clear and real and tangible as you possibly can. Then visualize your janitor painting over that negative graffiti of negative self-talk, and replacing it with something that is more positive, affirmative, and no doubt more likely to be true.

I once had a long conversation with Dr. Jeffrey Schwartz, author of the book *The Mind and the Brain*, which is the best layperson's guide on brain plasticity, the science of how the brain can rewire itself as a result of thought and experience. I described *The Janitor in Your Attic* exercise to him, and asked whether if someone consistently practiced this over a period of time, it could actually have the effect of hardwiring out negative self-talk. His response: Absolutely!

“Speaking wisely is essential when you speak to yourself... Words matter. We cannot risk speaking untruths to ourselves because of the strong likelihood that we will believe them.”

Jennifer Rothschild: SelfTalk, SoulTalk: What to Say When You Talk to Yourself



A tough-love message: Low self-esteem is often just an excuse for cowardice and laziness, as in “I’d probably fail and they’d probably reject me, so I’ll just stay home and watch TV. It’s hard to fail at watching TV and while the TV will do a lot of bad things to your brain, it will never reject you.

Toolkit Exercise #5-5: Beat up on your fears

In his famous first inaugural address, Franklin D. Roosevelt warned that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.” That is so often the problem with fear—it is nameless, faceless, and formless. And how can you fight what you can’t see? You need to create a metaphor to represent your fears so at least you are able to discern its real nature, so that fear can become your ally and work for you and not be your enemy working against you.

Here’s what I do: I have a punching bag in my basement exercise room; I’ve inscribed it with my fears, all the things it caused me to procrastinate, all my sources of negative self-talk and low self-esteem, in permanent marker. Then, several times a week (or more often as necessary) I wail on it! Somehow, beating up my fears metaphorically helps me overcome them in the real world.

“ Feel the fear and do it anyway.”
Susan Jeffers





Toolkit Exercise #5-6: Help people ditch emotional baggage (e-bags)

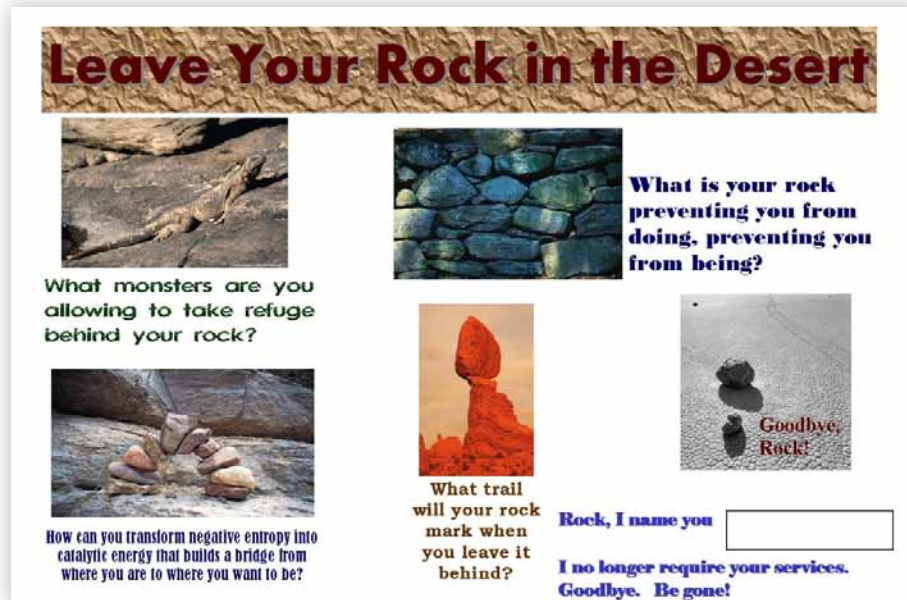
We all carry around emotional baggage from the past—ancient grudges we can't seem to let go, hurt feelings that never healed, insults that have festered and metastasized. As Charlotte Joko Beck noted in her book *Everyday Zen*, deny it though we may, we actually love hanging on to these little dramas. Complaining about them comforts us in our failures (*well, of course I couldn't climb that mountain, what with all this baggage I have to haul around*). The more emotional baggage we carry around, the more we have to complain about—and the more excuses we have for living a life that is less than what we would desire for ourselves.

When I hike in the Grand Canyon with a small group, I have each hiker place an ugly rock in their backpack (though I once had a geologist tell me there's no such thing as an ugly rock). This rock is to represent some emotional baggage they'd like to be rid of. Trust me, by the seventh day of carrying a heavy pack, the unnecessary weight of that rock is a real burden! On the last day, we have a ceremony: we build a cairn—a small pile of rocks that marks a trail. Each hiker adds his or her rock and says goodbye to it. I've seen miraculous things happen as people turn and walk away, leaving their rock, and the emotional baggage it represents, behind in the desert.

People have walked away from fears that imprisoned them emotionally for years; left behind anger, hatred, and vengefulness; and set aside bitter memories of childhood. Just as a 350-pound jockey will never win the Kentucky Derby, it's hard to win at life when your emotional backpack is full of toxic waste.

“The ultimate act of personal responsibility at work may be in taking control of our own state of mind. Moods exert a powerful pull on thought, memory, and perception. When we are angry, we more readily remember incidents that support our ire, our thoughts become preoccupied with the object of our anger, and irritability so skews our worldview that an otherwise benign comment might now strike us as hostile. Resisting this despotic quality of moods is essential to our ability to work productively.”

Daniel Goleman: *Working with Emotional Intelligence*



A mini-poster I share with workshop participants when we conduct a ceremony to leave behind the emotional rocks that weigh down the metaphorical backpacks of our lives

Toolkit Exercise #5-7: Foster a PUA!—Proceed Until Apprehended—attitude about taking initiative and getting things done

Proceed Until Apprehended is a line from the book *The Florence Prescription: From Accountability to Ownership*. In a culture of ownership, people adopt the “proceed until apprehended” attitude toward getting things done—if those things are right for patients, coworkers, and the community. This does not mean that they become loose cannons—quite to the contrary. “Proceed until apprehended” means clearly identifying the problem or opportunity, then building the support needed to take action. It means to stop complaining about problems and to commit to taking action to resolve those problems.

A “proceed until apprehended” attitude gives people the courage to have “a bias for action.” It is the underlying attitude that allows a Nordstrom employee to offer a no-questions-asked refund; for a Zappos’ call center employee to spend two hours on the telephone with a customer; for an Osprey call center employee to commit the company to repairing my backpack that was destroyed by a vicious squirrel without charge and without needing a supervisor’s approval.



Toolkit Exercise #5-8: Manage your reference groups

Sociologists tell us that one of the most important, if not *the* most important, influences on our lives is the people we spend time with, the people with whom we identify. This is what they call our reference group. People tend to hang around with others who are much like them in terms of attitudes, opinions, income level, etc. We are all profoundly imprinted by the characteristics of the reference groups with which we identify, in both conscious and subconscious ways. If your reference group consists primarily of people who are depressed, pessimistic, and chronically whining about how the world has made them a victim, over time it will be almost impossible for you to not fall into that emotional quicksand. On the other hand, if you are depressed and anxious but spend time with people who are confident and optimistic, their attitudes are likely to rub off on you.

“ The ceramics teacher announced on opening day that he was dividing the class into two groups. All those on the left side of the studio, he said, would be graded solely on the *quantity* of work they produced, all those on the right side solely on its quality. Well, came grading time and a curious fact emerged: the works of highest quality were all produced by the group being rated for quantity. It seems that while the ‘quantity’ group was busily turning out piles of work—and learning from their mistakes—the ‘quality’ group had sat theorizing about perfection, and in the end had little more to show for their efforts than grandiose theories and a pile of dead clay.” (emphasis in original)

David Bayles and Ted Orland:

Art & Fear: Observations on the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking

One of the surest ways to enhance your courage is to change your reference groups. You do this by consciously seeking out people who have the qualities you would like to emulate. This entails sticking your neck out, making those proverbial cold calls, joining Rotary or the Optimists Club, and otherwise getting out of your shell. The payback can be enormous, however, both personally and professionally.



