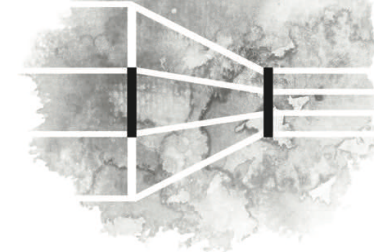


LEARNING DANGEROUSLY



Success is closer than you think

CRAIG STEPHENS

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

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INTRODUCTION



Your Opportunity

Your success is closer than you think.

You can choose to achieve your success at any time. Whether you do or not is up to you and depends upon your willingness to pursue *Learning Dangerously*.

Learning Dangerously leads you to a higher level of self-awareness, not only revealing new personal insights, but also enabling you to build new behaviours that will improve your performance and increase your success.

While mindfulness has become an increasingly popular topic of the self-help literature, without action, mindfulness does not necessarily result in improved performance. *Learning Dangerously* bridges the gap between mindfulness and your success. It's the most beneficial gift you will ever give yourself.

So why pursue *Learning Dangerously*? Because when properly applied *Learning Dangerously* will confront you, challenge you and change you. At first you may not like what you learn about yourself or your situation. However, over time, as you come to terms with your reality, your commitment to *Learning Dangerously* will drive better performance and realise greater success.

If you already regularly achieve your best performance or do it at least enough to be satisfied with your work and life, then you should write a book about it!

On the other hand, if you're like most people who strive for a more purposeful life, relationship, career, fortune or achievement, I encourage you to practise *Learning Dangerously*.

INTRODUCTION

This book is for people who want to take control of their life – right now. At the very least, *Learning Dangerously* offers you the opportunity to understand yourself and your behaviours more deeply than ever before.

Have you ever asked yourself?

What is my true potential?

How can I take more control of my day-to-day?

Is there a better way?

If you have, then be reassured your success is closer than you think.

You may wonder what your true potential is and want to make the time and effort to understand the difference between your success and failure.

You may have high hopes about your career and want to ensure you realise the great opportunities that are on the horizon.

You may feel frustrated that you can't achieve a quality of work and life that rewards your effort and commitment.

Whatever your situation, *Learning Dangerously* is your opportunity to pursue your path to greater success.

While every day is an opportunity for you to realise success, for many people, most days can end up being just another missed opportunity.

I've been witness to the performance of people in countless scenarios and circumstances throughout my professional career. Time and time again, I have seen one particular ability that differentiates those who consistently achieve high performance from those who simply wish for it; *the ability to turn effort into improved performance that results in success*.

Learning Dangerously is your opportunity to activate that ability in you.

I've seen learning transform many aspects of people's lives: relationships, careers, projects, efficiency, quality, happiness and purpose to name just a few. Not surprisingly, that learning was always dangerous.

Learning Dangerously is risky. It will confront you. It will challenge you. It will change you. That's why it's dangerous. But when you are committed to your success, *Learning Dangerously* will delight you.

The Mindset of Learning Dangerously

By now your life experience may have taught you that there will be times in the future when you will need to adopt new approaches or modify existing practices to achieve your success.

By developing *The Mindset of Learning Dangerously*, you will realise a significant improvement in your performance as you become more aware of your proximity to success. As my experience has taught me; *success is closer than you think*.

One of the greatest challenges we face in our efforts to improve performance is our willingness to accept the need for change; *to adopt alternate beliefs and actions over our existing beliefs and actions*.

The three most common perspectives that obstruct performance improvement are:

1. **I don't have time** – *who has time to learn? I'm already over committed, multi-tasking and searching for more time!*
2. **I know best** – *why should I consider another way? I'm better off sticking with what I already know and the voices I trust – particularly my own!*
3. **I know enough** – *why do I need more information – I may accept that 'knowledge is power', but I have my limits.*

But, as *Learning Dangerously* teaches us, for every obstructive perspective there is a positive counter-perspective:

1. **I don't have time** – *but Learning Dangerously is an opportunity that will return time to me by improving performance and enhancing success.*
2. **I know best** – *but Learning Dangerously challenges my past truths and seeks new understanding to have me focus on my present challenges and future opportunities.*
3. **I know enough** – *but Learning Dangerously offers more than just knowledge and will lead me to new experiences I can never imagine.*

It is these positive perspectives that form *The Mindset of Learning Dangerously*.

Let This Book Be Your Coach

When I coach my clients, I continually challenge them to identify the barriers that are preventing them from achieving their success. Imagine being able to remove or reduce the most common barriers:

- Lack of time
- Not enough support from others
- Fear of failure and the unknown
- Low self-esteem and confidence
- Poor planning of work
- Juggling competing priorities
- Insufficient skills and capabilities.

I often observe situations that require people to address such barriers in new ways by *Learning Dangerously*. While people don't always consider a new way necessary at first, most will eventually recognise the advantages of *Learning Dangerously*; *to personally confront their status quo and from within, plan new actions, which when acted upon, improves performance and increases personal success*.

This is the essence of coaching. And you can use this book as your personal coach.

How can this book be my coach?

Because this book is not you – it's independent – and so it's able to provoke new and different perspectives to challenge your current way of thinking and being.

An independent coach enables your self-reflection to recognise and accept the differences between your past experience and your future new opportunities.

Why is independence important? Because of our proactive inhibition – the tendency for our existing memories to interfere with the initial acceptance and later retrieval of new learnings. With this book as your coach, *The Mindset, Motion and Way of Learning Dangerously* will in time overcome your proactive inhibition.

Whether you are coached by me or by this book, by *Learning Dangerously* you will come to accept a fundamental principle for your future success; *while you will never learn all you could learn, you can always learn what serves you best*.

DANGEROUS 101



The Motion of Learning Dangerously

Learning is a habit.

Is your learning habit your greatest asset or your biggest liability? Is it fit enough to enhance your performance? Or out of shape and letting you down when you need it the most?

Your learning becomes dangerous when you are prepared to step out of your comfort zone to confront your challenges or embrace your new opportunities. When you observe the world around you from a new perspective, your learning will lead you down paths never imagined.

Who knows what new success will arise in your life by applying just one learning from this book?

On the other hand, when learning isn't dangerous, you are simply acquiring knowledge – if you're lucky. So unless you're training for a quiz show or local trivia night, you're better off making your learning dangerous to acquire new perspectives and more purposeful behaviours – not simply gaining more knowledge.

So what is your experience when you are *Learning Dangerously*? I refer to it as *The Motion of Learning Dangerously* and this motion moves you through 3 stages and 3 states, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The 3 stages of *Learning Dangerously* are: *confront*, *challenge* and *change*. When you are *Learning Dangerously*, you will pass through each of these stages, from *confronting* your status quo, to *challenging* your existing self, to *changing* your perspectives, mindsets and behaviours.

DANGEROUS 101

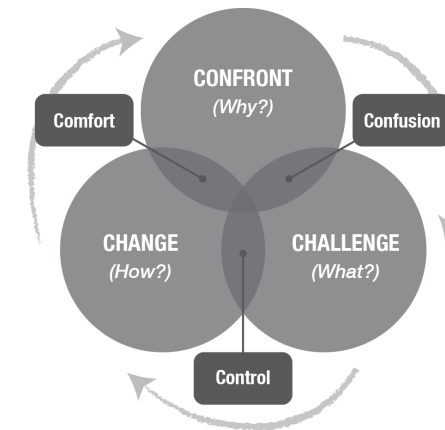
The first stage of *confront* sees you realise that an issue or opportunity exists which deserves your attention and action. Here you step out of your comfort zone and *confront* the need or desire for personal change head on.

At this stage the key question is, "*why does the challenge or opportunity need to be addressed?*". When this question is answered authentically, you will set a clear purpose for you to progress to the next stage.

The second stage of *challenge* defines your 'what?' in response to your 'why?'. Here you identify what you need to *change* to enable your new purpose – your primary question is, "*what new perspectives, mindsets or behaviours are now required?*".

The third stage of *change* defines your 'how?' to achieve your 'what?' – the actions to be taken to make progress. Here your focus is, "*how will the new goal be attained, how will the change occur?*".

Figure 1: The Motion of Learning Dangerously



Learning Dangerously is therefore a motion of *confronting* your existing situation and asking 'why?', *challenging* your existing situation and answering 'what?' is required and *changing* your existing situation to a new more purposeful one by actioning the 'how?'.

Through this motion, there are 3 states you will experience: *confusion*, *control* and *comfort*.

You may be wondering, “if the first stage of confront steps me out of my comfort zone, why do I finish back in a state of comfort?”. It is okay to be in your comfort zone if it serves your purpose. If practised diligently, *Learning Dangerously* will motion you from a lesser comfort zone through the 3 stages and 3 states and deliver you into a new more purposeful comfort zone. But to make that journey you will experience *confusion* and *control* along the way.

Moving from the stage of *confront* to *challenge*, it is natural for you to feel *confusion*. At this time, your existing perspectives, mindsets and behaviours, despite their limitations, will be rigorously defended by your conscious mind – the protector of your status quo.

Once you have realised a new purpose, defined what is to be *challenged* and how it will be *changed*, your state will become one of *control*. This state will initially feel awkward as you consciously develop a new competence for a new way of being. However, as you develop confidence in your new way of being, your state of *control* will mature into a new state of *comfort*.

The Motion of Learning Dangerously will *confront* you, *challenge* you and *change* you.

The Way of Learning Dangerously

While *The Motion of Learning Dangerously* describes what you will experience when *Learning Dangerously*, *The Way of Learning Dangerously* describes the process, that is, how you practise *Learning Dangerously*.

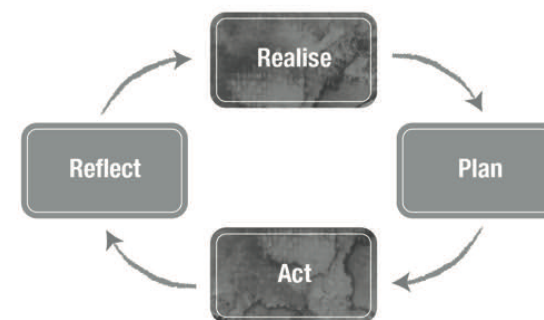
Simply, *The Way of Learning Dangerously* is like you calling a time-out on yourself, to assess what is going on and determine how you can take control of a situation. The process comprises 4 steps: *realise*, *plan*, *act* and *reflect*, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The 4 steps of *The Way of Learning Dangerously* are:

1. **Realise (“I want to”)** – identify and acknowledge a personal motivation for change. This step is the catalyst for *Learning Dangerously* as it ignites a personal and purposeful reason to take action and address a challenge or opportunity in your life.

2. **Plan (“I will do”)** – actively plan a course of action to undertake change. The purpose of this step is both to acknowledge the *confusion* you will be feeling as you seek to step out of your comfort zone and to construct a set of actions that will address the challenge or opportunity. Before you act you must have a *plan*.
3. **Act (“I did do”)** – carefully implement the chosen course of action. To act is often the most difficult step. The effort and duration for this step will vary depending upon the circumstances, the size and the complexity of the challenge or opportunity. You may also need to return to this step after you *reflect* on the results of your actions.
4. **Reflect (“I learned to”)** – assess the outcomes of the actions and respond. Once you have completed your actions it is imperative that you objectively reflect on the outcomes: “did the planned actions achieve the desired change?” If not, you will need to return to an earlier step to refine and reset your approach.

Figure 2: The Way of Learning Dangerously



The 4 step *Way of Learning Dangerously* may be simple in its design and use, but its challenge and value, like most things in life, lay in its execution: *you taking action*.

You may be thinking about the 4 steps and asking yourself, “how can I apply *The Way of Learning Dangerously* to my life?”. Here’s how.

How to Use This Book

This book provides 48 articles on topics that commonly challenge corporate, business and individual professionals and people alike, in both their working and personal lives.

In each article, I share my experience, expertise and insight to demonstrate *Learning Dangerously* and provide guidance to address the challenges and opportunities raised.

The 48 articles are grouped into *The 4 Learning Dangerously Domains: learning, influence, performance and success*.

Learning is at the heart of everything. How you approach your *learning* has a significant impact on your ability to change your beliefs and behaviours.

Influence is more than just communication. How you connect and engage with others, from the big picture to down-in-the-detail, is critical for your high *performance*.

Performance is the nuts and bolts of your *success*. How you plan and approach your efforts will drive your results – good and bad.

Success is the combination of *learning, influence and performance* and the integration of these will drive the sustainability of your *success*.

The 4 Learning Dangerously Domains are interdependent, as illustrated by Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: The 4 Learning Dangerously Domains



The way in which you learn – your *learning* – has bearing on your *influence*, your *performance* and your *success*.

In a world where you are often dependent upon the effectiveness of your relationships with other people, your *influence* is critical for your *performance*.

How you execute your *performance* in your role, business and network will directly impact your *success*.

Your *success* is dependent upon your ability to apply your *learning, influence and performance*.

So back to your question: “*how can I apply The Way of Learning Dangerously to my life?*”.

