

MINDSE

**a leadership  
handbook**

**by Matthew Ferrara**

Philosopher

Discover more at  
[mferrara.substack.com](http://mferrara.substack.com).





# Welcome to The Leadership Club (TLC) with Matthew Ferrara



THELEADERSHIPCLUB.SUBSTACK.COM

This is the place where owners, managers and industry leaders can focus on their mindset, skillset and influence and grow where they are planted.

## I started The Leadership Club (TLC) because:

- The real estate industry is undergoing **tremendous and rapid change**
- Leaders need **a source and place to consistently sharpen** their thinking, skills and ability to lead their people forward
- The key to growth is consistency, which is why TLC features a **weekly coaching call, actionable newsletter, and quarterly deep-dive class** of best practices specifically about managing and growing leaders
- After 33 years of coaching, training, developing and collaborating with the best in the business, TLC is **my way of passing forward the best** of those ideas, practices and lessons

## What to expect from The Leadership Club:

- A weekly, highly interactive call where you can ask questions, receive coaching and learn from others being coached, too
- Ongoing support for your leadership practice, with both skills and motivational support via stories, techniques, support materials and video content
- Actionable ideas for leading people through change, dealing with stress, developing new skills, managing talent, and growing your organization - and the industry, too

# this isn't game over...

# it's game on!



# EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The following pages contain key skills and techniques effective leaders consistently improve and deliver for followers. These techniques underlie the common “to-do” lists we associate with “management” and transform leaders from “administrators” to “inspiring guides” for the success their people and organization deserve.

Many techniques we use in The Leadership Club (TLC) come from contributions by people I’ve learned from over the years. If you wish to go deeper into some of them, these books have been invaluable to my understanding of effective leadership function and impact:

## LEADERS DO A VERY SPECIAL KIND OF WORK

- **The Effective Executive and Management Challenges for the 21st Century**, by Peter Drucker
- **Integrity Selling**, by Ron Willingham
- **Emotional Intelligence 2.0**, by Bradberry & Graves
- **The Advantage**, by Patrick Lencioni
- **Crucial Conversations**, by Grenny, Patterson, McMillan, Switzler
- **Deep Work**, by Cal Newport
- **Six Thinking Hats** by Edward de Bono
- **Quantum Leap Strategy and Hard Optimism**, by Dr. Price Pritchett
- **Leadership and the One Minute Manager**, by Ken Blanchard
- **Productivity is for Robots**, by Corey McComb
- **People Buy You**, by Jeremy Blount
- **Our Iceberg is Melting**, by John Kotter
- **The Power of Moments**, by Chip Heath
- **How will you Measure your Life**, by Clayton Christenson

# THE FOUR NEEDS OF ALL RELATIONSHIPS

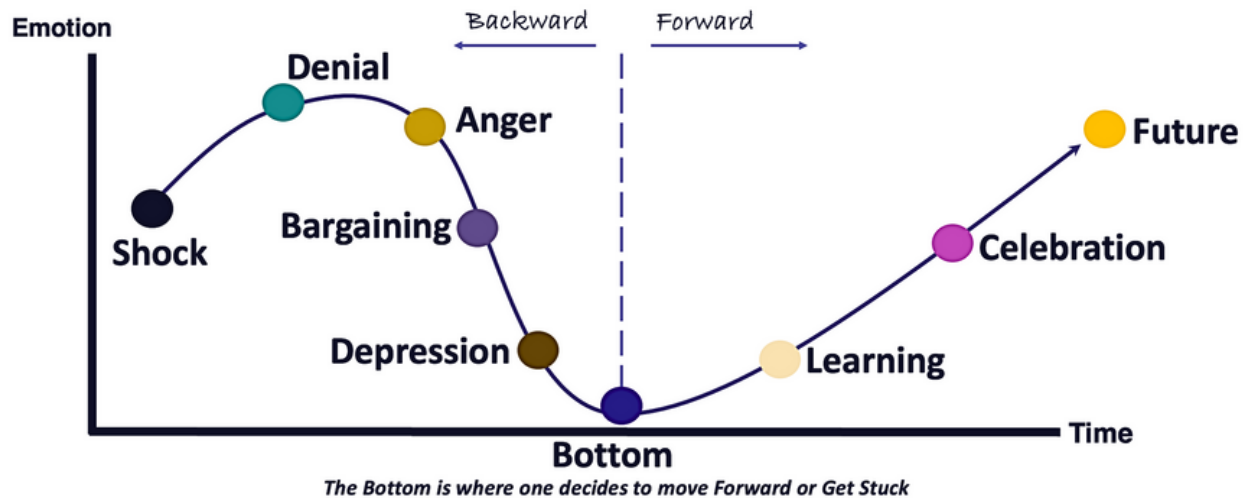
In all relationships, there are four key needs that must be filled and consistently refreshed:

- **Importance:** People must believe they are important to you before anything else. They must feel that the relationship *matters* to you - before, during and after any transactional aspects. They must feel that the relationship is *significant* to both them and you, in order to maintain and grow it.
- **Pride:** All relationships must deliver a sense of esteem for the people involved. They need to feel pride in being “in” a relationship with you. While it helps if they are proud “of you” and the things you do, it’s equally important they are proud “to be with you” to sustain a long term connection.
- **Certainty:** People must feel “better off with you than without you.” This doesn’t require you to be perfect or infallible, but it does mean that, on balance, you add more than you take. You must act in ways that increases people’s certainty that you’re a value in their lives.
- **Control:** People must feel “in control” of the relationship - that it’s something you’re doing “with” them and not “to” them. They need to trust that your relationship is authentic, transparent and beneficial, without “ulterior” motives.

LEADERS  
FOCUS ON  
RELATIONSHIPS  
FIRST AND  
MOST OF ALL

Often, the Four Needs are combined with a “fifth” bonus need called **Growth**. ***When someone feels that a relationship contributes to their growth, they will act to gain and sustain it, through good times and challenging ones.***

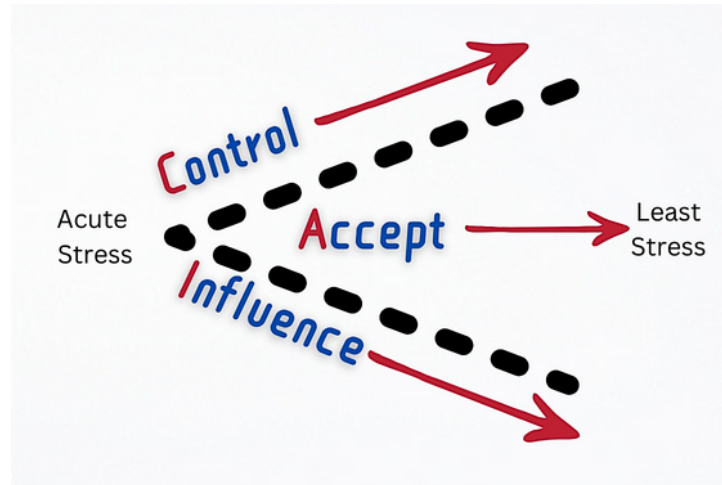
# THE CHANGE CURVE



When change happens - planned or sudden - people will experience a “process” of transition that involves evolving emotions over a period of time. Leaders must constantly evaluate the “position” of an individual on the Change Curve and take the action associated with that stage of transition to best support and guide them to a future state of growth and success.