“ If your choice of a reference group is people who are negative and pessimistic, then over time you yourself will become negative and pessimistic. It might happen so slowly you don’t even notice it happening, but it’s virtually inevitable you will eventually take on characteristics common to your reference group. On the other hand, if your choice of a reference group is positive and optimistic people, those qualities will inevitably rub off on you as well.”

Roger Looyenga (with Joe Tye): *Take the Stairs*

Toolkit Exercise #5-9: Determination and Brick Walls

Randy Pausch was living the American Dream. He had a job he loved as a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, a wonderful family, and fascinating hobbies. Then he was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer and given less than six months to live. And as he was dying, he was giving speeches and writing a book about lessons on how to live. This is my favorite quote from Pausch’s book *The Last Lecture*:

Brick walls are not there to stop you, they are there to make you prove how much you want something.

As Harold Kushner so cogently tells us in his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, we all sooner or later run into brick walls. When that happens, we need to remember the advice of my friend W Mitchell who wrote the book *It’s Not What Happens to You It’s What You Do About It*. There are three possible responses to running into a brick wall, each of which might be appropriate, depending upon the situation.

The first is to quit, giving up the quest. After a certain number of years, someone who’s been toiling away in the minor leagues has to accept that the dream of playing in the Big Leagues is not going to be realized and to find a new set of goals to pursue. I started Values Coach in 1994 after realizing that the brick wall standing between me and my then-goal of being CEO of a large hospital was trying to tell me that my calling in life laid elsewhere.



The second is to keep pounding away at that brick wall, enduring all the pain and frustration of picking yourself up time and again and knowing that it will knock you down many times before you finally crash through. Every spouse of an alcoholic or parent of a child whose gotten into drugs knows the daily anguish of running into a seemingly impregnable brick wall, hoping that this is the day that one last smash-up will lead to a breakthrough. So does every author who has papered the walls of a room with rejection letters.

The third is to find a way over or around the wall. When Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard started the company that still bears their names, their first project was a pin counter for bowling allies. It hit the market and immediately hit an impenetrable brick wall. Rather than pounding away trying to sell the device with brute force marketing, they tried something else—and developed the technology that Walt Disney used for the soundtrack of *Fantasia*.



Some years ago I wrote a book called *Never Fear, Never Quit*. “Never Fear” doesn’t mean don’t be afraid; it means don’t allow your fears to paralyze you. And “Never Quit” doesn’t mean don’t stop; if something isn’t working, by all means stop and try something else. What it does mean is don’t give up. Sometimes, as Randy Pausch said, brick walls are there to make you prove how much you want something. And sometimes they are there to alert you that you are on the wrong path in life. The challenge is often discerning what sort of wall you have just smashed into, and then facing down your fears and doing what you must do.



Toolkit Exercise #5-10: Let people play to their strengths

The Gallup research mentioned above also concluded that eight-of-ten (80 percent!) of workers do not believe that their greatest strengths are being used on the job. This is a missed opportunity for the organization, and a tragic waste of potential for the individual. Creating a “fill-in-the-blank” job description in which every employee is invited to demonstrate how something they love to do can be an asset to the organization can tap into these hidden strengths and talents. Every year, Springfield Remanufacturing (the company where Jack Stack invented open book management) holds several customer appreciation days. One of the activities is a fishing trip. They don’t hire professional fishing guides, they use their employees who love to fish; several times a year they get to fish on company time, and show off their fishing prowess to visiting customers.

“ People work better, harder, and with more energy, joy, and focus when they’re able to express themselves and experience making a valuable contribution through their own creativity and authenticity. The absence of that opportunity in any organization is a powerful handicap; its existence is magnetic and an import factor in long-term, measurable success. Smart leaders recognize this and develop strategies to successfully provide their employees the freedom to participate fully in the guiding principles of the business.”

Amie Devero: Powered by Principle: Using Core Values to Build World-Class Organizations

Toolkit Exercise #5-11: Minimize internal competition

In their book *The Knowing-Doing Gap: How Smart Companies Turn Knowledge Into Action*, Jeff Pfeffer (my former Stanford business school professor) and Robert Sutton include a chapter with examples from the business world on how promoting internal competition can “turn friends into enemies” and, even though certain employees or departments “win” the zero-sum game, the organization as a whole loses. Their recommendations include hiring, rewarding and retaining people who value cooperation over personal winning—and moving out those who don’t; focusing competitive energy on external threats and opportunities rather than internal turf-building and bonus-gaining; building “a culture that defines individual success partly by the success of the person’s peers”; and making it a leadership mandate that people



share information, teach and learn from others within the organization, and work together toward overall company goals.

Toolkit Exercise #5-12: Make the job description a floor, not a ceiling

“That’s not my job” are words that almost automatically connote a negative and disempowered corporate culture. On the other hand, where “whatever it takes” is an implicit element of every job description, there will be a positive and empowered culture. As one example, teaching everyone (yes, right down to the housekeeping staff) how to use Google or other search tools, and then encouraging them to surf for great ideas to enhance their jobs and their departments is one great way of growing people into jobs that grow with them. What more can you do to foster a culture in which people see their job descriptions as simply the main course, to be enriched by adding their own special touch and talents to the basic job expectations?

Toolkit Exercise #5-13: Use management role-playing to teach critical skills

In our leadership retreats, we often break the team up into groups of four and ask them to act out a short skit. In this, three people are asked to play the role of people who are positive and enthusiastic about their work and their organization, and the fourth is asked to play the role of a negative, bitter, cynical, sarcastic “pickle-sucker.” In almost every case, it becomes clear that people are not prepared to confront inappropriate attitudes and behaviors in a constructive way. A department head meeting is a good place to demonstrate, and have people role-play, various approaches to constructively confront people who are engaged in gossip, whining, finger-pointing, passive-aggressive resistance, and other forms of toxic emotional negativity.

“ By observing the behavior of a production floor employee or a senior executive, you can tell what the organization values and how it chooses to do its work. You hear the values referred to even in casual conversation. You feel the values are real and alive.”

Margaret J. Wheatley: *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*



Toolkit Exercise #5-14: Don't tolerate gossip and rumor-mongering

Either implicitly or explicitly, one of your organization's values is integrity (even Enron claimed that as a value). You also, I am sure, aspire to treat people with respect and dignity. But every time one of your employees talks about a coworker, a customer, or anyone else behind that person's back they are violating the integrity of the organization and the dignity of the person being gossiped about—and treat everyone else within earshot with disrespect. One of the most important steps you can take to eradicate toxic emotional negativity from the workplace is to establish a zero-tolerance policy for gossip—and to define what you mean by the term.

Establish a principle that any time someone is talking about a coworker in a manner that is potentially disrespectful, someone in the group will immediately pull out a cell phone and get the person being talked about on a speaker phone so that he or she can hear the conversation. Make it clear during new employee orientation that you are quite serious about this principle. As soon as a critical mass of people begin acting upon it, you will very quickly see a profound change for the better in the culture of your organization.

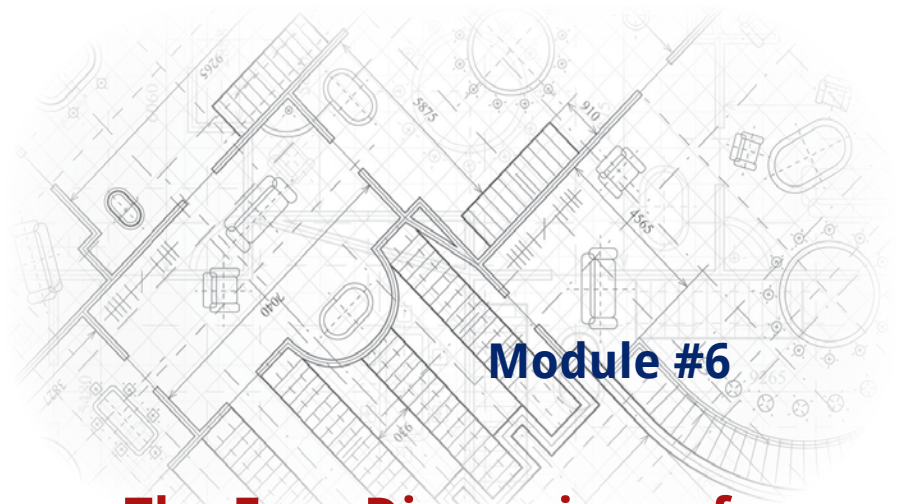
“ Since the implementation of our Values Movement, the coaching team has observed less gossip and we feel that is a great achievement. We are seeing staff members be more responsible for making and keeping promises.”