At the end of each of the 48 articles, I apply *The Way of Learning Dangerously* to the article topic by providing a suggested activity for each of the four steps: *realise, plan, act and reflect*.

By reading the articles and realising your own challenge or opportunity requiring personal change, you can either use the activities I provide for each of the 4 steps, or develop your own. Either way, you will begin to practise *Learning Dangerously* and build competence and confidence to apply it to the areas of your life most important to you.

Each article also includes a tip to get you started, indicated by the following icons:



Go and take some quick action now.



Grab a pen and some paper and write it down now.



Stop and take a breath and think about it now.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

It is not necessary to read this book end-to-end. I encourage you to start by choosing an article that immediately appeals to you, action the tip and apply the 4 steps. This will begin your journey of *Learning Dangerously*.

A *Learning Dangerously Template* is also provided towards the end of the book for you to record your use of *The Way of Learning Dangerously*.

It is important for you to accept that the 4 steps provided at the end of each article are to prompt you to practise *The Way of Learning Dangerously* and not to provide immediate solutions to resolve your problems or realise your opportunities. *Learning Dangerously* is personal and more than simply getting instant answers – it is about taking action that will over time address your challenges and opportunities.

Effective learning provides the opportunity to apply and experience new beliefs and behaviours. I encourage you to practise *Learning Dangerously* by initially applying the actions suggested in the 4 steps at the end of the article. As you become confident in applying the 4 steps of *realise, plan, act* and *reflect*, you can then identify your own actions.

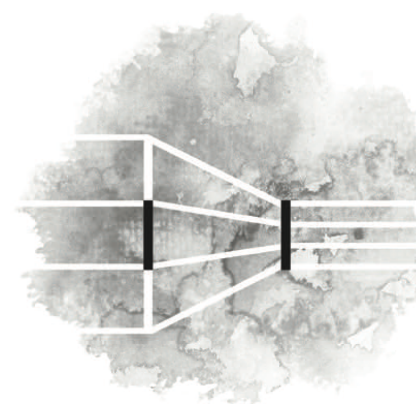
Sometimes *Learning Dangerously* can result in more actions before you find your solutions. When you are *Learning Dangerously*, you are not concerned by more actions. You're simply focused on undertaking the necessary experiences to *motion* you through the stages and states of *Learning Dangerously*.

Only with frequent and consistent practise will you create the learning habit that will produce sustainable and purposeful results.

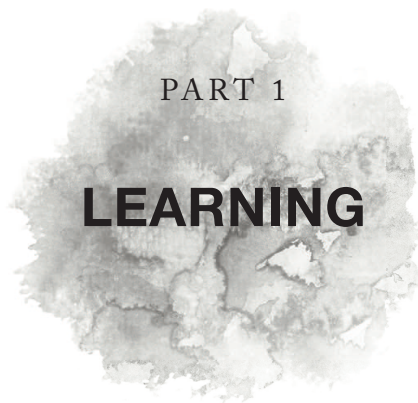
Remember, being your best in every moment is your choice. By committing to *The Mindset, The Motion* and *The Way of Learning Dangerously*, you are choosing to raise your *learning, influence, performance* and *success* to new heights beyond your experience and imagination.

Happy Learning Dangerously!

DANGEROUS 101

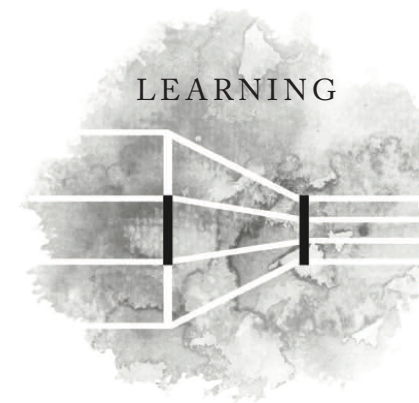


*While you will never learn all you could learn,
you are always able to learn what serves you best.*



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Part 1 – *Learning* – addresses common challenges we can face when learning.

The Way of Learning Dangerously, realise – plan – act – reflect, is best done when you are in a positive state of learning.

Most importantly, you need to have an open mind. Without an open mind you will struggle to realise opportunities to change and objectively reflect on the outcomes of your learning experience.

Learning is a great enabler of improved performance. But unless you develop a habit for learning that can apply new behaviours in the decisive performance moments, your progress will be haphazard.

By applying the tips and actions proposed in this Part, you will build positive learning skills, including: desire, belief, perspective, purpose, discipline and action.

Imagine having the ability to make every day a meaningful and valuable learning experience.

Let's get started – there's no time like now.

#1

YOUR PURPOSEFUL LEARNING BUILDS A BETTER YOU

Find your purpose to make your learning work

When do you learn best?

By yourself or in a group? Reading a book or on a webinar? Or do you need to get your hands dirty?

No matter how you think you learn best, there's a simple yet powerful step to ensure your learning builds a better you.

Find your purpose.

That's purpose, not porpoise. Unless your performance relies on an intelligent sea-dwelling mammal, let's first focus on your purpose.

When I was asked a long time ago, "*when do I learn best?*", I immediately thought, "*all the time, I'm a great learner – I love learning!*"

But now I can also recall those more recent times when learning didn't uplift my performance: the highly credentialed coach, the \$645 online learning program, the free weekend seminar. Great intentions, worthy investments, little return.

Sound familiar? Does your learning sometimes miss the target?

Or is there no target at all? Guess what; no target – no purpose, no purpose – no learning, no learning – same old results.

To get the best from your learning, you need to squeeze every drop of value from the experience and drink it up.

But who's got a thirst for learning when they're not feeling parched?

If your learning doesn't quench a thirst, fill a void, scratch an itch, if it doesn't serve your purpose, you will not realise any benefits.

It won't matter if you're being flown into outer space for a galactic leadership conference; if the purpose of your learning doesn't make you smile (or even better, cry with joy), you are wasting your precious time and you won't get the results you deserve.

So if your purpose for learning is missing, you have a simple choice: find a purpose for your learning; or stop the learning and start a more purposeful pursuit.



TIP: Our purpose can be driven by the people in our lives. Think about the people that matter most to you and how learning could help you be a better person for them.

Your performance is desperate for you to learn dangerously. Give your learning the best opportunity to improve your life by giving it the gift of purpose.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Make a list of your learning – rate your commitment.

Plan: Identify each learning's purpose – how it serves you.

Act: If purpose is missing – find a purpose or stop and move on.

Reflect: Now rate how purposeful your learning feels.

#2

THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A LIFESTYLE LEARNER

When learning is lifestyle, benefits are a summer breeze

What starts with 'L' and ends with 'earning'?

Lumberjack, lyricist, locksmith and lawyer are technically correct answers. But the answer I'm really looking for is 'learning' – which can eventually lead to 'earning'.

Are you getting better at the things that matter most to you?

If you're like me, performance can have its ups and downs. Improving performance takes consistent and frequent time and effort; to expect to do so without setbacks is unrealistic.

The likelihood of setbacks emphasises the importance of making the most of your learning opportunities no matter when, where or how they arise – that is, becoming a lifestyle learner.

Being a lifestyle learner builds self-awareness to learn from both your day's big events and fleeting moments.



TIP: Check your self-awareness via these 4 simple questions of lifestyle learning.

1. What just happened? (How did I feel?)
2. What was the result? (How do I feel?)
3. What could I have done differently? (How could I feel?)
4. What will I do next time? (How will I feel?)

Practising this approach consciously will reconnect you with a fundamental behaviour from your childhood. In our younger years, we consciously and unconsciously make the most of learning opportunities to develop ourselves.

However, as adults, as our life experience becomes more repetitive and predictable, our capability for recognising and utilising opportunities for personal learning and development diminishes.

As we commonly experience, learning often ends up at the end of the queue waiting behind the more urgent activities of surviving, doing and chasing.

Lifestyle Learners ("LLs") have 3 great advantages:

1. **Connection** – LLs know what they need to succeed and love what they do because they are connected with their world. Happy days!
2. **Capability** – LLs invest wisely in their own personal and professional development as they understand the importance of knowledge and skills for improved performance.
3. **Capacity** – LLs develop a robust flexibility of behaviour that projects a masterful presence and results in the high influence of stakeholders.

When you become a Lifestyle Learner you take control of everything: your feelings, thoughts, actions, emotions and outcomes.

Everyday is a chance to benefit from learning when you are a Lifestyle Learner. And just like a summer breeze, benefits are always welcome, refreshing and a great way to end the day.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify your most important learning opportunity for today.

Plan: Apply the 4 questions of 'self-awareness' to the opportunity.

Act: Use your answers to recognise the power of learning.

Reflect: Think back on your day and identify missed learnings.

#3

BEWARE YOUR DREAMS AREN'T FENCING YOU IN**Exhaust the 'haves' before you commit to the 'wants'***It's a tale of inevitable demise.*

History and folklore warn us: an unhealthy desire for what's just out of reach will lead to tragedy and loss.

Kings, queens, emperors, explorers, superheroes, politicians, celebrities and even business leaders have succumbed to the temptation of what could be, only to forsake the opportunities presented in the here and now.

So why should you be aware of this? And what's the relevance for your learning?

In our eagerness for something better, we can sometimes overlook our immediate opportunities. Rather than doing the work, reading this book, trusting the coach or answering the question, our time and effort can be wasted looking for a more-appealing solution or outcome.

It's true, you can't always get what you want. But recall the prophetic words of Jagger and Richards, "...if you try sometime, you might just find you get what you need."¹

Here's my true story about chickens that serves as a warning to us all.

Over the last summer, warmer conditions saw our chickens exhaust the grass of their run. Consequently, they were often observed craning their necks through the fence to peck the lush blades of grass just out of reach on the other side.

So with a sense of empathy, I repositioned their fence to provide them fresh grass. Once released, the chickens scurried across their newly accessible lawn, only to crane their necks through the repositioned fence to peck the lush blades of grass just out of reach on the other side.

Their focus on what was out of reach was blinding them to what was immediately under their little chicken feet.

When it comes to performance, many people are focused on their wants so much they incessantly search for the better solution: quicker, cheaper, easier, popular.

Do you really need a new book, an online course, a more comprehensive method? Or do you just need to take stock of what you already have and simply get to work?



TIP: Go to your bookshelf and select one book that serves your purpose right now. Read the first 10 pages. Repeat reading 10 pages a day until you are satisfied you have extracted all value and move to the next book.

People who lose sight of the value of resources they already have, will always be searching for more. That's a tiring way to live.

We will always have fences in our lives. So while it's important to have dreams beyond the fences, our dreams should motivate us to act and not distract us from what is already at our feet.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Make a list of your dreams – what is really important?

Plan: Identify those dreams that are distracting you from action now.

Act: Tell a friend about one dream you are ending today.

Reflect: Assess how you now feel about what is really important.

#4

THE 7 TRUTHS ABOUT GREAT HABITS

Every great habit has a great habitat

Why is it so hard to make great habits stick?

For me, it's because I was previously too skilled at coming up with excuses. Now I've discovered a 7 step approach that's changed all that.

I educate people about the importance of purpose, awareness, connection and focus to become an effective learner. But is this enough to be an effective habit builder?

Building habits is not rocket science. However, like launching a rocket, you need a massive amount of initial energy to get lift off and resist the gravitational pull of your status quo.

If you're like most people, you will know that feeling of resistance. It's amazing how good we can be at sabotaging our own success through the most creative excuses that defer or derail personal change.

Imagine if we were more naturally inclined to use that creative energy to pursue performance improvement?

The challenge for us when faced with personal change is to come to terms with our loss: routine, certainty, pride and privacy are common 'losses'. When our personal loss from change is not sufficiently addressed, we will naturally build resistance to that change. So when building a new habit, it is critical for you to nurture your change in a great habitat.

In addition to accepting loss, the false start also poses a threat to successfully building a new habit. This is best avoided by establishing a purpose for the habit. Too often people try on habits like a fancy dress outfit – it will serve a purpose in the short term, but won't be worn beyond Saturday night.



TIP: Think of a new habit you're struggling to build and apply the following 7 steps to understand your challenges.

1. **Habit** – what is it and what personal purpose does it serve?
2. **Attributes** – what strengths do you already have that can serve your future habit now?
3. **Beliefs** – what existing beliefs may support or obstruct your habit?
4. **Influencers** – who and what do you need to support your habit?
5. **Tendencies** – how do you typically respond to change and how does that impact your desired habit?
6. **Absolutes** – what actions will you commit to and how frequently will you practise?
7. **Targets** – how will you know when your habit will be fully grown and thriving?

Do you have the right habitat to build your great habits?

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify a habit you want to develop – define its purpose.

Plan: Answer the 7 steps above to build your habitat.

Act: Over time complete your actions as defined in '6. Absolutes'.

Reflect: Assess whether your habit has met your target in step 7.

#5

WHY DISCIPLINE IS A BIG PART OF LEARNING

Discipline connects your inspiration and your perspiration

How many times have you heard the phrase, “work smarter, not harder”?