- **Shock and Denial (Phase 1):** At this stage, people are dealing with the strong emotions that the change induces, because it challenges their sense of self, capabilities, habits, plans and goals. At this stage, leaders must convey one core message: “It’s going to be okay.” Provide reassurance by listening and letting people know that when the shock/surprise wears off, they will be move forward and thrive.
- **Anger and Bargaining (Phase 2):** At this stage, people are trying to “go back” to their successful and safe past by coming up with “work arounds” and compromises to mitigate (or deny) the changes. Their anger is a defense mechanism and attempts to bargain and provide false hopes. Leaders must convey a single message at this point: “There is a plan to move forward, when you’re ready.” Do not attempt to provide training, skills or coaching yet; this is a stage for information only.
- **Depression / Bottom (Phase 3):** At this point, people reach the point of “get stuck or give it a try” in their emotions. Some people may not proceed forward (which may lead to other changes in their lives/careers) while most people tend to “give up fighting” the change and decide to move on. Leaders must deliver messages and resources for training, new skills, tools and behaviors that capitalize on the decision to move forward and build competency for future success. This is start of new learning.
- **Learning / Celebration / Future:** In this stage, people begin to learn, try and apply new skills. They will experience both failures and successes, so leaders must help them deal with any disappointment and strongly celebrate whatever progress occurs. At this stage, the message is “Look at new success and growth!” Focus on how progress is leading to similar (or better) results than the status quo before the changes occurred, and help people integrate the new state of growth into their permanent sense of self and future.

# THE CIA MODEL OF STRESS



Stress and anxiety often results from the “intersection” of three aspects of an experience:

- **One’s control over the situation**
- **One’s influence within a situation**
- **One’s acceptance of a situation**

When these forces (Control, Influence, Acceptance (or CIA)) intersect strongly, people feel the most stress and anxiety (the acute angle of the axes); as someone increases the amount of control, influence or acceptance in a situation, things start to “open up” (like the separated right hand of the axes) and they feel the least stress.

As a leader, teaching people to exercise their options along the C, I, A axes will help them lower stress and better deal with their emotions in a challenging situation. With their emotions under control, they may even identify potential options and resolutions that were previously blocked by increased stress and anxiety.

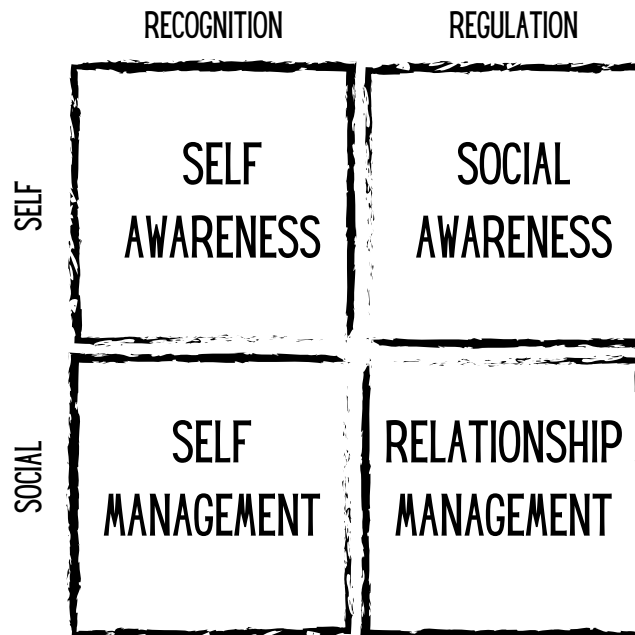
**To increase one’s sense of control**, teach people to quickly examine (or create a list) of options that could improve the situation. They do not have to accept, choose or follow any of the options - simply seeing all the potential choices will reduce stress and lead to possible positive actions.

**To increase one’s sense of influence** in a situation, help people identify ways they can have an impact on their emotions in the moment. Take a break, go for a walk, set the situation aside, talk to a colleague and take actions that immediately reduce or transform strong emotional reactions happening automatically in many situations.

**To increase one’s degree of acceptance** in a stressful situation, tap into the power of *adaptation and resilience* that each of us possesses. Compare the situation to similar past stressful moments, and recall actions taken that led to positive outcomes (or mitigated negative results). Identify options still open to you that give you power over the steps *after* adapting to a situation you may not ultimately be able to control.