From a report by FamilyCare, a West Virginia member of the Values Collaborative



Questions to Ask about Your Organization's Emotional Attitude

- ✓ Question #1: How do we assess employee engagement, how do we stack up, and how do we boost it?
- ✓ Question #2: Is our culture dominated by emotional positivity or is toxic emotional negativity evident?
- ✓ Question #3: Have we identified behaviors that, while common in practice, violate the stated values of our organization—the way that gossip and rumor-mongering violates the integrity of the organization and the dignity of the person about whom people are talking behind his or her back?
- ✓ Question #4: Have we established our zero-tolerance behaviors, and do we have the courage to enforce those standards?
- ✓ Question #5: How do we deal with people in the Rutledge Quadrant (good skills, bad attitude)?
- ✓ Question #6: How are our attitude and behavior expectations conveyed to new employees?
- ✓ Question #7: How do we eliminate any lingering fears that there might be retribution of some sort for making a decision, taking a risk, or speaking out about a problem (whether these are based on the reality of past situations or merely on the imagination that retribution might happen in the future)?
- ✓ Question #8: How can we foster a greater sense of urgency and efficiency that would be reflected, for example, in meetings starting promptly on time, with participants being engaged in the discussion and not working on their blackberries?
- ✓ Question #9: How can we equip and motivate people to confront toxic emotional negativity as reflected by chronic complaining, gossip, and other inappropriate behaviors in the workplace?
- ✓ Question #10: What can we do to help our culture be more clearly characterized by cheerleading, celebration, and fun on the job?
- ✓ Question #11: Are we buying our own press clippings?



The Four Dimensions of Values-Based Leadership

Goals for this Module

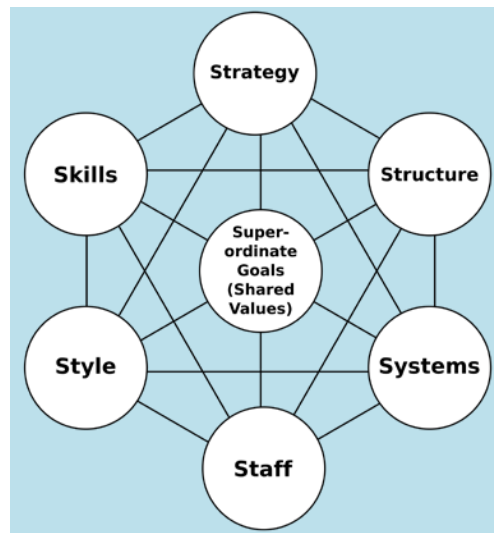
- ✓ **Objective #1:** Describe the difference between transactional and transforming leadership.
- ✓ **Objective #2:** Describe The Four Dimensions of Values-Based Leadership
- ✓ **Objective #3:** Share twelve strategies by which leaders can make what is invisible to the eye become visible to the heart, and thus promote a more positive and productive organizational culture.

**Management is a job description.
Leadership is a life decision.
In today's world we need leaders in every corner,
not just in the corner office.**



Leadership is above all about inculcating shared values

The hub of the famous McKinsey 7-S model for business success is “shared values.” When teaching the course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, we always emphasize that anyone who really takes to heart Core Action Values 1-11 will become the sort of person who, through their example, influences and inspires other people. That is perhaps the best shorthand definition there is of a leader: someone who influences and inspires. In this sixth module, we will explore the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership and I will share practical strategies for being a better values-based transformational leader.



McKinsey "7S" Model

Transactional and Transforming Leadership

In his Pulitzer Prize winning book *Leadership*, James MacGregor Burns described the difference between transactional leadership and transforming leadership. Transactional leadership entails managing the business: transactions occur—I give you money, you give me a product or service; you give me a paycheck, I give you my time. These are essential activities to effectively managing an organization. Transforming leadership, on the other hand, is leadership that changes people’s perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors. Jack Welch was a highly effective transactional leader; Martin Luther King was a highly effective transformational leader. Steve Jobs was both.



The primary focus of transactional leadership is strategy and tactics. Transactional leaders oversee the process of marketplace and competitive analysis, product creation and promotion, work process organization, financial management, and other essential elements of running an organization. Transactional leadership is involved when a hospital system negotiates a new union contract; when a consumer products company introduces a new product line; when a manufacturing company expands internationally or executes a layoff; and when a non-profit organization launches a new fundraising campaign. In most cases, transactional leaders are functioning within the broad bounds of a job description, whether it's created by the expectations of a Board of Trustees for a CEO or a manager's expectations of a frontline supervisor.

Transforming leadership is primarily concerned with culture. Transforming leaders might have a formal management job title, but this is not essential. People who change the world don't need a job description. Nobody told Mother Teresa to go to Calcutta; nobody told Candace Lightner to found Mothers Against Drunk Driving or Millard Fuller to start Habitat for Humanity; Nelson Mandela did not have a job description; Al Gore did not receive a paycheck for his work to raise awareness of global warming. Likewise, the Spark Plugs who help you champion positive cultural transformation are usually going above and beyond the bounds of their job description to do so, and in many cases do not have any formal management authority.

“Leaders of successful organizations make sure their followers are proud to be part of the company. For this to happen, the followers as individuals, and the organization as a whole, must have values in common.”

Larry R. Donnithorne: *The West Point Way of Leadership*

Transactional leadership is primarily of the left brain; transforming leadership is primarily of the right brain. Positive culture change, and building a positive culture of ownership, cannot be brought about through strategic initiative alone. It also requires a substantial emotional commitment on the part of those leading the change initiative, both formal and informal leaders. I previously mentioned the book *Strategy and the Fat Smoker* by David Maister. He said we all know what the strategies are (quit smoking and lose weight; provide great service in a cost-effective manner). The problem, he says, comes about when transactional leaders don't effectively inspire people to take ownership for their part of “the plan.” In effect they fail the test of transforming leadership.



The age-old question of whether leaders are born or made creates a false dichotomy. We are all faced with situations in which we have the opportunity to provide leadership, and we can all learn and enhance the skills we have for being effective leaders.

In the next several sections I will describe The 4 Dimensions of Values-Based Leadership, summarize some of the most important things that transforming leaders do; and share practical tools and strategies that can help any become a more effective leader.

“ You connect with your highest goal when you awaken full of enthusiasm for the day and when you know you are making a contribution. It is synonymous with being in the flow,—periods in which you are so totally absorbed with what you are doing that time stops and fulfillment comes naturally. It is making your life itself a work of art. It is working at something that you’re getting paid to do that you would secretly be willing to pay someone to be able to do.”

Michael Ray: *The Highest Goal: The Secret that Sustains You in Every Moment*

The Four Dimensions of Values-Based Leadership

There are four essential characteristics of values-based leadership. These qualities apply in every field of leadership, whether it’s leading a large organization, a small business, or even a family.

Dimension #1—Character

“ A man is both a seed and in some degree also a gardener, for good or ill... I am impressed by the degree in which the development of ‘character’ can be a product of conscious intention, the will to modify innate tendencies in desired directions; in some cases the change can be great and permanent.”