Does it inspire you?

If Edison’s quote, “*Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration*,”¹ is anything to go by, perhaps we should be spending less time seeking motivation and more time doing the work?

Like many challenges in life, the secret of your success is connection. In this case, it’s connecting your perspiration and your inspiration. And this connection is made through your personal discipline.

Perspiration without inspiration is a waste of time and effort. You’ve already read about the importance of purpose-led learning. Have you been investing time and effort into a cause without any meaningful results? If so, check your purpose.

On the other hand, inspiration without perspiration remains just that – a desire. Have you been longing to achieve an outcome without taking any meaningful action?

A lack of meaningful actions and results will inevitably lead to diminishing success.

As Jim Rohn, a thought leader who contributed to the evolution of the personal development industry, said:

*“Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishments”.*²

So what is discipline and what does it look like for you?

Your discipline is whatever you do to keep yourself accountable for the outcomes of your perspiration.

You may make public commitments, use personal rewards, keep a timesheet or have someone review your work.



TIP: Write down what you do to hold yourself accountable for your results? Does it really assist you realising your inspiration?

Whatever you do, your discipline is your self-control. Without it, you are likely to struggle to achieve satisfying and meaningful results.

I hope so far you have realised that learning is best undertaken with purpose. Learning is hard when there is no inspiration. Like riding a bike without a chain – a lot of pedalling yet no movement.

Alternately, while you might be riding with a chain, without discipline, you won’t stay on a course that gets you to your destination.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Rate your level of discipline today: 1 - low to 5 - high.

Plan: Identify someone to hold you accountable for your learning.

Act: Schedule a time to meet and have that someone give feedback.

Reflect: Consider the impact of that feedback on your learning.

#6

HOW TO FREE YOURSELF FROM A STUCK STATE

You can exist without motion, but you won't be learning

Feel tired? Lacking motivation to get moving despite everything you need to do?

Well this article is the perfect cure for your ailments. You're simply in a stuck state that needs some attention to get you moving again.

Your stuck states are often caused by your uncertainty about the effort to complete the tasks and their benefits. The feeling, *"I can't be bothered"* is essentially a belief that the effort exceeds the benefits.



TIP: Write a list of everything you have in progress right now and score your rate of motion: 1 - low to 5 - high.

Now, write down a reason for your lack of motion next to any item you rated a 1 or 2. Your reasons may include: no longer a priority; can't find the time; or too many other things to do.

Now for those items you rated the motion a 1 or 2, write down the benefits of completing them to the right and read them out aloud.

If hearing those benefits gives you a tingling feeling inside, then highlight them – they are your priorities. If not, rule a line through them – they no longer matter to you.

You have now addressed the stuck state and kick-started some motion. To accelerate your motion consider applying these 5 actions.

1. **Keep moving** – when you have a number of simultaneous commitments, maintaining regular iterative bursts of effort over short durations is a sure way to maintain energy and avoid that 'sinking feeling'.
2. **Avoid the mud** – find many sources of inspiration, including people around you, to maintain your motivation, generate new ideas, trigger action and get feedback on your progress.
3. **Keep on your toes** – become aware of how you work best. Be agile and nimble. Work effectively with pace, quick-wits and high energy.
4. **Don't freeze** – if things aren't going to plan avoid panic as your risk returning to a stuck state. If you are feeling the anxiety of uncertainty then it may be time for some new ideas and actions.
5. **Avoid the same path** – while it's important to keep moving it's also important to learn from the past. Maintain awareness of the mindsets and behaviours that led to your stuck state in the first place and change them.

Keep these tips in mind and you'll not only be free of mud, you'll feel like you're walking on air.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Recognise a part of your life that is stuck right now.

Plan: Choose one of the actions above to address your stuck state.

Act: Complete the action and report your progress to a colleague.

Reflect: Assess how you now feel about that part of your life.

#7

TAKE YOUR LEARNING FOR A SLIDE ON THE WILD SIDE

Learning from an extraordinary day at work in socks

Sometimes the greatest learning comes from the most unlikely situations.

For example, not having business shoes to wear at work after cycling in from home.

What to do? Should I go home and get my shoes – a 2-hour return trip, buy a new pair – I already had a new pair at home, or borrow from a colleague – I'm a size 12?

Once I got over my initial shock, I applied my first step for problem solving – identifying assumptions. What was I assuming from past experience that could be clouding my thinking about the current situation?

I was assuming I needed to wear shoes at work.

So then it hit me – I have black socks, I don't have meetings out of the office, do I really need to wear shoes? At that moment I committed to wearing socks for the day.

What a revelation!

I was initially very conscious of the feeling of my socked feet against the cold steel of the escalator, as I made my first journey from the change room to my desk.

Moving onto polished floorboards I felt more comfortable and noticed the ease at which I could glide across the space. My silence felt good.

Interestingly, I was ultra-decisive for the remainder of the day, as every subsequent decision was easy compared to my commitment to wear socks for the day.



TIP: I bet you don't need to seek out an unusual or unfamiliar circumstance to test your resolve in the face of discomfort. List all of the things that you are uncomfortable about right now and begin to action them today.

So what were my 3 learnings from my day in socks at work?

1. The discomfort of experiencing an unusual or unfamiliar circumstance will eventually become comfortable.
2. We make assumptions about the future based on our past experience. This can prevent us from identifying new solutions.
3. By at least trying a different approach we are bound to discover new learnings about ourselves, others and our environment.

Sometimes our learning is a brief opportunity in a decisive moment. We can either choose to take that opportunity and run with it or lose it forever. People who don't have time for learning miss a lifetime of opportunity.

I encourage you to look for the odd moments when you have an opportunity for a slide on the wild side.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: List what learning causes you to feel uncomfortable.

Plan: Identify 3 new learning opportunities you will have tomorrow.

Act: As you learn, record your discomfort and address it.

Reflect: Consider whether you will choose discomfort in future.

#8

3 WAYS TO REFRAME AND GAIN LEARNING

 Reflect, rotate and translate aren't just isometric

Have you ever noticed how a photo can look different depending upon the frame that it sits in?

Every day we choose our own personal frames and position our experiences inside them. This process of framing is how we create the context and meaning of our experiences.



TIP: Think about the people and events in your life that make you emotional. Identify what frame you are using to create your own personal context. Now identify an alternate frame you could choose to use instead to change your feelings.

Just as we can change the frames around our photos, we can change the meaning of our experience through reframing. So what happens when we reframe? This can be explained neatly by a field of geometry – isometric transformations.

Now I suspect there may be some of you who have immediately reverted to your “*I’m no good at maths*” frame and switched off.

If that’s you, then try putting on an “*if I’m smart enough to have got this far through this book, then I can at least give this next paragraph a go*” frame instead. Feel better?

An isometric transformation occurs when a geometric shape, such as a triangle, is moved and the original angles and side lengths remain.

There are three types of isometric transformations: rotation (turn); translation (slide); and reflection (flip).

When you reframe yourself, you are effectively carrying out an isometric transformation, in that you either:

1. **Rotate** away from an existing perspective and turn towards a new point of view.
2. **Translate** the new perspective into a positive state and slide to a new experience.
3. **Reflect** on the reframe to flip your behaviour into a new pattern for the future.

Just as the isometric transformation of shapes does not change the shape’s inherent properties (angle or side lengths), your own reframing does not change your personal values, beliefs or attitudes – it simply creates a new perspective.

Learning is always enhanced by adopting new perspectives. Increasing your awareness of the frames you use is the critical first step to opening your mind to new perspectives.

So if it’s time for a new perspective, try an isometric transformation to reframe: simply turn, slide and flip your existing frames.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify a current frame you use that may not serve you.

Plan: Select a new frame and plan to use it at the next opportunity.

Act: Assess the impact of the new frame on your behaviour.

Reflect: Consider if the new experience aligns with your purpose.

#9

HOW YOUR BELIEFS CAN LIMIT YOUR LEARNING

What's your Rubik's Cube?

I have self-limiting beliefs. You have self-limiting beliefs.

In fact, our belief that we don't have self-limiting beliefs is the biggest self-limiting belief we can possibly believe.

Where do beliefs come from?

The social systems we have lived in, such as our family, school and peer groups have all contributed to our beliefs – both positive and self-limiting

It took me 35 years to address a self-limiting belief. Fortunately, it hadn't had a big impact on my life, just occasionally niggling at me, until my son recently asked me, "Dad, can you solve the Rubik's Cube?".

As a 10-year old, I remember the day I first saw the Rubik's Cube. At that time, I was struggling at maths, so on that very day I instantly formed 2 self-limiting beliefs out of my past experience with maths.

The first belief was that I would only be satisfied if I solved the cube myself from scratch. The second belief was that I needed to be brilliant at maths to understand how the 6 sides and 48 moveable pieces of the cube worked before I'd be able to solve it.

And so the puzzle remained unsolved for over 3 decades, until recently.

Inspired by my son's interest, I began questioning my self-limiting beliefs about the puzzle.

What alternate beliefs could I choose to adopt instead?

Firstly, I decided to believe that I no longer needed to solve it myself. I realised that the satisfaction from setting a positive example for my son would outweigh any loss of pride from not solving it on my own. It was okay to get some help.

Secondly, I accepted that the puzzle did not necessarily need to be understood to be solved. I could be satisfied learning to unscramble the cube by memorising another person's method.

So after finding a Rubik's Cube solution on YouTube¹, I spent a week memorising the pattern and order of 8 algorithms and after 30 years, I marvelled at the cube in my hands – 6 complete sides!

It took my son one day to learn it!



TIP: Are you studying or learning right now? Music, language, sport, cooking? Whatever it is, think about whether your beliefs are making that learning easy or difficult, rewarding or frustrating.

Learning to unscramble the cube was exciting. Learning to unscramble my self-limiting beliefs was mind-blowing.

Your self-limiting beliefs can be a never ending impediment to your success. But the opportunity and rewards from learning are also never ending, if you are prepared to acknowledge and challenge such beliefs.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify a belief that doesn't serve your purpose.

Plan: Choose an alternate belief and define the new behaviours.

Act: Practise the new behaviours and record the impact on results

Reflect: Appraise the benefits of the new belief over the old belief.

#10

3 CHILDLIKE BEHAVIOURS TO HELP YOUR LEARNING

Live today like child's play

What could adults learn from a child's approach to play?

There are some big differences between the classroom strategies to help children learn (pedagogy) and the workplace strategies to help adults learn (andragogy).

However, when we compare the principles of the learner's self-concept¹ to how children play, those differences are not so big and provide us with a great opportunity to use children's play as a model for our own learning.

The principles of the learner's self-concept suggest adult-learners:

- Are self-motivated and self-directed;
- Are independent;
- Like to find their own way;
- Can make their own decisions; and
- Want to manage their own learning.

Those of you who have had the joy of playing with a 2-year old toddler will no doubt see familiar learning needs. So what positive learning behaviours can we adopt by observing children at play?

You may observe that when children play they demonstrate 3 behaviours: “*test*”, “*regulate*” and “*persist*”.

1. **Test** – it's common to see a child take a new object or situation and spend some time testing its use and even its limits. At that time, the child is learning about their capabilities in a situation. Sometimes, if they have observed others' behaviour they may attempt to replicate that behaviour through their own play.

2. **Regulate** – as the child becomes aware of their capability with the object or situation through testing, they will begin to regulate their use of the object within the boundaries of its capability. They may close the door more slowly, throw the ball with more follow through or pat the animal more gently.
3. **Persist** – like adult-learners, persistence can vary. Children will generally persist with play until they have used the object or participated in the situation to a point that meets their satisfaction or expectation. Interestingly, this may fall short of the expectations of those around them, including parents.



TIP: When you introduce a new idea or concept to adults, or children for that matter, give them a chance to play with it before you show them how-to. It's an opportunity for them to find their own way.

It's not surprising that when a child is shown how to play the right way by an adult they can lose interest. Adult learners can respond similarly when the learning focuses on the objectives more than the learner themselves.

Ultimately there is no failure, only experimentation. The best experimentation is like a child's play: test, regulate, persist.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Compare how you learn with test-regulate-persist.

Plan: Schedule a learning opportunity to test-regulate-persist.

Act: Record your experience from the new approach.

Reflect: Identify opportunities to change your future learning.

#11

HOW TO DROP 3 WORDS AND FEEL GREAT

It's tiring to be someone who is always going to do something

People commonly use 3 words that result in poor management of their day and missed learning opportunities.

While some eventually get around to attending to their outstanding tasks, for others, this practice can spiral out of control and form a habit of consistent deferral.

If you can recall an outstanding task that has been on your mind for some time, you will probably find it easy to feel the sense of exhaustion it can cause.



TIP: Before you read on, go and do one thing that will give you some relief from an outstanding task.

*"And if it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And If it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first."*¹

Mark Twain gives good advice: focus on the most important tasks first. Despite our best plans, we are constantly dogged by the unexpected and this is when we are most susceptible to using the 3 words.

So what can be done?