Adapted from the CIA Model of Stress Reduction by Roger Seip  
[https://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/cia\\_model\\_stress\\_reduction.html](https://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/cia_model_stress_reduction.html)

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



Emotional intelligence (EI) can be understood through four quadrants which include skills and abilities related to understanding and managing emotions in oneself and others. These quadrants are often described as:

**Self-awareness:** recognizing and understanding our own emotions, and being aware of how these emotions influence our thoughts, behavior and decision-making. Self-aware individuals know their strengths, weaknesses, values and motives. They know what drives them and what pushes their buttons (triggers) and have increased insight into the patterns that shape their emotional responses to everyday situations.

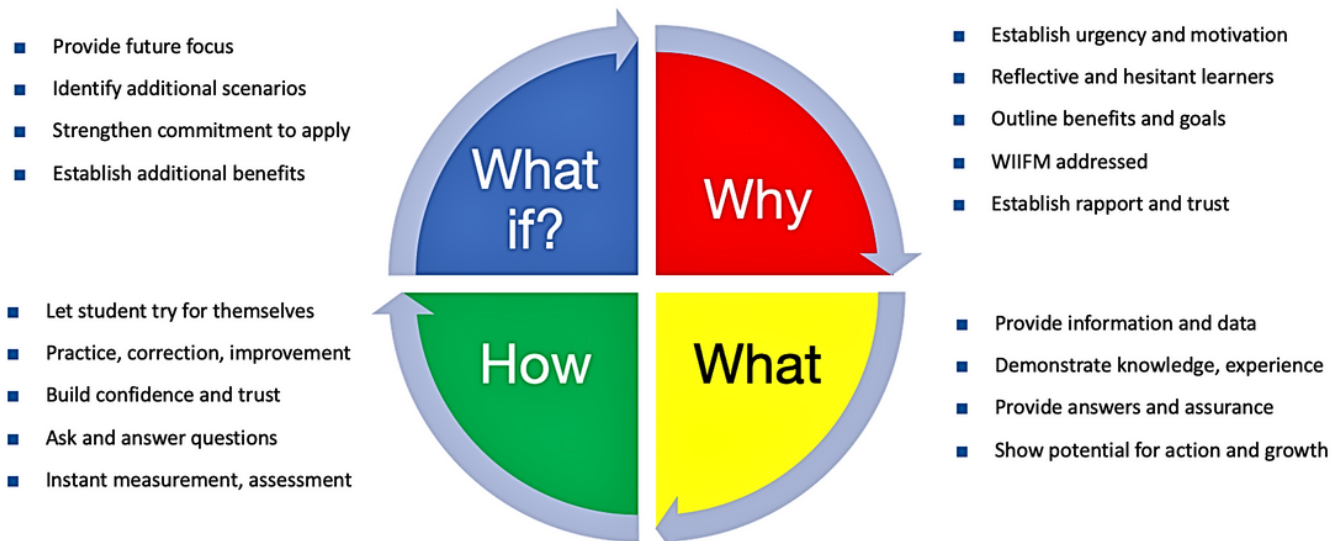
**Self-management:** the ability to regulate and control our impulses and behaviors in different situations. Includes skills like self-control, versatility, resilience and stress management. Strong self-management skills effectively manage pressure and help us stay balanced in difficult situations, even keep a positive attitude in the face of significant adversity.

**Social awareness (also, empathy):** the ability to recognize and understand the emotions and perspectives of others in situations. Includes skills like empathy, compassion, identifying social cues and interpersonal dynamics. High social awareness can sense emotions in others, show understanding and concern, and adjust communications and behaviors to build rapport and maintain positive relationships.

**Relationship management:** effectively navigating and influencing interpersonal interactions and situational dynamics. Involves skills like communications, conflict resolution, teamwork and coaching. Individuals with strong relationship management skills build mutually beneficial relationships, deal with conflict constructively and motivate others towards shared goals. They often help other people avoid being overcome or undermined by their own emotions.