J.R.R. Tolkien (in a letter to his son)

Character is destiny, said Heraclitus, and nowhere more so than in leadership. Character is forged through commitment to a higher purpose, nurtured by selflessness, and demands total self-honesty. This is a gradual process that requires a lifelong commitment, but the change can be profound and lasting. Mary Kay Ash taught her beauty consultants sales skills, and motivated them with dreams of pink Cadillacs, but she also did something more important: she helped them foster personal character strength,



something that remains central to the company today. This is one reason that Mary Kay's company has never been embroiled in the sort of controversy that many other companies in the direct sales field have encountered.

Perhaps no one in history has thought more deeply about the nature of character than Confucius. He used a comparison between “the superior man” and “the small man” to illustrate various dimensions of character (Confucius wrote in seventh century BC feudal China—were he alive and writing today he would no doubt speak of superior men and women). I've extracted the great philosopher's thoughts on character from The Analects into this mini-poster:

“ A king does not abide within his tent while his men bleed and die upon the field. A king does not dine while his men go hungry, nor sleep when they stand at watch upon the wall. A king does not command his men's loyalty through fear nor purchase it with gold; he earns their love by the sweat of his own back and the pains he endures for their sake. That which comprises the harshest burden, a king lifts first and sets down last. A king does not require service of those he leads but provides it to them. He serves them, not they him... A king does not expend his substance to enslave men, but by his conduct and example makes them free.”

Steven Pressfield: *Gates of Fire*



CONFUCIUS ON CHARACTER



The superior man works to develop the superior aspects of his character. The small man allows the inferior aspects of his character to flourish.

The superior man is easy to serve but difficult to please. The small man is difficult to serve but easy to please.

The superior man can see a question from all sides. The small man can see it only from his biased perspective.

The superior man calls attention to the good points in others. The small man calls attention to their defects.

The superior man can influence those who are above him. The small man can influence only those below him.

The demands that the superior man makes are on himself. The demands of the small man are placed upon others.

The superior man is slow in word but prompt in deed. The small man is quick to make promises but slow to keep them.

The superior man is diligent in ascertaining what is right. The small man is diligent in ascertaining what will pay.

The superior man is calm and at ease. The small man is fretful and ill at ease.

When things go wrong, the superior man seeks blame in himself. When things go wrong, the small man seeks blame in others.

The small man thinks he is a superior man. The superior man knows he is a small man.

In the presence of a superior man, think all the time how you might equal him. In the presence of a small man, evaluate your own character to be sure you are not like him.

The superior man has the quality of wind. The small man has the quality of grass. When the wind blows, the grass cannot help but to bend.

“To see what is right and not to do it is cowardice.”

Confucius: *The Analects*



Question: This one will take courage on your part to honestly answer. What one character flaw, if you could remove it, would have the most powerfully transforming effect on your life and on your relationships at home and at work? What one action can you take right now to begin the process of eliminating that problem?

“ Employees today seek to work for a company and leaders with whom they feel proud to be associated and who treat them like active contributors, not passive producers. They want to work for leaders who appreciate the value they add and rely on their passions and talents to every extent possible.”

Michael Frisina:

Influential Leadership: Change Your Behavior, Change Your Organization, Change Health Care

Dimension #2—Expectations

There is a scene early in J.R.R. Tolkien’s book *The Hobbit* that sets the stage for the entire story. Gandalf the wizard has agreed to help Thorin and his band of dwarves recover the treasure that was stolen from them by a fire-breathing dragon. The dragon has hoarded the treasure deep in a cavern at the bottom of a mountain, and the dwarves need a burglar to sneak in to tell them where the dragon is so they can recover the treasure without being caught. Gandalf introduces them to Bilbo Baggins, the hobbit. Now, hobbits are short and fat and they love nothing more than eating, drinking and sleeping. Thorin, the mighty king of the dwarves, looks down at the little hobbit and sniffs, “Why, he looks more like a grocer than a burglar.” Gandalf replies that there’s more to Bilbo than meets the eye, that in fact there’s more to him than even he sees in himself. The rest of the story is the story of little Bilbo Baggins striving to live up to the expectation created for him by Gandalf the wizard at the very start. By story’s end, it is Bilbo who has become the real leader of the group.

You tend to get what you expect. This ancient wisdom has been repeated so often and in so many ways through the ages because it reflects an eternal truth, and nowhere more so than in the relationship between leader and followers. Effective leaders look beyond superficial appearances to find and galvanize hidden strengths in others.

Question: What is one area in your life where increased expectations of yourself and others would yield the greatest benefit, and how can you communicate these new and higher expectations? How can raising the bar on attitudinal and behavioral expectations spark a positive transformation in your organization?



“ We are far more powerful in the creation of our lives than we realize. Our thoughts about people determine how they will show up for us and how we will relate to them. Our words let the other person know our expectations of them and their behavior. If the words are critical, then the behavior will mirror the expectation represented by what we say.”

Will Bowen: *A Complaint Free World*

Dimension #3—Fellowship

Gallup studies show that one of the best predictors of employee engagement is having “a best friend” at work. Great organizations tend to be characterized by a strong spirit of fellowship. While we often think of fellowship in the context of fun with friends, in fact it means much more. It is created when there is general commitment to shared values and a common vision, and a determined commitment to achieving that vision while living those values. A spirit of fellowship is essential to establishing mutual trust in the workplace. Part of the genius of Ray Kroc, founder of McDonald’s, was his ability to foster this spirit of fellowship across the company itself, its franchisees, and its suppliers in a unique culture that insiders refer to as McFamily. My first real job, other than cutting grass and sacking groceries for tips, was at a McDonald’s in Middletown, Rhode Island in 1968. It was one of the highest performance work teams I have ever been a part of—a bunch of sailors and high school kids all working part-time jobs came together in a spirit of friendship; during the noon rush could have competed with an Indy 500 pit crew for hustle. And to this day I remember the QVSC values of McDonald’s—Quality, Value, Service, Cleanliness—which were taught to me by the franchise owner my first day on the job.

Question: What actions can you take to promote a higher level of mutual respect and trust within your area of the organization?

“ Purpose gives people a psychological stake in the success of their team and the larger organization. Even if they are a continent away from the epicenter where the big decisions are made, people with purpose use words like “we” and “our” when talking about new strategies, acquisitions, and product launches. They beam with pride when they talk about the performance of the enterprise, its contributions to society, and its potential for the future.”

Merom Klein and Rod Napier:

The Courage to ACT: 5 Factors of Courage to Transform Business



Dimension #4—Quest

When Steve Jobs was recruiting John Sculley to join the executive team at Apple, he asked a question that turned out to be life-changing for Sculley: Jobs asked whether Sculley wanted to help change the world, or spend the rest of his career selling sugar water to kids. Creating a spirit of quest, of something bigger than just selling stuff and making money, is the acid test of transforming leadership, and of creating a culture of ownership. Unfortunately, many workers not only do not feel a spirit of quest in their work, they don't even know what the quest is. According to the latest Gallup report on the state of the American workplace, only 40% of workers can even say what their company stands for and how it stands out from its competition.

A Quest entails uncertainty and anxiety (if it were easy and had a guaranteed outcome, it would not be a Quest). Therefore, one of the leader's key responsibilities is helping people overcome anxiety and channel fear into the energy for constructive action. When seven people were murdered by a psychopath who injected cyanide into Tylenol capsules in Chicago during 1982, the Johnson & Johnson Corporation was faced with a serious crisis. In the coming months, however, the challenge to survive was transformed into a quest to surmount the crisis. An employee group even commissioned T-shirts that read "We're coming back." When the company that printed the T-shirts learned what they were for, it waved the charges.

Question: Think about your biggest challenge or frustration: how can you transform that into fuel for the quest?

“ An evangelistic leader believes that the cause will succeed and then sets an inspiring example by withstanding long and difficult battles, fostering collaborative efforts, showing composure in difficult times, and remaining humble in victory. He plants his feet firmly on the ground yet keeps his dreams in the clouds.”