We can be more aware of when we use these 3 words, simply drop them from our dialogue and become people that take action now. The 3 words are: *trying*, *going* and *later*.

1. **Trying** – when people say that they will try, they are either appeasing the expectations of another person, anticipating failure, or promising something they shouldn't, can't or don't want to do. Stop *trying* and start committing to action.

2. **Going** – how does it feel when you finally start a task you have been putting off? Not only do you usually realise that it's not as difficult as first thought, when you can say "*it's in progress*" you will experience great relief. Stop *going* and start commencing.
3. **Later** – when we believe we must complete an activity in its entirety we can create a feeling of overwhelm and fall into the 'do it later' trap. So, break activities down into smaller tasks and plan over a realistic timeframe. Stop *later* and start now.

Your language is an important influence on your future outcomes. When you are contemplating future action, be aware of the words you are using. By using positive words that are time, action and results-oriented you can improve your commitment, learning and results.

The days are easier and more fulfilling when we can talk about what we have done today, rather than what we are going to try and do later.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify when you use the words: trying, going, later.

Plan: Replace those words with: do, complete, now.

Act: Set daily tasks with a time target for effort and duration.

Reflect: Assess the impact on your activity after 1 weeks effort.

#12

WHY QUITTING IS GOOD FOR YOUR LEARNING

 Quit to get ahead... but not all of the time

I've heard it said "don't give up – quitting lasts forever".¹

Good advice if you are committed to the bigger picture (your purpose) but aren't putting in an effort. However, if you aren't committed and your heart isn't in it, quitting maybe just what you need.

We all know about the importance of finding your purpose to drive great performance. Without purpose you will:

- Struggle to find the commitment;
- Lack discipline to drive results;
- Get bogged down in stuck states;
- Persist with old perspectives; and
- Resist a new and open mindset for learning.

So when you are pursuing learning without purpose, you have a choice, to either find your purpose or move on – and it's okay to quit when you have no purpose.



TIP: Think about quitting. What were you taught to believe about it? What is your belief now? Do you understand the difference between quitting (purpose) and giving up (effort)?

Quitting when there is no purpose can be advantageous in 3 ways:

1. **Quitting frees up your time, resources and learning.**

By removing goals that are unachievable or no longer desirable, you can direct your efforts to activities that are more meaningful for you and lead to greater learning. Quitting is not about giving up. It's about getting clear on what is important to you and ceasing to spend time on meaningless or frivolous goals.

2. **Quitting requires you to better understand your responsibilities.**

Some of the aspirations that you wish to quit may be tied to a personal responsibility. By choosing to quit you are forced to make a decision and address any consequences for your personal responsibilities. By quitting, you at least take action and gain clarity about your purpose.

3. **Quitting can prevent procrastination.**

Amassing goal after goal on lists is overwhelming. The inability to shift goals can lead to an unhealthy stuck state – procrastination. Culling those goals that no longer serve your purpose is the simplest way to start motion.

So while you may be told to “*just do it*” – don't “*just do it*” if “*doing it*” no longer serves your purpose.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Write down what you regret you have quit in the past.

Plan: Compile a list of your current goals and their purpose.

Act: Organise to quit the goals that don't serve your purpose.

Reflect: Consider how you feel with those goals gone.

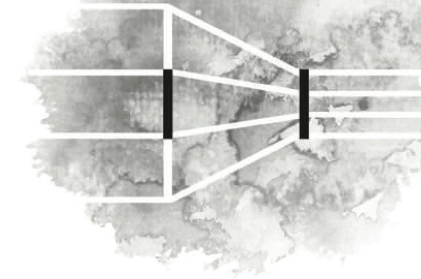
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INFLUENCE



Part 2 – *Influence* – addresses common challenges we can face about our influence.

We consciously and unconsciously influence people around us all the time and to varying degrees of success. By taking a *Learning Dangerously* approach to influence you will soon realise the effectiveness of your influence and how you can improve it.

It is said, “*the meaning of communication is the response you get.*”¹ Despite your words and delivery, it is the experience and response of the recipient that is the true measure of your influence.

Is silence in response to your question in a team meeting a sign of influence?

Is passive resistance to your request for change a sign of influence?

Is an argument that arises from a simple observation a sign of influence?

Influence is more than an act of expression. It’s your impact on the people around you and by *Learning Dangerously*, you have an opportunity to improve the outcomes of your impact in every interaction.

Imagine having influence that serves your purpose and makes you an engaging and attractive person and professional.

Let’s get started – there’s no time like now.

#13

THE FIRST STEP TO BUILD YOUR INFLUENCE

Get in touch with the impact of your communication

You cannot not communicate.¹

You may be surprised sometimes how people can react so differently and unexpectedly to your communications. At times you may be shocked at their outrage, other times disappointed by their apathy.

But if you really know who your people are, what they care about and how they prefer their communication – you need not be surprised.

This is the who, the why and the what of influence.

Imagine your competitive advantage by being completely attuned to the impact of your communication on others.

I recall a trainer once advising how to give instructions to a group. The trainer brought us to the middle of the room and gave us 7 simple instructions to follow. We barely managed to complete the third, let alone remember the fourth.

His message was simple: one instruction at a time, confirm the understanding, assess the response is positive and only then move on to the next instruction.

Your influence requires the same level of oversight to truly understand your impact on others.

Do people respond positively to your requests, follow your instructions to the letter or provide what's been asked of them?

No matter how well you have chosen your words or designed your presentation, the response to your influence will reflect how effectively you have addressed the who, why and what of your communication:

- Did you demonstrate you know your audience (the who)?;
- Did you connect with what your audience cares about (the why)?;
- Did you deliver your message to inspire your audience to take action (the what)?



TIP: As well as assessing your people's experience of your communication in the moment, take control of your influence by getting feedback before and after the moment of impact.

We are always influencing, whether we are aware of it or not. We are always having an impact on our people, whether we like it or not. Let's get it right the first time more often. I challenge you to become more aware of what influence you are really having on the people that matter in your work and life.

Is your influence received as a pat on the back, a shoulder of support or a slap in the face?

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: List your upcoming opportunities to influence.

Plan: Define the who, the why and the what in a plan.

Act: Get feedback on your plan and performance.

Reflect: Assess whether your influence had the desired result.

#14

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR CONNECTION WITH OTHERS

Understand intent before you judge behaviour

No-one I know enjoys being judged – even when they have just nailed a quadruple axel jump.

Judgment can result in us becoming defensive and offering excuses that justify our behaviour, especially when we know we have done wrong.

However, our responses to judgment can soften when we trust the intent of the judgment. If judgment is delivered to punish, shame, or put us in our place it's hardly surprising that we would push back.

However, if judgment is delivered with understanding first, hearing all the facts and free from bias, the response is likely to be more receptive. If we seek to understand people's intent, we will understand better people's behaviour.



TIP: The next time you are required to give constructive feedback, first ask 3 questions of the other person to understand their intent behind their behaviour.

Our behaviours don't always live up to our best intentions. Have you ever noticed the excuses you give to explain the difference between your intent and your behaviour? *"I meant well". "It wasn't that I didn't try". "It just turned out that way".*

How do you view those excuses when they are someone else's excuses? Not as convincing?

If you believe people aren't just their behaviour, that their behaviour is the best they can do with what they have on hand at the time, then your influence will benefit by being more considerate of people's intent.

To ensure you truly understand the intent of people and build positive influence you must be careful about how you communicate.

So how do we influence by understanding intent, rather than simply judging behaviour?

Practise having an open mind that in the words of Stephen Covey, *"seeks first to understand and then to be understood"*¹. This is effectively the practice of empathy, an important element of emotional intelligence.

Imagine approaching all of your conversations with a commitment to understand the other party's intent and behaviour before you speak.

The effectiveness of our influence is dependent on our capability and willingness to understand those we care about.

Hold up an imaginary mirror when you are speaking to others, especially when you are delivering feedback. Do you like what you see? Are you really connecting?

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Reflect on someone's behaviour and identify their intent.

Plan: Ask colleagues for feedback about how you engage them.

Act: Use 3 questions you could ask for better understanding.

Reflect: Consider whether your connection has strengthened.

#15

KEEPING THE CROWD ON YOUR SIDE

Create purpose, connection and support to win your audience

Have you ever been in an audience of a poor speaker?

Did you feel empathy? Did you feel embarrassed? In my experience, how you felt will have depended upon whether the speaker demonstrated their care for you in 3 ways.

I've seen an audience willing on a struggling speaker, like a crowd at an AFL match urging a footballer to kick the ball, before they're tackled.

I believe speakers and presenters have a duty of care to ensure their audience's expectations are met. Just because you're the one standing up in front of an audience doesn't give you the right to take on any role other than that expected by the audience – that particularly includes the role of a comedian.



TIP: In small doses, humour can be a very effective way of connecting with the audience. Always get feedback beforehand from a reliable person about the appropriateness of your intended humour.

Ultimately, presenters and speakers must consider their audience when developing and delivering their content and messages. In particular, it is important that the expectations that have been set with the crowd are honoured, or even better, exceeded.

So what are the 3 ways you can keep your crowd on your side?

1. **Address an agreed purpose** – you will naturally feel comfortable about why both you and your audience are there. This creates a positive sense of anticipation for you and diminishes the audience anxiety of “*what am I about to experience?*”. There is a huge difference in the energy of a presentation when the audience is feeling anticipation versus anxiety.
2. **Find a connection** – caring for the audience by first demonstrating your understanding of the audience, and then delivering content in a manner that enables the audience to relate to the messages. Storytelling and metaphors are effective tools to achieve such a connection.
3. **Provide support** – maintaining the audience connection with the content. This is primarily done by managing their energy levels by varying the manner of your delivery. Be wary of delivering monologues if the audience is not sitting at a table with a meal and beverages!

By considering purpose, connection and support you can quickly build trust with your audience and receive their gratitude and appreciation. When you achieve this level of connection you will always be considered the best person in the room to be up the front in the limelight.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify a speaking opportunity and define success.

Plan: List 3 actions to address purpose, connection and support.

Act: Get feedback from the audience about your connection.

Reflect: Give thought to how you could connect even further.

#16

HOW TO INFLUENCE YOUR CONVERSATION RALLIES

Your outcomes will improve as a player, not just a spectator

Do you ever feel like you're a spectator of a conversation you're participating in?

Perhaps what you're saying is not being heard, or worse still, ignored? Maybe you're not effectively replying to the other party's 'shots'?

Just like tennis matches, your conversations depend upon you understanding the other party's strengths and weaknesses, style of game and form, as much as you understand your own.

And like tennis rallies, conversations can be short or long, can comprise a variety of shots and will ultimately be won by the player who maintains greatest control of the rally at the decisive moments.

Conversations are a fundamental and personal part of our lives which we are often required to conduct with different people at different levels of complexity. Whether family, friends, work colleagues or strangers, we are constantly engaging in dialogue with others who have varying degrees of skill.



TIP: To see just how significant conversations are in your day-to-day, maintain a list of your conversations and rate them in terms of their ease and success.

Conversations aren't something that are necessarily there to be won or lost. Entering a conversation with the intent to win is likely to leave you with a reputation for unsportsmanlike behaviour. Just like social tennis, conversations are more enjoyable when everyone is participating.

So how do you improve the results of your conversations?

Just as tennis players have a repertoire of shots to choose from, we have choices as to how we reply throughout conversations. How well we select and execute those replies defines the level of our conversational agility.

In my model for effective conversations, there are 4 types of replies that are commonly used and influence your conversational agility: *responses*, *reacts*, *resists*, and *reveals*.

1. **Responses** – enable the conversation to progress to a productive outcome by authentically addressing the points being made: *"I understand what you are saying and this is what I'm going to do about it"*.
2. **Reacts** – are more emotive and with a focus on 'what's in it for me' they typically stall or diminish the progress of conversations: *"You're not listening to me – you don't know how I feel"*.
3. **Reveals** – introduce new information not necessarily asked for and so can positively or negatively distract the other party from their objective: *"I know you are asking about X, but did you hear about Y?"*.
4. **Resists** – can be a conversation circuit breaker to reset 'mutual balance', although constant 'resists' are a sign of low trust: *"How about we try doing that another time?"*.

Be open with your intent and choose your replies wisely and it will be game, set, match – conversation.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify your most common replies.

Plan: Consider better replies in common conversation rallies.

Act: Use more responses and reveals in an upcoming conversation.

Reflect: Describe how your conversation felt with more agility.

#17

5 PHRASES YOU SHOULD INFLUENCE OUT

Negativity is sometimes easier to express than suppress

Ever noticed how people's arguments favour convenience over conviction?

As Dale Carnegie said: *"any fool can criticise, condemn and complain – and most fools do."*¹

When you listen closely to some negative reasoning, you would be forgiven to think that people might be taking the easy way out.

In fact, when negative arguments are scrutinised or challenged, they are often revealed to lack conviction and really be strategies to avoid effort, inconvenience or change.