The four quadrants are mutually reinforcing. Strengthening one quadrant often enhances performance in the others, leading to improved emotional intelligence and interpersonal effectiveness.

# THE LEARNING WHEEL



The Learning Wheel is a pedagogical tool used to effectively and consistently develop learning (teaching) experiences. It can be used to quickly build outlines, develop content, design materials and manage time. The Learning Wheel's power comes from its ability to:

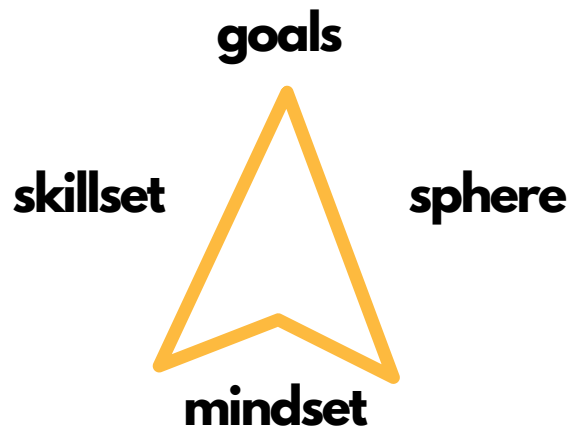
- Account for the learning styles of all types in a given venue / audience
- Design an integrated experience with a consistent pedagogical process
- Reduce development time by ensuring principles of adult learning are fulfilled
- Create consistency and measurable outcomes for learning experiences while minimizing the impacts of time, instructor skill level, materials or audience competency

**Starting at the top and moving clockwise**, a learning experience can “travel the wheel” to take learners on a process that covers motivation, information, application and inspiration.

- **Start with Why:** Use a variety of techniques to inform and engage learners on the purpose, goals, benefits and anticipated outcomes of learning the new skill/ability
- **Show the What:** Use information, data, demonstration, charts, graphs, stories and multimedia to explain the knowledge and processes to be acquired by learners
- **Practice How:** Provide methods, time and evaluation for learners to apply their new knowledge to real-world situations. Includes opportunities to practice, ask questions and measure the accuracy of their results (and for the instructor to assess competency)
- **Explain What If:** Provide scenarios, stories and inspiration for continuing to practice and apply the new learning to gain future desirable outcomes and results



# GROWTH GPS (PHILOSOPHY)



Matthew Ferrara’s unique philosophy for navigating change and turning caution into calculated risk. Using the metaphor of a “GPS” that you would program to navigate from a known place to unknown desired location, the four phases of traveling with confidence include:

- **Goals:** A plan can only help someone who has established a clear goal or outcome for their efforts. The clearer the goal, the more likely success will be achieved. Goals may include tangible results, but are often most effective if they focus on the “next version of ourselves” that the growth journey will help manifest. We will go as far as we can “see” ourselves in the future.
- **Mindset:** The **energy** for navigating change and sustaining our efforts comes from our **internal attitude**. Developing a **clear “reason”** for taking action releases our achievement drive. Involves integrating a “mindset mantra” into the acceptable ways we will move forward (according to our values).
- **Skillset:** The disciplines, practices and techniques that can **sustain someone’s growth journey**. Protects against futile or energy-depleting actions while multiplying the results of small but significant skills and talent we already possess. May involve learning or enhancing an existing ability to a higher level.
- **Sphere:** The people “with whom and for whom” we will undertake our growth journey. Focuses on our sphere of influence who constitute the greatest source of personal and professional growth. Emphasizes developing moments of “time well spent” with our personal network and attracting opportunities (short-cuts) on the growth journey.

# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

## 6 REASONS MEETINGS DON'T DELIVER VALUE

1. They have no “must-attend” purpose
2. They lack an agenda to guide expectations and outcomes
3. **Participants are uncertain how to prepare, participate or collaborate during the meeting**
4. Meeting times interrupt highly valuable periods when critical work must be accomplished
5. Takeaways are low-value or inapplicable to the participants
6. **Participants have not contributed or accomplished anything valuable by the end of the meeting**

## 10 WAYS TO DELIVER GREAT MEETINGS

1. Design and distribute a clear agenda 2-5 days in advance
2. State the intended outcomes, benefits and actions to be taken/conducted during the meeting
3. Clearly state who should (and should not) attend
4. Start on time. End on time. Keep the meeting moving.
5. **Indicate how to prepare for the agenda *before* attending**
6. Use the appropriate venue (online, in-person, hybrid)
7. **Describe ways to participate during the session. Ask for volunteers to lead portions of the agenda.**
8. Minimize distractions, including smartphones, keyboard sounds (note-taking) and poor tech/video connections
9. Take clear notes. Summarize meeting outcomes at the end. Ask for confirmation by participants.
10. **Debrief meeting value and effectiveness before participants leave; get feedback from all attendees.**

## 5 ONLINE MEETING EXTRAS

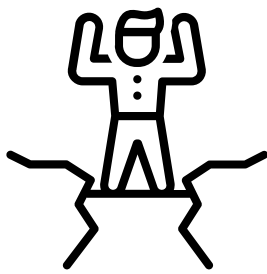
1. Open the meeting 15 minutes in advance; test all technology. Have a backup ready.
2. Use highest quality cameras, lighting and microphones for facilitator and important guests.
3. Record the meeting “on the local computer” for the the highest quality image and sound.
4. Require all participants turn on cameras and use microphones to interact / ask questions.
5. Use clear, large visual tools (slides, docs, etc.). Test sharing slides, videos, sound and applications beforehand using a computer, tablet or smartphone.

# ONLINE PRESENTATION TIPS

## 10 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR ONLINE PRESENTATION DELIVERY

1. Stand up and let your voice/breath flow evenly, while leveraging natural body language while on video.
2. Improve lighting (and video sharpness) by facing a window or adding more artificial light around you.
3. Use a better microphone such as ear-buds, lavalier or podcast mic to reduce echo and surrounding noise.
4. Allocate time for small talk and welcoming participants and they join. Put people at ease as they log in.
5. Use interactive tools like chat room, polling, whiteboards and reaction tools that involve physical engagement by participants.
6. Slow your delivery pace, to account for a “technology layer” of distractions, poor connections and visual cues.
7. Ask 50% more questions or feedback requests to keep people on their toes and not multitasking in the background
8. Use multimedia, such as video, web pages and even interactive documents to maintain attention and encourage participation
9. Send materials in advance, including agenda, pdfs, and related files that may need to be printed
10. Provide a transcript as well as a recording of the content, for participants who learn by reading rather than watching or listening.

# ESSENTIAL COACHING MODEL



SKILL / DIRECTION



WILL / SUPPORT

**The Skill/Will model** provides an essential system for leaders to help others improve performance by varying coaching techniques between two dimensions of behavior:

**Skill / Direction efforts** provide specific “how-to” guidance for someone who has never done (or has problems doing well) a particular activity or behavior. Coaches teach skills using step-by-step, repeatable learning that the trainee can try, apply, evaluate and improve. Emphasis on building competency and abilities. Assumes the learner is interested and motivated to achieve a goal.

**Will / Support efforts** offer encouragement and motivation to someone with abilities who lacks willingness to act. Coaches provide, reinforce progress, and emphasize benefits. Focus on stamina and momentum. Assumes learner is capable, but lacks confidence or interest to make progress.