Guy Kawasaki: *Selling the Dream*



What Transforming Leaders Do

Over the past ten years, Values Coach has worked with more than 100 different organizations on a variety of different culture-change initiatives, including more than 60 different organizations that are engaged in the Values Collaborative. Some have been phenomenally successful—Paul Utemark, CEO of Fillmore County Hospital in Geneva, Nebraska, said “I got a whole new team and didn’t have to change any of my people.” In other organizations the results have been disappointing or, while initially positive, have not been sustained. Here are a dozen things the most effective leaders do to assure a lasting impact of cultural transformation:

1. Map the vision

One of my favorite definitions of leadership is the one popularized by Joel Barker: a leader is someone who takes you to a place that you didn’t know you wanted to go. That implies at least these four things:

- ✓ The leader sparks a dream that touches people at an emotional level. This can be specific, like JFK’s dream of putting a man on the moon by the end of the decade, or it can be more impressionist, like MLK’s dream that one day our children can all play together regardless of their skin color, but it must create a visceral emotional connection. Hitting a 12 percent profit margin is not a dream that will spark an emotional connection; fostering a culture that establishes your organization as a recognized “best place to work” might be.
- ✓ The leader inspires people to take action, and take risks, to start the movement toward fulfilling that dream. This requires a careful balance of committing to a transcendent cause—the way Habitat for Humanity volunteers are trying to eradicate poverty housing and connecting with what Zig Ziglar called the WIIFM factor (What’s In It For Me)—the way Habitat for Humanity volunteers enjoy working outside with friends.
- ✓ The leader sparks courage and determination to work through the inevitable obstacles and roadblocks—the way Bill McGowan never let his team at MCI give up or give in when they were locked in mortal combat with one of the world’s most powerful corporations trying to break up the AT&T phone monopoly. By the way, had MCI lost that fight, there would be no internet today and we would all still be using black rotary dial telephones.



- ✓ The leader keeps raising the bar, knowing that the place to which we didn't know we wanted to go to is never a final destination but always a journey towards a better place than where we are now—no matter how far we have come.

2. Set the example

This element is non-negotiable. One of the most common excuses we hear from people as to why they will not participate in helping to foster a more positive and values-based culture is that they don't think they see that sort of commitment from leadership. If you are truly committed to transforming the culture of your organization, you must show up. Some of the ways you can do that are to be visibly present every day for each day's reading of that day's promise from *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* (at least every day you are in town—and when you're not available have a representative there); post *The Pickle Pledge* in your office and make contributions to the executive office pickle jar when you catch yourself complaining about something; know by heart your organization's values and routinely ask employees to tell you what they are and how they see them (or don't see them) being lived out in the organization.



*CEO Roger Steinkruger joins employees of Tri Valley Health System in Cambridge, Nebraska in the daily reading of each day's promise from *The Self-Empowerment Pledge**



One of the most important examples that a leader must set is the emotional example. During World War II, General Omar Bradley said that the general who complains about the morale of the troops must first look to his own morale. It was true then and it is true today. Emotions are contagious, but for better or worse the mood and attitude of the leader has a disproportionate impact on the emotional climate of the workplace. Emotional self-mastery and emotionally intelligent behavior are prerequisites of effective leadership.

“ In any human group, people pay most attention to—and put most importance on—what the most powerful person in that group says or does. There are many studies that show, for example, that if the leader of a team is in a positive mood, that spreads an upbeat mood to the others and that collective positivity enhances the group’s performance. If the leader projects a negative mood, that spreads in the same way, and the group’s performance suffers. This has been found for groups making business decisions, seeking creative solutions—even erecting a tent together.”

Daniel Goleman: *The Brain and Emotional Intelligence: New Insights*

3. Make it a movement

In the most successful organizations, culture change has not been framed as a program or an initiative, but rather as a movement (whether or not that word is specifically used). People become engaged in a movement for two reasons: 1) because they want to in some way contribute to a better world; and 2) because they personally will benefit in some way from the success of the movement. As an example, the people who most zealously push their organizations into recycling and other environmental stewardship



commitments do so because they have an overall commitment to conservation and protecting the planet, but also because they want to assure that they and their children (and children’s children) can appreciate the unspoiled beauty of the natural world. There is a wonderful 3-minute TED Talk video by entrepreneur Derek Sivers on how to start a movement available at this link: [How to Start a Movement](#)



One of the key purposes of the Values and Culture Challenge that was launched with two hospitals in Wyoming and is now spreading globally is to give leaders a practical yardstick that inspires people to see building a more positive and productive culture of ownership as a competition and as a movement that inspires pride and commitment—and not just as a management “program of the month.”

4. Instill urgency tempered with patience

Without a sense of urgency, cultural transformation runs the risk of becoming just another “program of the month” that will have limited sustained impact. On the other hand, real culture change takes a long time and a sustained commitment, and thus also requires a strong sense of patience. For many years, Values Coach worked with Auto-Owners Insurance, a Fortune 500 company. The company initiated its Super Outstanding Service program in 1997. Ten years later, it earned the first of five (and counting) awards from J.D. Power for providing best-in-class service for insurance claims processing. Auto-Owners approached this commitment with a strong sense of urgency: one of the projects we completed was a special curriculum called Raise the Bar. But it also recognized that achieving “super outstanding service” could not be attained with a flash-in-the-pan one-time program. Every other month the Auto-Owners in-house magazine *The Memo* recognizes associates who have reflected a “Relentless Pursuit of Excellence” in serving their customers.

5. Identify, Nurture, and protect your Spark Plugs

In the TED video “How to Start a Movement” mentioned above, Derek Sivers uses a three-minute video taken at a music festival to illustrate how a movement starts. It begins with “the shirtless dancing guy” apparently making a fool of himself. But then, a “first follower” joins in, and invites his friends. Within 90 seconds, almost everybody else on the hillside is dancing. The key lessons Sivers says, are that a movement requires the person we call Spark Plugs (and that he calls lone nuts and first followers) to have the courage to stand up, stand out, and take a stand, and to be joined by a growing number of “first followers” who have the courage to break away from the cynicism of the crowd and join in with the fun of the movement.

One of the most heartbreaking things we see in organizational cultural transformation is when those pioneers who are committed to helping build a more positive culture are ridiculed by the zombies, vampires, and pickle-suckers, and not adequately supported by leadership. As a result, they grow increasingly disillusioned and drop out. In such



cases, the effort to change the culture either has no effect or, at worst, a negative effect by creating one more instance of “we tried that and it didn’t work.” In the previous module I quoted Jim Clifton’s book *The Coming Jobs War*, in which he stated that disengaged employees, and especially disengaged managers, are a quality defect. The surest way to kill the enthusiasm of your Spark Plug people—and eventually lost them altogether—is to allow what Clifton calls “bosses from hell” to pop the balloon of their passion.



One of the ways we’ve seen this defect manifested is when frontline Spark Plugs are excited to be part of the process but then are told by their managers that they can’t be spared to get away for training or committee meetings. One of the most important responsibilities of leadership in any culture change initiative is identifying, nurturing, and protecting the Spark Plugs who make that change happen. Simple symbolic actions, such as consistently showing up for the daily reading of each day’s promise from *The Self-Empowerment Pledge*, send a powerful message to the rest of the organization that top leadership is committed to the process.

“What employees valued most were even-keeled bosses who made time for one-on-one meetings, who helped people puzzle through problems by asking questions, not dictating answers, and who took an interest in employees’ lives and careers.”

Google study on what constituted best managers, as reported in “Google’s Quest to Build a Better Boss” by Adam Bryant in *The New York Times*, March 12, 2011



6. Promote a “Proceed Until Apprehended” mindset to cultivate courageous followers

The most important three words in **The Florence Prescription: From Accountability to Ownership** are Proceed Until Apprehended (which our friends in the VA Health-care System often shorten to PUA!!! with three exclamation points and 50 additional decibels). Why are these the most important three words? Because in many (most?) organizations there is more learned helplessness than there is real empowerment. At the front lines people complain that they are never empowered (and often do anything they can to avoid having someone try to empower them with real accountability) while in the C-suite executives complain that no one ever takes initiative and responsibility by acting in an empowered way. What we have here is a failure to communicate!