So what does negative reasoning do for your personal brand and influence? It's not positive to be known for your negative views. Let's not confuse this with being objective or practical. Being objective can hold conviction. Being negative is often just convenient.



TIP: We all succumb to convenience over conviction at times in our day. If you're not convinced, then carefully consider the 5 statements and ask yourself whether you've recently used any of them?

There are 5 phrases in particular, which can be easy to say, but when challenged usually lacks conviction. These phrases should be challenged because they typically don't make a positive contribution to the issues at hand.

1. **It will take too long** – the best response to any statement that includes the adverb 'too' is *"compared to what?"*. Once you understand what the person's basis of comparison is you will be able to assess the merit of their statement.
2. **It's not worth the effort** – there are two points worth clarifying here. What is the effort? And what is the return? Effort can be exaggerated and the benefit underestimated.
3. **It's not the right time** – when is the right time? If it is agreed that the effort is worthwhile then why would you delay reaping the benefits?
4. **It's too expensive** – what is the expense being compared to? Something that was previously free? I can understand how something that costs more than nothing may appear to be expensive, but what is the return on cost?
5. **It's the same as last time** – what happened last time? I have no doubt that some workplace change has been seen or done before, but why is that necessarily a predictor of what will happen this time?

While it is natural to expect some resistance to change, such resistance cannot be on the basis of convenience – otherwise we stagnate. I encourage you to challenge these 5 phrases to improve your influence.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: List the situations when you use any of the 5 phrases.

Plan: Identify who you know who uses any of the 5 phrases.

Act: Deliver a positive challenge to your/their negativity.

Reflect: Consider the impact of your challenge.

#18

YOUR RUSH TO SHARE MAY LEAVE OTHERS SPARE

Sometimes the greatest influence is playing a support to others

Have you ever encountered a 'sentence finisher'?

The comedy sitcom *Seinfeld* made hilarious observations about the speaking styles of the low-talker, the high-talker and the close-talker.¹ I don't recall any episodes about someone who consistently attempts to finish your sentence for you. I worked with such a 'talker' once, but it didn't feel like a comedy to me.

If we are in the habit of anticipating what someone else is saying, thinking or feeling, what if we are wrong? And how does the other person feel when they aren't being understood?

It was painful for me – particularly because my 'sentence finisher' only completed half the endings to my sentences correctly. It got to the point where I began stopping midway through a sentence. His enthusiasm and passion were overshadowed by his unconscious need to read my mind. Soon I began to feel like I didn't need to be there.

The respect given when you simply listen to the other party is powerful. Stephen Covey referred to the importance of seeking to understand others in his book, *First Things First*.²

Dr. Covey also used an Indian talking stick technique to explain the power of truly seeking to understand the people we are speaking with. In this simple technique, speaking in a conversation is revered with the symbol of the stick. The actual process of passing the stick effectively signifies a shift in the roles in a conversation. The stick also recognises the responsibility of the listener to remain silent while the speaker is speaking.³

I discovered my own trigger to practise 'silence' through the phone delay of long distance conference calls.

I recall international conference calls I previously chaired and the need to deliberately pause for a full 3 seconds to ensure others on the phone had finished talking. The 3 second pause ensured that all parties had considered what had been said before the conversation continued. When I've applied this approach to face-to-face conversations, I've experienced an easing in my mind, tone and language as I allow the contribution of others to land and rest for a moment.



TIP: When you're in your next conversation be conscious of really listening to the other person. Be sure the other person finishes their point and there is a 3 second pause prior to you starting to speak.

The trick to your influence is not being openly desperate to demonstrate or share it. That doesn't build trust. A considerate participant in a conversation sees their role to be a support to the other person – not to be the star.

How would you feel if you observed the other party to a conversation stopping and considering what you had just said before providing their response? Important?

What an easy way to build influence!

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Rate your listening skills out of 10.

Plan: Listen to yourself when you are next listening to others.

Act: Ensure you speak less than others in today's conversations.

Reflect: Observe the response of others to your pauses.

#19

4 STEPS TO INFLUENCE OTHERS ON YOUR FEET

 Help others to hear you and get better responses

Are you ever told “I think you should read this”?

I recently came across a book from my past, titled “*How to Think on Your Feet*.”¹

I can’t remember who gave it to me and it certainly wasn’t a book I would have bought when I was starting out in my career. For in those days I didn’t appreciate the benefits of thinking on your feet: creating a positive impression, appearing unflappable and being known as reliable in difficult situations.

For my focus was somewhat mistakenly centred on being heard rather than responding professionally and effectively.

These days, our best efforts to think on our feet are increasingly challenged by the unpredictable pace, volume and relevance of information. So despite your ability to cut through the noise and distraction to build great messages, will your thinking be really heard by others?

And I don’t just mean heard in the physical sense – ear to brain. I also mean heard in the processing sense – brain to response. Because despite the investment you may make in the design and look of the message, it is the response to your message that truly measures its effectiveness.



TIP: Rather than asking someone, particularly a child, “*did you hear what I said?*”, ask them “*what did you hear me say?*”.

So what are the 4 steps you can take to increase the likelihood of people hearing what you’re actually saying?

1. **Understand** – be certain you understand what they are asking from you before you begin responding. Listen to the key words they use and weave them into your response. It is far more effective, and courteous, to clarify their need or position before diving headfirst into an irrelevant monologue.
2. **Direct** – once you are clear about their need then directly respond to that need by getting to the point. Don’t introduce any other information or divert to other matters. You will make it easier for others to keep their interest in you if you stay on topic. You can always offer more information later.
3. **Deliver** – use short sentences and simple words and phrasing to deliver your message. Pause to assess their interest and attention. If need be, stop to clarify they are still hearing you, as sometimes you can trigger a new thought for the other person.
4. **Sense** – watch for their level of interest. Where are their eyes? On you? Or moving to other people, the floor or ceiling – a likely sign of flagging interest. Long breaths – a signal for you to get on with it. If you are losing them go back to the steps of *understand*, *direct* and *deliver*.

By applying these four steps when thinking on your feet, you will make it easier for other to hear and understand what you are saying – an outcome that benefits everyone.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Consider which of the 4 steps best serves you right now.

Plan: List what you should see if you are easy to understand.

Act: Apply the steps to today’s ‘on your feet’ responses.

Reflect: Recall your level of influence when ‘on your feet’.

#20

HOW SILENCE CREATES INFLUENCE ABOVE NOISE

The sound of silence is mightier than the word

There are times when less is more.

If you're like me, silence between people can feel awkward. But it can also be influential.

You may have seen a leader ask an authentic question, only to negate its influence by re-wording it, introducing small-talk or providing answers that relieve the recipient of dealing with the question.

It is critical that leaders allow their questions to land and avoid interfering with the recipient's contemplation and construction of their answer, especially when they are coaching their people.

An important aspect of influence is holding people to account for their behaviours. So when communicating, it is important that we are providing people with the opportunity to respond free from our own biases.

What 3 benefits does the use of silence offer you?

1. **To make a point** – often when we are so keen to make a point we fail to give it the time and space to engage the other party. When you don't create an opportunity for the recipient to consider your point, they can miss it all together. Silence can be used to emphasise your points to make them stick.
2. **To build appropriate tension** – especially when coupled with direct eye contact, silence can be a very powerful way to build tension and have others consider their position more deeply.
3. **To enable others to consider their response** – rather than responding with a typical, predictable or knee-jerk response, the silence can act as a prompt for a more considered reply by the other party.



TIP: Observe the conversations around you. Notice when silence is used to effect. Notice when a lack of silence leads to management speak and clichés.

There's a lot to learn from how people respond to your influence. In fact, the true meaning of your communication is the response you get.¹

When you fail to give the recipient the opportunity to respond to your question by answering it yourself, such as qualifying the question (*"what I really mean"*) or qualifying their response (*"you might want to think about it later"*), you miss the opportunity that silence presents to sense the true state of the conversation.

Give people the opportunity to consider and respond to your questions without your interference.

Silence is golden only when it is allowed to sound.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Think about what it is like to talk to you.

Plan: Identify a conversation for you to apply silence to today.

Act: Delay your responses to demonstrate your consideration.

Reflect: Assess how your use of silence has impacted your influence.

#21

FEEDBACK IS A DISH BEST SERVED HOT

The taste that feedback leaves depends on how it is served

I was taught the value of feedback the hard way, by delivering it cold.

Cold feedback is the worst feedback and I can assure you it doesn't taste any better when it is reheated. Worse still, when the late feedback could have addressed behaviour that impacted a person's performance rating, you are better off not giving it at all.

There are plenty of good reasons to become known as someone who is generous and insightful with their feedback. Most importantly it is the hallmark of an influencer. Providing in-the-moment feedback demonstrates that you are interested in the person, their performance and their future.

A great way to build rapport with people is to take an interest in their performance. To give feedback with good intent, be it positive or constructive, is really saying *"I care about you enough to take notice of your performance and here's how you can keep it up or improve"*.



TIP: Consider your most important stakeholders and the extent to which your engagement includes feedback. Consider increasing opportunities to offer and receive feedback to increase your personal influence.

Importantly, the way you deliver feedback has a big impact on your influence. In addition to being recent, feedback should be expected. It is critical that you set expectations about these 4 elements of feedback: *frequency, circumstances, process and content*.

1. **Frequency** – people will become more aware of opportunities to give feedback when they are expected to find opportunities. Setting an expectation about how often feedback should be given will drive people to become more observant of the behaviour and intent of others.
2. **Circumstances** – defining what people are to be giving feedback about (i.e. values, behaviours results) makes it easier for people to observe and provide feedback, both positive and constructive.
3. **Process** – agreeing the process for feedback can help people get comfortable with the giving and receiving of feedback, as people respond differently to feedback and can find it confronting. Agreeing the process helps ensure consistency across the team.
4. **Content** – stating what is and isn't to be said in the feedback conversation will also avoid negative outcomes from the delivery of well-intentioned feedback.

If you are seeking to raise your profile as an influencer, then demonstrate that you are willing to give and receive feedback. A more open and performance-orientated workplace starts with feedback.

By setting clear expectations and practicing feedback consistently and in-the-moment, you will ensure the people that benefit most from your influence will always be coming back for seconds.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

- Realise:** Consider how to increase your gift and receipt of feedback.
Plan: List 3 people you could improve influence with by feedback.
Act: Arrange to give feedback to 3 people this week.
Reflect: Identify the feedback elements you need to develop.

#22

IS MODERN DAY INFLUENCE MORE THAN A 'LIKE'?

How much attention should you pay to a 'thumbs-up'

With all the 'likes' being given and received on social media, is there a risk that we will become so focused on our likeability we will lose sight of our substance?

Theories and research on influence talk of principles such as reciprocity, scarcity, and credibility as crucial for strong influence.¹

Reciprocity suggests that random acts of kindness or gifts that are considered valuable are returned in kind.

Scarcity of a valuable service is likely to lead to higher demand.

Credibility about your subject matter expertise and from the testimonials of others is likely to increase your influence.

So where does being 'liked' fit in and should you pursue it?

While the 'like' may be an indicator of your credibility, is what you're being 'liked' for really important? Being 'liked' for an article you have written, a report you have shared or a deed you have done in the workplace maybe 'nice feedback', but should it be your focus?

Should it influence you?

That depends upon what is driving you to contribute in the first place. If it is to be noticed, then what happens when you are not noticed? And what does that mean for your ongoing efforts? Do you stop and only direct effort to the things that get 'liked'?



TIP: Review your purpose. Are your 'likes' consistent with what is important for you? If not, what else could you do to align your 'likes' to your purpose?

In the long term, it is more important for your influence to be consistent with your purpose, than to be 'liked'.

For as marketing experts suggest, the best way to get noticed amongst the incessant 'noise' of the marketplace is to promote your unique purpose – your own point of difference.

Therefore, your ability to deliver consistent and sustainable results is likely to depend upon you defining a clear, convincing and influential purpose, beyond your immediate 'likeability'.

To achieve outcomes through the influence of people, it is paramount for you to discover, understand and utilise the right personal thinking and emotion to connect with your peers, followers and stakeholders.

Your success in your world will depend upon you forging meaningful relationships with people and will depend on more than 'likes' received or given.

While such relationships require an effort greater than posting a thumbs-up, influence that is driven by the sharing of thoughts, feelings and words results in more sustainable and beneficial outcomes.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Define what you are 'liked' for.

Plan: List what you need to be 'liked' for to achieve your goals.

Act: Define actions to reconcile the difference between 1 and 2.

Reflect: Consider what you need to do to build sustainable benefits.

#23

5 WAYS TO INCREASE INFLUENCE AT MEETINGS

Meetings require more than simply showing up

It happens to the best of us.

You're chairing a meeting. You have issued a well-crafted agenda. You've allowed plenty of time for discussion. But what are the attendees doing? Consuming oxygen or blowing hot air?

On the other hand, as a participant, have you ever left a meeting wondering, "*what was that about?*". Everybody knows it takes two to tango, and that's the same for being influential at meetings, whether you are a participant or host.