**Learners may also fall into four “combinations” of skill and will:**

- **High Skill/High Will:** Learner is both competent and motivated, and requires minimal supervision and coaching. They approach tasks independently and leaders empower them by providing growth opportunities and recognizing contributions.
- **High Skill/Low Will:** Learners possess skills but lack motivation. They may be experiencing burnout, dissatisfaction, or fear. Coaches focus on inspiring and re-energizing them with clear expectations, support, and incentives to act.
- **Low Skill/High Will:** Learners are enthusiastic but lack skills or knowledge to be effective. They may be new to their role. Coaches focus on training and accuracy.
- **Low Skill/Low Will:** Learners have both low skill levels and low motivation. They may feel overwhelmed, insecure, or demotivated. Coaches provide support, guidance, and encouragement to improve skills and rekindle motivation.



# TIME/TASK MANAGEMENT

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<b>DO NOW</b> TASKS WITH DEADLINES, BIG CONSEQUENCES	<b>SCHEDULE</b> UNCLEAR DEADLINES, MORE LONG TERM
NOT IMPORTANT	<b>DELEGATE</b> MUST GET DONE BUT DONT NEED MY SKILL	<b>DELETE</b> UNNECESSARY OR DISTRACTIONS

The Eisenhower Decision Matrix prioritizes tasks based on urgency and importance. (Used by President Dwight Eisenhower, known for managing his time and tasks.)

**Urgent and Important (Do Now):** Tasks that are both urgent and important require immediate attention; Usually critical to major goals and rise to top priority. Examples: Major deadlines, emergencies, and critical functions or meetings.

**Important, but Not Urgent (Schedule):** Tasks that are important for long-term goals but don't require immediate action. Schedule for later, but plan in advance to keep them from becoming urgent. Examples: strategic planning, nurturing relationships, training and professional development.

**Urgent, but Not Important (Delegate):** Tasks that are urgent but do not require your personal attention or skillset. Usually delegated to someone better suited to handle them, freeing up your time for important tasks. Examples: administrative tasks, email, scheduling, reports, taking notes.

**Not Urgent and Not Important (Delete):** Tasks often considered distractions or unnecessary that can be eliminated or postponed to a much later time. Examples: unfocused meetings, scrolling social media, and other time-wasters.

The matrix helps leaders assess and prioritize tasks effectively, by focusing on what matters most and protecting their time. When used proactively, it helps leaders differentiate vital and non-vital uses of their time, skills and attention.

# BE A BEE

FROM THE ALWAYS INSPIRING NEWSLETTER  
MFERRARA.SUBSTACK.COM



**The best way to predict the future is to remember you can create it.**

That idea recharges my confidence, especially on Mondays, when the headlines start distributing awful predictions. The good news is that nothing is ever certain. Including gloomy forecasts!

So I remain focused on the one thing Worry, Inc., can't undermine:  
My own work.

**During the pandemic I had serious doubts about my industry, family, neighborhood, the world.** So I called my mentor.

"I'm not sure," I said. "This future is way bigger than I can handle."

"Stop trying to handle it then," he said. "You aren't supposed to shape the whole future. Just your own."

"How do I do that when I'm just one small piece of the puzzle?" I asked.

"Like a bee," he said. "In the hive, each does its own part. Goes out. Does the work. Adds to the whole. Even when they don't have individual control over the whole outcome."

**"That's how the honey is made," I said. "And why honey is golden," he replied.**

That's how I flipped the script: To work on my own predictions and my own presence.

With my presence: because a bee has to "be there" for the whole thing to work. Doing my part, which friends, clients and peers rely on to help them keep Worry, Inc. away, too.

Remember when interest rates were supposed to tank the economy? They didn't and the housing industry sold 5 million homes in 2023. **Why?**

**We're all bees doing our part.**

In my business life, the future "changed" a dozen times. Each time had the potential for disaster: Every time, I kept "bee-ing" determined.

Things change, and so do you. So does the future. It's an advantage for people who know who they want **to be**.

**You are your best predictor of future success.** It's up to you to be there.

**To reach the gold you deserve!**

# more help

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YOU GROW

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