In a PUA! (Proceed Until Apprehended) workplace, if it’s the right thing to do—for customers and patients, for coworkers, for the organization—then it gets done. This might mean someone making a decision on the spot without fear of being reprimanded, the way a Nordstrom clerk can instantly authorize a refund to a customer with no questions asked, or it might mean that someone goes over the head of an immediate supervisor to address a quality, safety, or ethical issue that appears to be being ignored. A PUA! workplace encourages and nurtures what Ira Chaleff, in the book quoted below, calls “courageous followers”—people are willing to challenge leadership when it’s necessary but are supportive Spark Plugs when it comes to bringing about constructive change, even if it means they become unpopular with the Zombie and Vampire populations within the organization.

“ When behavior that jeopardizes the common purpose remains unchanged, courageous followers recognize the need for transformation. They champion the need for change and stay with the leader and group while they mutually struggle with the difficulty of real change. They examine their own need for transformation and become full participants in the change process as appropriate.”

Ira Chaleff: The Courageous Follower: Standing Up TO & FOR Our Leaders



7. Foster Courage and Channel Fear

It's often said that people are afraid of change, but it's not true: people love change as long as it comes with a guarantee that it's going to be a positive change. If you were to change people's paychecks by adding a zero to the dollar amount, you'd be unlikely to experience any resistance to that change. The leadership challenge is to teach people how to manage anxiety and to make sure they are afraid of the right things.

If people are more afraid of the boss than they are the competition, the competition will win. If people are more afraid of losing their jobs than they are of losing customers, they will engage in behaviors that cause the company to lose customers and eventually cost jobs.

In the days immediately following the terrorist attack of 9/11, the airline industry suffered a collective panic attack. The major air carriers fired more than 100,000 people within the first several weeks; this was not the result of a careful strategic analysis, it was a knee-jerk panic attack. The only exception among the major airlines was Southwest Airlines, which reassured its people that they didn't need to worry about losing their jobs, they only needed to worry about doing their jobs. Over the next ten years, every major airline carrier went through bankruptcy, with the exception of Southwest Airlines. That company continued to be profitable and continued to grow, often by hiring the very people who had been fired by the other air carriers. At the moment of truth, leaders at Southwest Airlines responded with courage whereas all the others reacted to fear.

“ Fear is a reaction, courage is a decision. Courage is the main quality of leadership—courage to initiate something and keep it going. The best leaders have a pioneering spirit, an adventurous spirit; they have the courage to blaze new trails in this incredible land of opportunity.”

Joe Tye: All Hands on Deck: 8 Essential Lessons for Building a Culture of Ownership

8. Cultivate toughness and resilience

The greatest test of leadership is not the ability to build a team or grow a business, as important as these are. The greatest test is the ability to keep the team inspired and motivated when to all outside appearances the war has been lost. We remember our greatest leaders more not so much for what they achieved as for what they endured: Washington at Valley Forge, Florence Nightingale at the Scutari Barrack Hospital, Mandela in prison, Iacocca standing firm when Chrysler corporation was circling the drain.



In any culture change movement, there will be significant resistance, either overt or passive-aggressive (or both); there will be temptation to quit because other priorities impinge; and there will be times when momentum seems to have been lost. It is at those times that it is most important for the leader to be fully engaged and visible, and demonstrably supportive of the Spark Plugs who have made such a personal investment in the culture change process.

The Lord of the Rings by J. R. R. Tolkien is one of the greatest stories ever written, and the movie adaptation by Peter Jackson is one of the great cinematic accomplishments of all time. As with all great fiction, there are many lessons woven throughout the story. In fact, I believe that Tolkien's classics are among the greatest leadership textbooks ever written if you are reading them for that purpose. Almost to the very end of the story, there is an oppressive sense that the forces of evil are so overwhelming that their victory is inevitable: when the Fellowship is confronted by the Balrog in the mines of Moria; during the sieges of Helm's Deep and Minas Tirith; when Sam and Frodo fall into the hands of orcs in Mordor; at these times, you want to close the book and weep for the fate of Middle-earth. Middle-earth. At each of these points, though, the trajectory of the story is altered through sheer force of will and determination, and a Churchillian determination to never give up and never give in.

As Joseph Campbell described in his writing on the hero's journey, one of the central tenets of the world's most powerful myths is that at the darkest moment the seeds are being planted for ultimate victory. It is at these moments we most need resilient leadership. In almost every great myth there comes a moment of trial and testing in which the hero ultimately prevails and emerges from the fire changed in positive and permanent ways.

One of the greatest tests of leadership in our recent history was the Great Depression. I believe the most important sentence uttered during the 20th century was FDR's statement that "we have nothing to fear but fear itself," because that speech brought an immediate end to bank runs that threatened the very fabric of our society. Six of the eight companies profiled in my book **All Hands on Deck: Eight Essential Lessons for Building a Culture of Ownership** lived through the Great Depression. Not one of them executed a layoff during those darkest of days; quite to the contrary, because of their resilient leadership they each emerged from that cauldron stronger, bigger, and poised for even greater achievements.



Dwight Eisenhower once said that what matters is not the size of the dog in a fight, but rather the size of the fight in the dog. In today's turbulent environment, leaders are challenged to inspire their people with the courage and perseverance to deal with whatever the world throws at them. My vote for the second most important sentence uttered during the 20th century is Winston Churchill's "we shall never surrender!" because the one man's spirited determination kept Great Britain in the one fight that the world could never have afforded to lose.

“ Keep your spirits up, don't allow yourself to be depressed, and never for one moment doubt but that matters will finish better and more quickly than you imagine.”

Napoleon Bonaparte in a letter to one of his generals

9. Focus dissatisfaction

In a previous module I shared results of Values Coach surveys showing that in many organizations, at least the perception is that 20% or more of all paid hours are wasted on complaining, gossiping, and other forms of toxic emotional negativity. This represents an expenditure of negative energy that is counterproductive for the organization and detrimental to the individuals upon whom it is inflicted. What if all that negative energy could be focused toward a positive end?

Someone who sits down on a thumbtack will be unhappy about one and only one thing—the pain in their rear—and will be incredibly motivated to alleviate that pain by standing up. It's a great metaphor, isn't it? What if you could focus every ounce of unhappiness and dissatisfaction in your organization on one central problem that, if solved, would make everything else better? A more effective marketing campaign, filling key vacancies, a more pleasant spirit of fellowship in the workplace, increased sales and profits—whatever that problem is? Any time anyone complained about something—about anything!—that negative emotional energy would be directed toward the solution of your one overriding problem. That is the challenge and the opportunity of transformational leadership: transforming negative and destructive emotional energy into a positive emotional commitment that is focused on real solutions.



10. Foster the power of faith

Core Action Value #6 in the course on *The Twelve Core Action Values* is Faith. When we talk about faith as a value, we don't mean religious belief. *Everyone* needs faith, regardless of their religious belief or non-belief. The cornerstones of faith as a value are gratitude, forgiveness, love, and spirituality. One of the illustrations we use in the course is The Four Pillars of Faith, which are: faith in yourself, faith in other people, faith in the future, and faith in something beyond what is visible in the material world.

The best leaders instill faith at these four levels. They serve as coaches and mentors who help people see and pursue their true potential (using tools like The Pyramid of Self-Belief). They foster mutual faith between people, which is an essential ingredient of effective teamwork. They instill faith in the future that gives strength for confronting the challenges of the present. And they remind people that, no matter what their specific job duties might be, they are part of something bigger: the way the old woman sweeping the floor in the well-known story told the traveler that she wasn't just a maid—she was helping to build a cathedral to the glory of God!

“People don't want more information. They are up to their eyeballs in information. They want *faith*—faith in you, your goals, your success, in a story you tell. It is faith that moves mountains, not facts. Facts do not give birth to faith. Faith needs a story to sustain it—a *meaningful* story that inspires belief in you and renews hope that your ideas indeed offer what you promise.”