Given most meetings have more participants than hosts (it doesn't always seem that way), participants typically have a greater bearing on the outcomes and therefore have as much responsibility as the organiser to drive positive results.



TIP: At your next meeting, rate the performance of each of the participants and/or the host out of a total score of 10. Consider their contribution, attitude and etiquette.

Here are 5 suggestions to make you a more influential contributor at meetings.

1. **Don't attend** – if you have nothing to add then don't go. A client of mine instantly gained 3 hours a week by identifying meetings where her role didn't add value to the meeting agenda.
2. **Be prepared** – respect your precious time (and that of others) by being ready to contribute. Another client immediately increased her meeting performance by preparing questions and comments the day before the meeting. In particular, ensure all pre-reading is read as if you wrote it.

3. **Engage attendees** – acknowledge the contributions of others: good, bad and especially indifferent. Provide verbal or non-verbal signs of attention to encourage input. By simply smiling more during her meetings a client received more positive feedback from attendees.
4. **Offer critique** – provide the organiser and the attendees with feedback about the meeting across agreed performance indicators. It's not surprising to see positive changes in behaviour when there is conscious awareness about meeting performance.
5. **Arrive early** – don't turn up late for meetings. As others arrive ask them about their expectations about the meeting. Perhaps you'll identify some issues that need to be discussed that aren't already on the agenda?

Either as a host or a participant, the bottom line is that we should respect the opportunity meetings provide us to positively influence others.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Write a list of all of your regular meetings – good and bad.

Plan: Assess your level of influence as either host or participant.

Act: Take 3 steps to increase your influence.

Reflect: Consider how your participation at meetings has changed.

#24

INFLUENCE IS PERSONAL – MAKE YOURS STAND OUT**Is communication bleaching you from your messages?***Ever inspired someone to act?*

Sometimes it isn't easy to inspire people you know, let alone those you don't know.

Given today's exponential increase in the volume, speed and connectivity of communication, how can you inspire the people that matter most to you to take action?

Through your personal stories.

Stories are an effective medium to spark a response from your audience that might just move them to action. However, people often under utilise or poorly craft their stories.

I've worked with a number of leaders who told stories that weren't particularly gripping or exciting. There weren't always heroes or villains or twists and turns. Nevertheless, they had an impact on the people listening because the stories created a connection. They told a story that the audience could relate to and importantly, were told by the person who experienced it.

So why are stories influential?

People enjoy listening to stories because the narrative and characters provide points of personal connection. In particular, stories that demonstrate shared values are an important trigger for building rapport.

Do we all have stories to tell?

Research done by sociologist Morris Massey suggests that we all experience a series of developmental periods in our lives that create our major core values: the Imprint Period (from birth to age 7), the Modelling Period (from 8 to age 13) and the Socialisation Period (from 14 to age 21).¹



TIP: Think back and consider the significant stories from these periods in your life. You will find a number of influences that created your core values: family, friends, school, location, prosperity and historical events.

Remember, the true meaning of your influence will be defined by how your audience responds to your story and messages.

There are 3 steps for finding and delivering the right story:

1. **Know your audience** – refer to Article #15 *Keeping The Crowd On Your Side*.
2. **Provide clarity** – have a clear message that connects the audience at an emotional and logical level.
3. **Sell the story** – use an engaging and appropriate style to draw in the audience, build rapport and offer your message for them to 'buy'.

The stories from your life have the potential to enhance your influence and create inspiration that lives happily ever after.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: List the most important messages you must communicate.

Plan: Consider your audience, their needs and feelings.

Act: Tell stories that will connect you with them.

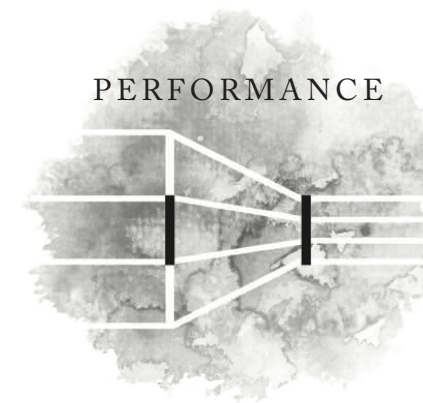
Reflect: Determine the impact on your audience from your stories.

PART 3

PERFORMANCE

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PERFORMANCE

Part 3 – *Performance* – addresses common challenges we can face that diminishes our performance.

Performance is all about how you get the work done. While our efforts to understand and plan work are important, our ability to execute work is critical for our success.

The reality of work today is that we are, more than ever, faced with competing priorities that challenge our ability to get the right things done at the right time.

Learning Dangerously will assist you to identify how to most efficiently and effectively execute your work. This Part includes topics such as: dependencies, time management, productivity, skills development and working innovatively.

Performance is more than just effort and activity. It's your ability to make the most of your most precious resources – your presence, effort, time and purpose.

How we work has just as big an impact on our success as what we work on.

This Part will help you build your performance to maximise the return on your efforts and realise your greatest success.

Imagine having performance capability that enables you to work less and achieve more.

Let's get started – there's no time like now.

#25

THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR DEPENDENCIES

Your dependencies are your steps to success

But comforting as they can be, your dependencies can also confound you.

Three consistent actions can assist you to improve your management of people dependencies. And isn't it time we got better at them!

In 1754 B.C., the Babylonian King Hammurabi issued a code of more than 200 laws governing business, interpersonal interaction, wages and punishment.¹

Despite the development of our thinking and practice over the subsequent 3,700-odd years, the management of people dependencies continues to challenge business, professional and personal performance.

Daniel Wren writes in *The Evolution of Management Thought*, the 4 main problems confronting the emerging factory system of the British Industrial Revolution more than 200 years ago were:

1. The recruitment and motivation of workers;
2. Training and development of skills and behaviours;
3. Performance management, both reward and discipline; and
4. The search for managerial talent.²

Should we be surprised that 200 years later, these are still some of the most written and talked about business topics challenging organisations today? Not if you have experienced the inherent complexity of managing people dependencies.



TIP: Write a list of your performance outcomes for any area of your life. Now write down for each outcome your dependency on either a person or process and rate the health of the dependency from 1 (poor) to 10 (strong).

Our dependencies on other people are critical. Outside of your work, you probably have very fruitful and effective relationships built on trust. However, trust in the work environment often requires more effort and is usually more fragile.

There are 3 behaviours you need to consistently practise to build positive people dependencies to benefit your performance.

1. **Serve the good of others** – if you don't know what is good for the people you serve, then ask them and discover what they need from you and vice versa. More than ever before, 'win-win' is the best mantra to build valuable dependencies.
2. **Take action** – inaction is a big threat to you building positive people dependencies. Inaction breeds disconnection and distrust between parties, who are eventually forced to go it alone or go with someone else.
3. **Shake perspectives** – our ability to change our perspectives of ourselves and the world around us is an important attribute for building flexible relationships. People appreciate your ability to change a position, concede a point or allow for some slack. But you may need to change your perspectives about people and situations to do so.

Through consistently good decisions, proactive action and new perspectives, you'll archive those historic challenges of dependency and evolve to a new level of performance.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: List your 3 most important people dependencies.

Plan: Identify any actions to strengthen dependencies.

Act: Undertake one action to improve your dependencies.

Reflect: Consider if your actions enhanced your dependencies.

#26

EFFORT MAKES PERFORMANCE REWARDING

Understand the true effort and you'll perfect performance

A journey of thousand miles may indeed start with one step.¹

Having taken the first step of your journey, your understanding of the remaining effort, be it just one more step or one thousand miles of steps less one, is critical for your performance outcome.

I am fascinated by performance. My personal experiences have taught me that performance is more than executing a plan. And no matter the size of the stage you perform on or the number of people you perform to, your performance outcome will depend upon your understanding of the required effort: how you act out the mindsets, skills and behaviours for success.

So do you know what it takes to become world class in your field? Are you prepared to make that effort? Is it unreasonable that to become the best, you need to make a worthy effort?

Most people accept that to become better tomorrow at what they do today requires either more effort or new effort. Furthermore, most people are prepared to make that effort when the benefits are a fair return.

The question is: *"do you understand the necessary effort required to achieve your desired performance outcomes?"*.



TIP: On the first day you embark on your journey to become world class, don't fixate on your hero's success. Ask yourself what was my hero's performance on the first day of their journey? Then go and do it better, that day and every following day.

What is the risk when there is imbalance between our desire for performance success and our understanding of the required effort?

We are regularly bombarded by marketing promises suggesting 'great change for minimal effort'. Only recently I saw a commercial spruiking, *"we all want to lose weight and look great for minimal effort"*.

Although deep down we doubt the *"for minimal effort"* promise, we can't deny its appeal. When our desire exceeds our understanding, we are susceptible to superficial motivations such as *"at no cost"*, or *"easy and fast"*, or *"for minimal effort"*.

So our desire for success can be a trap. While it is important for our growth and development to have aspirations, desire without an understanding of effort will remain an unfulfilled desire and will fade, leaving us alone having achieved nothing.

Understanding and accepting the required effort for success is the fuel that keeps desire burning. Your commitment to the true effort needed for your success will ensure your ongoing focus on both the effort of the journey and the outcome of the destination.

But be careful. While it can be useful to assess your progress by comparing yourself, your team or your business to the success of others, be sure you do so from a position of true understanding of both your own and other's relative efforts. There is a risk of 'self-sabotage' when we reconcile the difference in performance outcomes without a proper understanding of relative effort.

Don't focus on the destination without appreciating the journey required. All great performance has been driven by the acceptance of effort necessary for fulfilling outcomes – be it effort of one step or one thousand.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify one performance goal this week.

Plan: Determine the effort for the 1st step and schedule.

Act: Carry out the 1st step to schedule.

Reflect: Assess, and if positive, move to the 2nd step of that goal.

#27

3 STEPS TO KEEP YOU ON TRACK

Sometimes you can't do your best, but it's better than nothing

It's not always easy to perform at your best.

The reality for many of us is our performance must typically contend with all manner of issues. So when we are able to meet or even exceed our performance expectations, we usually feel a great sense of pride and accomplishment.

Sometimes challenges come unexpectedly out of the blue, despite our comfort and experience with the job at hand. When our performance is challenged, we are at risk of falling into one or more of the following traps:

1. We disconnect from the purpose of our outcomes (Drive);
2. We stray from our drivers (Key Performance Indicators);
3. We fail to maintain a regular level of activity (Frequency).



TIP: Consider one action you perform. Draw an equilateral triangle with 3 layers inside. Inside the bottom layer, write the purpose of this action for you, in the middle layer, write the driver that is critical for success, in the top layer write how frequently the driver needs to be executed.

So what can we do about these 3 traps that can distract our performance? Let's consider an example.

Imagine planning to compete in a hurdle event on an athletics track.

Your drive could be any of the following: to beat a fellow competitor, to win the race outright, to achieve a personal best time or to simply enjoy the experience.

Your key performance indicators could be any of the following: the number of hurdles cleared, the number of strides you take between hurdles, the length of your stride, the speed of your stride, your reaction time to the start gun sounding, your final sprint to the line or your chest position on the line.

Your frequency is all about your training. How frequently do you practise all of the activities associated with a hurdles event: strength and endurance training, mental training and hurdling drills?

When we are committed to our performance we are on-track. What happens when our commitment is challenged? In this example, what might happen if we became sick or injured and our training interrupted?

For most of us, who don't have a team of support staff, we can lose our focus. Instead of resetting our frequency and goals for the temporary interruption we can end up stopping all together.

Instead, we could stay connected with our performance goals by recommitting to our purpose, establishing new key performance indicators that consider our new circumstances and set a new schedule of frequency that allows for our short term situation.

When your performance is under threat, you need to stay connected with your drive. If your drive is still there, then reset your frequency and key performance indicators to maintain some level of performance.

There are always times in our lives when we can't be at our best. Sometimes being your best is simply doing anything more than nothing to stay connected with your longer term purpose.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify the driver of your most important performance.

Plan: Describe full, half and low effort for that driver.

Act: Apply the 3 levels of effort for that driver over 1 week.

Reflect: Assess your level of connection at the 3 levels of effort.

#28

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PERFORMANCE PRECISE

Make your next performance sharp and exact

Ever committed the 'over promise and under deliver' mistake?

This is the situation when our eagerness to impress or serve others, miscalculates the amount of effort required to complete an activity. Consequently, promises or commitments made to deliver performance outcomes are left unfulfilled or unsatisfied.

By failing to understand and assess the key drivers that lead to great performance, we increase the risk of repeating that mistake time and time again.

This is the opposite of precise performance, which is characterised by undertaking the right activities to get the right results.

Precise performance can only be attained by truly understanding what is necessary for your performance. You need to be precise about more than just the amount of effort. There are 6 performance drivers that are critical for your performance to be precise: *goals, actions, behaviours, mindsets, outcomes and feedback*.

A man who was a precise performer, Leonardo Da Vinci, once wrote, "*he who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards a ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may cast.*"²¹ While it may be idyllic and the perfect getaway, it is not a practice that will serve your performance or your success.