Annette Simmons:

The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, and Persuasion through the Art of Storytelling

11. Be a cheerleader

In his book *Leadership A to Z*, James O'Toole defines cheerleading as a vital leadership responsibility, and asks why so many leaders forget to put the cheer into their leading. One of the things that defined the early culture of Wal-Mart was Sam Walton himself leading employees in the Wal-Mart Cheer; at Texas Roadhouse restaurants, employees engage in pep rallies (called Ally Rallies) right out there on the restaurant floor—often bringing patrons to their feet to dance alongside.



Jeff Shelton, CEO of Harlan County Health System in Alma, Nebraska made this pickle himself as a way of sparking enthusiasm for The Pickle Challenge in his organization

“ The most effective leaders... use humor more freely, even when things are tense, sending positive messages that shift the underlying emotional tone of the interaction. Although the words that leaders speak may deal with dry details— clauses in a contract, the numbers in a business plan—the good feelings that a laugh brings keep a leader’s relationships simpatico.”

Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee:
Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence

12. Employ metaphors and symbols

Because it is true that a picture is worth a thousand words (or more!), metaphors and symbols are among the most powerful forms of human communication. A metaphor creates a visual connection between two otherwise unrelated items, often creating a strong emotional impact. In the insurance industry, for example, “The Good Hands People” are not really a pair of hands and “Like a Good Neighbor” is not really your neighbor. But those metaphors create a much stronger emotional impact than paragraphs of text would do. Likewise, the insurance industry has done a great job using ducks, geckos, and Mr. Mayhem (I’m sure you can identify each company that these images refer to) capturing their message with one symbol.



In fast food, Ronald McDonald the clown has been responsible for the sale of zillions of Happy Meals (another great metaphor—meals are inanimate objects and as such cannot be “happy”), and linking Ronald with the Ronald McDonald House movement has created billions of dollars of goodwill for the company. In healthcare, the sycamore tree symbol used by Planetree represents the tree under which Hippocrates taught the first medical students in ancient Greece. Hospitals around the world are using that symbol to convey their commitment to patient-centered care.



13. Utilize the power of stories

Story-telling is the most important method of conveying cultural expectations within the organization and from one generation to another. More than any other single thing, stories influence the evolution of culture, mainly because they touch people at an emotional level. One of the most effective speeches I’ve heard on the subject of patient safety in hospitals was delivered by Doug Cropper, CEO of Genesis Health System. It was at a leadership retreat with his entire management retreat, and they had just learned that two patients had died as a result of mistakes by hospital employees. Doug shared the story of how his daughter had been killed by a careless driver, and the pain that was inflicted upon their family as a result, as asked his managers to put themselves in the shoes of families of the patients who had died in their facility. You could have heard a pin drop in that room, and I’m certain that the first thing most people did upon returning to their departments is work on improving safety.

Story-telling is not just about the words of the story—it is also how the story is delivered. In fact, research shows that body language, tone of voice, and other non-verbal cues are more important in creating impact than the words of the story itself. To prove it to yourself, watch the YouTube video of Taylor Mali performing his poem **What Teachers Make**. It’s a great poem, obviously, but the reason this is the most forwarded poem on the internet is not just the words, but rather how Taylor delivers them.

You don’t need to be a professional speaker to deliver a story with power. In our Values Collaborative organizations, I have seen Spark Plugs receive standing ovations for just



sharing their own stories in a way that touched the hearts of people they work with. Following is the text of a special report on key strategies to become a more effective presenter—the one skill every leader needs to master but which few studied in school.

Special Report: Presenting Yourself with Power

“ If I had a dollar for every corporate leader, from CEOs to branch managers, who had lousy presentation skills, I’d be a multi-billionaire... If you would like to rise above 95% of all people in the marketplace, then begin now by studying presentation skills.”

Jeffrey Gitomer: Little Green Book of Getting Your Way

Several years ago, I had lunch with the CEO of a major producer of corporate training videos. We were talking about effective communication techniques when he said, “Joe, if you really want to reach an audience, you have to have sex with them.” I almost choked on my noodles. “All of them?” He replied, “S-E-X: Significant Emotional eXperience.” He’s right. You must touch someone’s heart if you want to have a lasting impact on their thinking—and more particularly, on their thinking of you. Here are eight things you can do to make sure people remember you—and that they think of you when they need someone who does what you do.

- 1. Create a visceral mental image:** The most memorable advertising uses metaphors and images to create an emotional reaction. The Good Hands People have hands just like you and me, and Chevy trucks really aren’t made of stone, but those metaphorical images create a positive feeling, which is why these campaigns have lasted for decades. What picture can you use to capture the essence of your business?
- 2. Sell with stories:** Let’s say you’re an insurance agent trying to sell a life policy to a young father in a Harley-Davidson t-shirt, who’s telling you that he can’t afford it. What’s more likely to convince him: reciting statistics about motorcycle mortality, or telling him about a previous client who traded in his cable TV for life insurance the month before being killed in an accident, who went to heaven knowing that he’d provided for his family? I’ve posed that question to hundreds of agents over the past year, and without exception their answer is



“the story.” Every time I read a book or watch a movie, I’m on the lookout for a great story that I can borrow for my own purposes, and you can benefit from doing the same thing.

3. **Touch listeners on the funny bone:** People listen better when they’re laughing. This doesn’t mean you have to be a stand-up comedian, and by all means don’t open your presentations with “so, this guy walks into a bar...” But you can and should learn how to make people laugh. T.S. Eliot said “good poets borrow, great poets steal.” I do both! I illustrate power of enthusiasm with humorous stories borrowed from Southwest Airlines. When speaking about the power of vision, I tell a story that I borrowed from another speaker, then modified to fit my own needs—and then topped off with a new story taken from my own experiences.
4. **Make the impossible believable:** I’m on a quest to eradicate complaining, finger-pointing, rumor-mongering and other toxic emotional negativity from the workplace. When I challenge my audiences to join me in the campaign, people look at me as if I’d asked them to fly to Mars. Then I remind them that not so long ago, the room we’re in would have been full of cigarette smoke. Back then, it seemed inconceivable that we could ever live in a smoke-free world, but today that dream is real. If we can eradicate toxic cigarette smoke from the environment, why not toxic emotional negativity—which is as harmful to the soul as cigarette smoke is to the body.
5. **Ask for a commitment:** In every speech I give, I ask people to make a commitment of some sort. For example, I’ll ask listeners to stand up if they’d be willing to invest one minute a day for a year to change their lives for the better. Without exception, every single person in the room will rise. Then I challenge them to take *The Self-Empowerment Pledge*, which I will have included in their handout package. I’ll ask for volunteers to read each of the seven promises, and ask participants to answer these two questions:

If you personally were to make a commitment to live out these seven promises, would you be better off in two or three years—personally, professionally, financially, and spiritually—than where your current direction is taking you?



If everyone in your organization were to make a good faith effort to live these seven promises, would you all do a better job of serving customers, would you be more competitive in the marketplace, would you be more effective at attracting and retaining good people, and would it be a better place to work.

Again, without exception, people nod their heads yes to both questions—so I “close the sale” by asking them to reaffirm the commitment they made at the outset—to invest one minute a day in themselves, in their organizations, and in their futures. What I’ve done is both ask for a commitment and also in a vivid way, describe the benefits to listeners of making that commitment. (To take *The Pledge* yourself, go to www.Pledge-Power.com; you can print out a mini-poster and listen to all seven audio tracks from the CD.)