Clearly there is a case for understanding the underlying drivers of performance before you risk casting adrift.

And Da Vinci should know. He was a renowned polymath, painter, sculptor, architect, musician, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, geologist, cartographer, botanist, and writer.



TIP: Write down a list of all the roles you have in your life, like Da Vinci's list above. Next to each role write down 1 performance driver that is critical for that role. Now rate with a score out of 10 the extent to which you effectively execute that driver.

I suspect Da Vinci was also a man who understood his performance drivers. Like Da Vinci, you need to be clear about the drivers that exist beneath the performance outcomes you are seeking.

Ask yourself these questions to define your drivers for precise performance:

1. **Goals** – what do you expect from the performance?
2. **Actions** – what actions will you take to achieve your goals?
3. **Behaviours** – what behaviours will support your performance?
4. **Mindsets** – what do you need to believe to support your actions?
5. **Outcomes** – what will success look like and how will you know?
6. **Feedback** – how will you determine your progress? How frequently?

By precisely defining your performance drivers you will pursue the right activities and get the right results. Otherwise, you may end up drifting rudderless.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Apply the 6 drivers to a critical performance.

Plan: Write down 1 action to strengthen each driver.

Act: Practise the actions over 1 week.

Reflect: Consider how your performance has changed.

#29

WHAT IF YOU CHOSE TO HAVE MORE TIME?

You actually have as much time as you want

I've been hearing a lot of "I just don't have time right now".

What does that really mean?

Einstein said on a day when he wasn't particularly busy, *"the only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once."*

Can you remember what you did over the past 7 days? How did you use your time this week? Wisely or wastefully? Did you lose time or make time? Did you spend time or save time?

Whatever your experience, I'm sure if you're like most people, at some time this past week you would have wished for more time.

So how do you create time? Do you buy other people's time and apply it to your own priorities? Or reallocate it across your people, pursuits and places in life?

Time is a paradoxically finite resource. When it is lost, time is seemingly mourned and can be associated with feelings of regret. So why do we choose to lose time and then lament its scarcity?

Does this behaviour save us from the challenges that confront us: *"I ran out of time..."*, *"If only I had more time..."*, *"I never have the time to..."*?

Perhaps we now need to reconsider our relationship with time? Do you respect your time? Do you know why you spend it the way you do?



TIP: If you're wondering how you spend your time then record it. Keep a journal for a week – you'll be amazed at what you learn.

There are 3 ways you can choose a life of more time:

1. **Cut time use** – the most obvious way to free time is to stop using it up – particularly on activities that don't serve your purpose. Do you think at the end of your life you will wish you had watched more TV?
2. **Copy excellence** – save your time to use elsewhere by becoming better at using it in the first place. Try modelling best practice, you will become more effective and efficient at executing your activities. For new skills, find a tutorial on YouTube, don't waste your time figuring it out yourself.
3. **Create more resource** – use someone else's time to free up your own time. Outsourcing or automating are valid options to achieve the same outcome using less of your own time.

Time is a common and easy excuse to deflect our own performance pitfalls. While we all have the same amount of available time at the start of each day, how we choose to use that time is a personal choice.

While time may feel finite, your choices about how and why you spend it are not. Be sure to choose wisely.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Listen to yourself and identify how you talk about time.

Plan: Identify 3 things you want to dedicate more time to.

Act: Limit your time on 3 activities that don't serve your purpose.

Reflect: Assess how your availability of time has changed.

#30

WHY BUSYNESS SHOULD NOT BE YOUR BUSINESS

The arithmetic of busyness doesn't add up

For most people, the seduction of busyness is that it feels better than being idle.

Busyness can trap us into an unconscious state, where we blindly commit to activities that don't serve our purpose and prevent us from pursuing new opportunities.

Busyness is a barrier for your own self-experience. How often have you thought "if I only had the time, I could..."?

Henry Thoreau said, "It's not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is what are we busy about?"¹



TIP: Write a list of all the things that are making you busy today. Categorise the list into 3 levels of value: high, medium and low. Work on the high ones for the rest of the day.

What happens when you have so much going on you have no capacity to consider new opportunities? Life becomes routine. Life passes you by. You don't know where your time has gone.

It's common for us to blame time for the cause of our busyness: "if only I had more time I wouldn't be so busy."

What would be a more effective way of reframing that statement? How about: "if only I made better decisions about what was really important to me and my purpose, I wouldn't waste my time and effort on frivolous activities." How do you feel about that statement? Any truth in it?

It's simple. If you want to take control of how you spend your time, then cease your busyness by getting ruthless about your use of time. Here are 5 steps to get started:

1. **Build space and buffers** in your schedule that enable you to take time-out to break and assess how you're going.
2. **Plan for new and different activities** during your day-to-day to vary your routine. This will make you more aware of your time and your state of mind.
3. **Regularly analyse the tasks** that you perform and distinguish between the vital and the disposable. Stop tasks and see if anyone notices.
4. **Set firm boundaries** between work and non-work time and stick to them, especially at the end of the day when the pressure of getting things done threatens your work departure time.
5. **Minimise interruptions and distractions** to ensure your busyness isn't due to you accommodating other's needs. Be a team player, but not to the extent that you're the one staying back late at work.

I don't doubt people have a lot to do.

I do doubt whether it all needs to be done, or the way it has always been done.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Define what you mean when you say, "I'm really busy!".

Plan: Consider what you want to be like when you are busy.

Act: Identify 3 activities that can reduce your busyness – now.

Reflect: Determine how you now feel about busyness.

#31

WHY 15 MINUTES SHOULD BECOME YOUR 1 HOUR

Complex times demand simple responses

In these modern times we hear much about the complexity of work – a Google search returns 100 million results!

As our lives accommodate increases in the number of people to manage, the volume of information to comprehend, the screens of emails to sort and the bites of social media to consume, are we simply responding by investing more of our time?

Is it possible that we are using old-age solutions for new-age problems?

First published in *The Economist* in 1955, Parkinson's Law is the adage that work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion. The theory was derived from Cyril Parkinson's experience in the British Civil Service.¹ As long as we complete tasks in the allotted time, we will feel effective despite the potential for better productivity.

The office meeting is a classic example of Parkinson's Law in action. People attending and conducting a meeting to fill the time allotted. Is there a human endeavour that more consistently fails to deliver value despite the potential benefits?

Given the opportunity for all attendees to prepare beforehand, I believe there is a real opportunity for the duration of every meeting to be shortened, but still provide sufficient time for objectives to be met.

Hence the importance of an agenda, a chairperson and a timekeeper.

So if you limited the time available to just 15 minutes, is it possible you could complete tasks that normally take one hour? Unless a process is dependent upon a minimum time duration of over 15 minutes then anything is possible.



TIP: Choose one thing in your schedule today and shorten the normal time allocated to only 15 minutes to complete it. A report, a phone call, a meeting. Experience having to compact your effort and notice what is different.

I practise one new task every week in less time. Do I always finish it in 15 minutes? No. Does it matter? Not if there isn't a third-party deadline. Most importantly, it is a stimulating process that will make you more conscious of how you work and your resultant productivity.

And consciousness is critical. For as creatures of habit, the patterns of activity we build over time, if left unchecked, will provide a sense of achievement, despite the potential for inefficiency.

The key to dealing with complexity is not to find more time, but to allocate less time and use it to better effect.

Consider the shortened meeting. Over time, we adjust our behaviour to say what needs to be said efficiently and effectively and with no less value than before.

Perhaps as your awareness evolves you will eventually adopt 5 minutes as your new 15 minutes?

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: List the time allocations you give to your common activities.

Plan: Identify 3 tasks you want to assess over the next week.

Act: Assess the difference between the actual and allotted time.

Reflect: Consider if your awareness has changed your use of time.

#32

DON'T WASTE YOUR CURIOSITY ON NICE-TO-HAVES

If necessity is the mother of all invention, innovate with care

There is only one bigger dampener of innovation than a lack of curiosity and that's a lack of relevance. Let's look at both.

There is no doubt that curiosity is a fundamental element for a culture of innovation. As mathematician and philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead stated, *"the basis of invention is science, and science is almost wholly the outgrowth of pleasurable intellectual curiosity"*.¹

I recall once attending a networking event where a discussion focused on curiosity and learning in the workplace. One particular question raised was, *"what prevents adults from being curious about the world?"*.²

Is it our contentment with the status quo? Is it our survival mode (fight or flight) that focuses us on the vital things in our lives (finances, family and work) with little room for consideration of 'what if?'.

I heard it said at that event, *"many people saw an apple fall from a tree before Sir Isaac Newton, stopped and asked 'Why?'"*.

Now I don't know if Newton had a mortgage, juggled the school run or was struggling to plot his next career move. But, he clearly had a curious mind. Perhaps if we found the space in our lives for a 'what if?' mindset, curiosity would become a more natural and regular state of existence.



TIP: How do you create curiosity in your world? Try asking 'What if?'. Many of the challenges and issues we face are foreseeable by considering 'What if?'.

Fostering a mindset of curiosity is one thing. Putting it to good use is another.

When you pursue 'nice-to-haves' you risk not creating a sufficient sense of urgency or necessity in people (or yourself), to shift from a current state to a new state.

Remember that our current states are often ones of established comfort and familiarity. Therefore, they are inherently difficult to leave. Unless there is an event that creates an urgent need to depart your existing comfort zone, nice-to-haves with little immediate value may foster a culture of apathy that undermines curiosity.

If you are like most people, you probably recall a time when a new initiative was launched with much pomp and ceremony in the workplace. Months later, it had faded into the distance and been replaced by a newer, shinier priority.

Curiosity is an important mindset for individuals to be innovative. But for it to lead to innovative thinking and be a basis for engaging and inspiring others, it must be purpose-driven and focused on the critical issues – not caught up in 'nice-to-haves'.

In the end, too much use of curiosity to innovate 'nice-to-haves' will result in innovation becoming a 'not-to-have'.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Consider where your curiosity usually leads you.

Plan: Identify 'nice-to-have' activities in your life.

Act: Replace one 'nice-to-have' activity with a critical task.

Reflect: Assess your curiosity when it is focused on critical tasks.

#33

WHY INDEPENDENCE IS OVERRATED

High performance doesn't care about your self-sufficiency

If I told you that you can enjoy the benefits of interdependence, to have more time and produce better outcomes, would you be interested in hearing how?

There are few great performers who haven't shared their inspiration, perspiration and success with others. Have you ever noticed that the more you share your work with others, the more you learn about yourself?

Stephen Covey wrote: *"life is, by nature, highly interdependent. To try to achieve maximum effectiveness through independence is like trying to play tennis with a golf club".¹*

While we are initially driven in life to become independent, we are subsequently rewarded throughout life for the extent of our interdependence.

At an early age we are taught the importance of being independent and encouraged to experience many activities and solve problems by ourselves. In fact, as parents and adults, it is natural for us to encourage children to learn to do things by themselves and for themselves.

As we develop through our education and vocational experiences, we become more aware of the importance of interdependence. Working in teams and syndicates becomes the norm as we realise the advantages of collaboration and shared responsibility.

So you should be careful that your 'do-it-yourself' approach doesn't become 'do-it-by-yourself'.



TIP: Identify anything you 'do-it-by-yourself'. Think of what opportunities you may have to engage others in what you do. What could be the advantages of taking an interdependent approach to work or life?

Taking the independent road is destined to end in loneliness and loss. Here are 3 actions you can take to become more interdependent.

1. **Delete** – stop anything you do that is entirely independent and develop a new approach that shares at least some of the effort and reward with others.
2. **Disperse** – break larger activities into parts that can be collaboratively produced with others. It is the larger tasks that you typically pursue on your own that provide the greatest opportunity for you to share the load.
3. **Delegate** – let go of work that is no longer challenging and developing you and enlist others to execute it with your support and guidance.

Ultimately, great performance may require you to let go of your past.

Being interdependent recognises that you can still retain responsibility for outcomes despite relinquishing ownership of the process. In many instances, it doesn't matter whether you solved it yourself or delegated all the thinking and doing out to others and still achieved the results on time, on budget and to quality.

Engaging others and collaborating is more appealing because you can share your challenges and your triumphs with other people.

Otherwise, who's around to support you or celebrate your success when you're all by yourself?

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Consider the impact of your independent work on you.

Plan: Identify 1 opportunity to 'disperse' your work.

Act: Share work with others, building an interdependence.

Reflect: Consider how less independence is beneficial for you.

#34

WHY ACCEPTING YOUR LIMITS IS GOOD FOR YOU**The online revolution can suck the efficiency out of you***What's the biggest efficiency conspiracy in the history of mankind?*

Software. And now it's online and available to everyone! What logic supports the notion that if we give everyone the tool they can all become craftsmen?

When Steve Jobs announced the launch of the Apple Macintosh in 1984 a revolution in home computing occurred. Companies now had a means by which employees could feel good about working unpaid hours on weekends. Luckily we were too smart to fall into that trap!