6. **Learn from the experts:** Most professional speakers have online video clips featuring their best material; you can efficiently see lots of them by visiting speakers bureau websites. Even more helpful is watching videos of the best business speakers, many of which are online and can be easily found with Google. Watch how Steve Jobs, John Chambers, Jeffrey Immelt, Carly Fiorina and other business leaders (and former business leaders) use (or don’t use) notes and Power-Point, how they use hand gestures and eye contact, how they connect with various audiences. Then adapt those techniques into your own presentations.
7. **Practice, practice, practice:** Make it a point to practice presenting with power at every opportunity. Work a visual image into your memory hook; include a story in every sales presentation; ask people in your audiences (big or small) to make a commitment of some sort. Join Toastmasters or take a Dale Carnegie class. Communicating with power is a key business skill, one that you must cultivate if you wish to realize your potential as a professional and as a person.
8. **Let your passion shine through:** While preparing this article, I found an online video of Steve Jobs’ presentation at Apple’s 2005 software developers conference. He grabbed me by the collar and literally pulled me into the computer screen with his infectious passion. I’d intended to watch just the first few minutes; 45 minutes later, I was ready to trade in my Windows PC for a Mac and invest my next paycheck in Apple stock. Isn’t that the sort of impact we’d all like to have?



In his book *Leadership A-to-Z*, James O'Toole says that one of the most important duties of leadership is to be a cheerleader—then he wonders why so many leaders think it's somehow unprofessional to let their own enthusiasm shine through in a way that will inspire others. Don't let that accusation apply to you. Never be afraid to let your passion shine through in your presentations. If you can't be passionate about it, then you're in the wrong line of work.

When you stop worrying about what your audience thinks of you and instead focus on what you can do for your audience, you unleash incredible energy and enthusiasm. This power will pour out of you in more commanding body language, authoritative hand gestures, sincere eye contact, and all the other non-verbal cues that say much more to your listeners than the words coming out of your mouth. The technical term for this power is charisma.

Conclusion: Making the invisible become visible

The day before Walt Disney died of lung cancer, he lay on his back in the hospital bed painting a picture on the ceiling for his older brother Roy. It wasn't a literal painting—it was a picture he created with words, the final dream of the man who told us that if we could dream it we could do it: Walt Disney World in Orlando. After Walt died, Roy postponed his well-deserved retirement to oversee the construction project that gave visible form to Walt's invisible dream. At the opening ceremony, the person sitting next to Roy on the dais said, "It's too bad Walt couldn't have seen this." You can just imagine Roy's knowing smile as he replied, "Oh, Walt saw it alright."

Walt Disney helped people see the invisible, believe in the impossible, and achieve the unimaginable. That's what transforming leaders do: they help us see, believe, and achieve. They make what is invisible to the eyes become visible to the heart. And that vision inspires us to do more than we ever thought possible.

Culture Mechanic

Your resource for more positive and productive organizational culture

The culture mechanic advisory service will provide your team with an ongoing infusion of new tools, strategies, ideas, and inspiration to add to your *Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit*. The annual subscription includes:

Biweekly Newsletter: A biweekly *Culture Mechanic* newsletter with in-depth coverage of one specific topic. Representative titles include

- ✓ What you can learn from Procter & Gamble's statement of values
- ✓ Essential elements for an emotionally intelligent culture
- ✓ Diagnosing and treating Attitude Deficit Disorder in your organization

Bimonthly special feature: bimonthly book, special report, e-book, webinar, or other resource that goes in greater depth into a specific topic. Representative titles include:

- ✓ Advance copy of Joe's forthcoming book *The Pickle Challenge for a Happier Life and a More Positive Organization (hard copy)*
- ✓ Updated edition of Joe's eBook *Leadership Lessons from The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings*
- ✓ Special Report: *Turn your Statement of Values into a Knock-Your-Socks-Off Marketing Tool*
- ✓ Webinar: *The Courageous Organization: Strategies to Infuse your People, and your Organization, with the Courage and Resilience to Confront any Challenge*

Monthly teleconference: Each month Joe will host a teleconference for participating organizations in which he will answer questions, share his thoughts on the latest research on corporate culture, and generally seek to inform and inspire listeners. Calls will be recorded and archived.

For information and to subscribe go to www.CulturalBlueprint.com or contact Michelle Arduser at the Values Coach office: 319-624-3889 or Michelle@valuescoach.com.

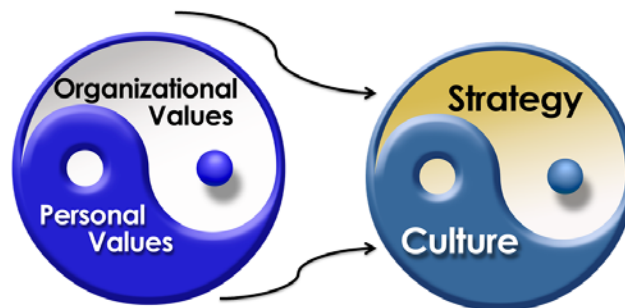
The Values Collaborative and *The Twelve Core Action Values*

We've got our cultural blueprint, now how do we raise the bar?

“*The Twelve Core Action Values* is like graduate school for the 7 Habits. This course is a great way to cultivate and nurture leadership talent at every level of your organization.”

David G. Altman, Vice President and Managing Director, Europe, Middle East and Africa,
Center for Creative Leadership

Remember this from Module #3?



Organizational values define strategy
Personal values define culture

Now that you've defined your Invisible Architecture and created a plan for your corporate culture, the best way to sustain your momentum and raise the bar is to join the Values Collaborative and share *The Twelve Core Action Values* that were summarized in Module #3 with your people. As research by Kouzes and Posner (referenced on page 71) shows, the clearer people are about their *personal* values, the more committed they will be to the *organizational* values of their employer. *The Twelve Core Action Values* is a 60-module course on values-based life and leadership skills. The purpose of this course is to help people use those skills to be happier and more successful at home as

well as at work; to be better parents, better time and money managers, and more effective at setting and achieving goals for the things that most matter to them.

The Values Collaborative is a train-the-trainer program that prepares Certified Values Coach Trainers (CVC-T) to present *The Twelve Core Action Values* to coworkers; it is also a growing community of organizations across the country that have made the commitment to help their people be happier and more successful by giving them the gift of this course on values-based life and leadership skills.



*Master Values Trainers from VISN 20 of the Veterans Health Administration:
5% said the course was “somewhat helpful,” 50% said it has “helped a great deal,”
and 45% said it was “life-changing.”*

For information about the options for joining the Values Collaborative
contact Michelle Arduser at the Values Coach office:
319-624-3889 or Michelle@valuescoach.com.

Bring Values Coach to *Your* Organization

You can bring Joe Tye or other members of the Values Coach team to your organization for:

- ✓ Leadership retreats on designing the Invisible Architecture™ and building a culture of ownership
- ✓ Consulting on cultural blueprinting and making optimal use of the *Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit*
- ✓ High-energy and content-rich keynotes, workshops, and breakout sessions

For details go to:

www.ValuesCoach.com

For information about the options for having Joe and other members of the Values Coach team visit your organization or speak for your association contact Michelle Arduser at the Values Coach office:
319-624-3889 or **Michelle@valuescoach.com**.

CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR LUNCH!

You need a Cultural Blueprint so your lunch doesn't get eaten by someone who has one!

THIS WORKBOOK AND THE 6 WEBINARS OF THE CULTURAL BLUEPRINTING TOOLKIT WILL HELP YOU:

Module #1: Enhance employee engagement and promote a stronger culture of ownership.

Module #2: Create a roadmap for the Invisible Architecture of your organization.

Module #3: Craft your current or revised statement of values into a source of competitive distinction for recruiting great people and earning "raving fans" customer loyalty.

Module #4: Build up each of the 8 essential characteristics of a culture of ownership.

Module #5: Eradicate toxic emotional negativity and promote a more positive and productive workplace attitude.

Module #6: Promote skills of transformational leadership at every level of your organization.

“I got a whole new team and didn't have to change any of the people.”

**Paul Utemark, CEO, Fillmore County Hospital,
Geneva, Nebraska**



Joe Tye is Head Coach of Values Coach Inc. and a leading authority on values-based life and leadership skills and cultural transformation. He is a frequent speaker and consults with organizations across the country on values and culture. Joe is the author or coauthor of 12 books, including *The Twelve Core Action Values*, *The Florence Prescription* and *All Hands on Deck*.