We have all experienced what I call the 'software vortex'. That dark part of the cyber-world where software tempts us with the promise of short cuts, quick parts and macros. You end up in a virtual no-man's land, caught between the trenches of Visual Basic programmers and computer illiterates, knowing enough to get by and not enough to get efficient!

The 'software vortex' is only the tip of the iceberg. It's a symptom of a greater problem for talented people who think they can pick up any new skill with aplomb.

How often when you commit yourself to a new skill do you really master it? And if you do, at what expense? Experts are by definition not expert in everything. Neither are you nor I. So we have a performance decision to make: invest in our own skills or invest in an expert's skills.



TIP: Consider your work tasks. What do you spend most of your time doing? How much of that time is spent efficiently – you do it once and quickly, versus, inefficiently – you relearn it, make a few mistakes and eventually get it right? Who can you engage to spend your time better?

These days with the advent of 'software as a service' we are all now faced with numerous online options to simplify our lives with software.

However, the simplification is null and void if we are incapable of efficiently learning how to do it ourselves. If we are spending more time learning the service than using it efficiently it is not a simplification. It is a waste of time.

Be careful how you spend time on your performance. If you can avoid it, don't get caught up in the lure of do-it-yourself for non-value add activities. Your performance is best served by sticking with what you know and can do best.

Whether you find the best online service or pay the experts to do it for you, avoid committing to new skills that aren't your expertise – especially when you are short of time!

If you do choose to become an expert yourself, make sure you can really afford to spend your dollars and your time on a new skill, rather than your core skills.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify the critical activities for your performance.

Plan: Determine who is best to complete those activities.

Act: Outsource those activities that are best done by others.

Reflect: Calculate the benefit of having accepted your limits.

#35

YOUR INEFFICIENCY IS KEEPING YOU AT WORK

 Productivity is an outcome not a process

Sure you get stuff done throughout the day.

But could you clock-off at the end of each day a little earlier?

I'm sure some of you love to spend more time at work because it's a great place to be, you like your peers and the work is meaningful. There's also those of you who dedicate more time to work than is rewarded. So instead of donating free hours of your time to work, no matter how attractive the free Wi-Fi is, how about you take control of your time?

Imagine if you could spend one less hour at work every day – what would you do with that hour?

Now some people will argue that those extra hours are a necessary part of being in a management position. Really? So their performance is judged on how much time they spend at work?

What if they could achieve the same results in less time? Perhaps they would fill it with even more work – and build a better case for a pay increase or promotion!



TIP: How much of your work is unplanned, unpredictable and unmanageable? Assess your work habits during the week and identify what is the real reason for you not taking control of your work time.

In the age of flexible work practices, that extra time spent at work is not always looked upon favourably, nor is it a guarantee of a pay rise.

If you could deliver more productive value in your day and spend less time at work, would you choose to do so? If so, start with these 3 actions.

1. **Cut meetings to 15 minutes** – or at least make them an appropriate duration to be truly efficient. You may recall Parkinson's Law¹ – avoid allowing activities to simply fill the space you've allocated. Image the positive response if you told meeting attendees: *"as today's meeting is only 15 minutes all of you can go home 45 minutes earlier."*
2. **Control your interruptions** – set times for people to contact you directly via instant messaging or mobile. This enables them to have your full attention when they do call, and schedule access so that you are not continually dropping and picking up your work between enquiries.
3. **Work iteratively** – become an agile operator and maintain motion of all of your tasks. Everything you have promised to deliver should be progressed once every day until completion. You know the feeling when someone is waiting for your work and you're dreading the call because the job hasn't moved since the last call. Maintain flow and avoid dropping the balls.

The bottom line is you have a choice about how you work and how much time you end up spending at work. Fail to continually improve your productivity and you'll be forever wondering – where did the time go?

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Calculate how much of your work time is 'value add'.

Plan: Determine how many hours you spend in meetings.

Act: Progress current tasks iteratively for every day to completion.

Reflect: Consider how much time you donate to the workplace.

#36

SOMETIMES IT'S TIME TO STOP CHASING

Direct your efforts to engage a problem not chase a solution

There are times, despite our best attempts, when much of our effort is wasted – especially when we chase.

What are the signs that you're chasing? When you're spinning your wheels? When the same problem keeps raising its ugly head? When time after time you are facing that issue you promised yourself you would never deal with again?

Whether it's results, other people, deadlines, promises or dreams, when your effort is not being rewarded, you are chasing.

So how do we end up getting trapped into the effort of chasing?

Well, it feels better than doing nothing.

And while that may be true, in the long term, chasing just wears you down. Your energy, your willpower, your discipline and outcomes all suffer when your effort is put into chasing.

On the other hand, engaging is the process of connecting with your outcomes, whether they be your most delighted customer, reliable supplier, fondest partner, closest friend, highest score, lowest weight, fastest time or enjoyable workday.



TIP: Write a list of issues that are on your mind right now. For each issue record the best outcome you can 'chase'. Now write down a positive action you can take in the next 15 minutes to engage the issue and commence progress towards addressing the issue.

Importantly, the difference between chasing and engaging is more than just positive thinking. It is positive action – positive action through purpose and value.

To engage is to embed purpose and value in your effort. Without clear purpose and value, your activity may have good intent, but your efforts will be haphazard and underwhelming.

Purpose is particularly important for your internal impact. For you to be driven to take action, your clarity of purpose turns simply chasing after your goals into a pursuit – a much more targeted approach.

For example, think about issues that you are putting off right now. Consider these issues beyond the immediate action required. What is the bigger picture? What is the higher purpose for you to engage this issue right now? Is it a personal responsibility? Is it an internal value? Is it a strong belief? By moving beyond the action and considering the purpose, you engage a problem and motivate a response.

Value is particularly important for your external impact. The more value you identify and create from your effort the more attractive your activity becomes, particularly for other people who rely on you.

For example, imagine you are wanting to build a relationship with another person where they reciprocate your interest in them. Have you given them a reason to engage you, or not engage you? Find mutual value for your relationship and practise actions to increase engagement.

People who actively shift their mindset and behaviour from chasing to engaging are amazed at the positive impact on both their results and peace of mind.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify who or what in your life you are chasing.

Plan: Define 1 action you could take to engage them/it instead.

Act: Practise that action frequently to increase engagement.

Reflect: Assess the impact you have had on them/it.

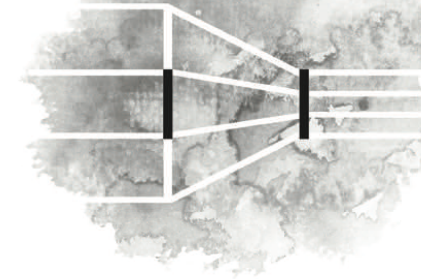
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SUCCESS

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SUCCESS



Part 4 – *Success* – addresses common challenges we can face that threatens our success.

Success is the output of your performance and influence. Your success usually involves the contribution of other people and so depends upon the strength of your relationships and networks.

Learning Dangerously enables you to identify and address the barriers to your success. Such barriers can be held internally, your beliefs and attitudes, and externally, within your team, organisation or culture.

One of the greatest mistakes we can make is to do the work and expect the results.

Experience tells us that our success is always under threat from many different factors. That is why this Part addresses behavioural topics such as: empathy, understanding, pride and resilience; as well as technical topics such as: team success, project discipline, commitment and measurement.

By applying the tips and actions from this Part, *Learning Dangerously* will maximise the return on your efforts to improve your *learning, influence and performance*.

Imagine having the mindsets and behaviours to continually turn your performance into success.

Let's get started – there's no time like now.

#37

WHY YOUR SUCCESS SHOULD PUT OTHERS FIRST

It's more about others and less about you

Your success depends upon your ability to support others.

While some people are born leaders, leadership success is more than just being someone or doing something.

Leadership is in fact less about you and more about those around you. In the end your success will reflect the success experienced by those who follow you.

Whether it be customers, clients, team members, direct reports, the entire workforce or friends and family, the extent to which you are someone who supports and fosters the success of others will positively impact your own success. That is why leadership is such an important aspect of performance.



TIP: Contact 5 people in your life and ask them what is currently most important to them for success. Consider how you can support them to achieve that success.

There are numerous models of leadership that have been developed, tested and touted over the past century. Many of them express the need to be flexible in style and communication. Ultimately the ability to influence others to trust and engage with you is dependent upon the extent to which they will prosper from their fellowship of you.

So, similarly to how you approach influence, leadership is a concept that is best practised outside-in. That is, by understanding what your people need to realise their success, you will develop a leadership style that will best support them and in the long term accomplish your own success.

By getting too entangled in leadership methods and models, some people feel as though leadership is something beyond them. Leadership doesn't need an MBA, a certification, permission from your boss, or a TED talk. It's already in you.

The challenge is how you access your leadership capability and use it effectively to benefit your people. Inspired by a traditional model of political electioneering, here are a simple series of steps and questions to build your leadership success by putting your people's success first:

1. **People** – who are your followers? Who do you serve? What is important to them? What is their success? How can you support them?
2. **Platform** – what do you stand for? What are your strengths? How can you support your people to achieve their success?
3. **Promises** – what are your commitments to your people? What will be the outcomes? How are they communicated?
4. **Progress** – what have you delivered? Has it satisfied your followers? Are you enabling them to succeed?
5. **Polls** – what feedback have you received from your people? Should you continue with your existing platform?

By developing a people-driven platform to understand, support and deliver success for your people, you will soon find your own success through the success of others.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify an important group of people for your success.

Plan: Determine how you will obtain feedback from your people.

Act: Complete steps 2, 3, 4, above for your group of people.

Reflect: Consider the impact of your action for your people.

#38

BEWARE THE INNER ENEMY OF YOUR OUTER SUCCESS

Is your opponent standing opposite you – or within you?

'How to achieve high performance' has become a popular topic in the corporate world over the past 20 years.¹

Despite the commitment to deliver results, studies continue to show that efforts regularly fall short of delivering positive change and achieving high performance.

A significant factor that will increase the rate of future success is increased self-awareness. How? Self-awareness enables a greater understanding of how people operate at three levels.

Individually, self-awareness enables us to learn about personal strengths, weaknesses and biases. At a business level, self-awareness informs owners about the systems that operate to produce results. Across an entire organisation, self-awareness provides insights about culture.

At each of the 3 levels of self-awareness, a failure to properly understand either the internal person, systems or culture, risks the creation of the toughest competitor – the 'enemy within'.

Personally, the 'enemy within' can be the voice inside your head, the self-limiting belief or a negative emotion preventing high performance. In business, it can be the internal resistance of the owner to dedicate time and resource to where the business needs attention the most. In a corporation, it can be the erosion of corporate values or a blind-eye to risk that threatens success.



TIP: Often we are at the mercy of our self-limiting beliefs. When confronting poor performance, consider what beliefs exist that limit and even prevent performance success.

In The Art of War, Sun Tzu, writes: *"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle".²*

The distinction between knowing yourself and the enemy is crucial to achieving success at all levels.

The nature of combat, whether in war, sport or in business, is that you have at least one opponent. But is the enemy opposite you or inside you?

What can you do when you identify an internal enemy?

Whether it be personally, in business or across the culture of a corporation, you must directly address the 'enemy within' by understanding its beliefs.

Direct the question 'why?' at the actions of the 'enemy within'. And then ask 'why?' of that 'why?' and repeat this process another 4 times. You'll eventually uncover a self-limiting or negative belief of the 'enemy within' that exists at a personal, business or corporate level.

The next step is to reframe that belief into a positive belief that removes the internal enemy. The ease of reframing is dependent upon the depth of the belief. Nevertheless, by changing the context or content of the belief you can address the 'enemy within' and remove significant barriers to success.

First and foremost, your challenge, whether you are an individual, a business or a corporation is to understand the 'enemy within' – at least then you'll be competing on a level playing field.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify an 'enemy within'.

Plan: Ask the '5 whys?' to identify the enemy's beliefs.

Act: Reframe the beliefs to a positive perspective.

Reflect: Reassess your 'enemy within' and repeat if required.

#39

YOUR BIG SUCCESS NEEDS A LITTLE WHY

We never lose the need to understand people

Have you ever known a child that asks 'why'?

What are children really asking when they ask 'why'?

From my experience¹, they are seeking to understand their existence and relationship with the world around them. In particular, they are getting a sense of the behavioural parameters that regulate what they can and can't do.

Do we ever lose the opportunity to better understand our world? No. But while we may not lose the opportunity, we can believe we no longer have the need. This is unfortunate, as it is when we are seeking understanding that we are nurturing our future success.



TIP: List 3 things for which you have stopped seeking further understanding. What has changed that no longer makes these important? What could you learn by reestablishing a connection with that understanding?

So what happens when we grow up and depend on people for our success?

We get older and wiser. We rely on our experience and expertise to know and predict the behaviour of others. We also apply a few assumptions here and there, use some self-beliefs and become experts about other people.

But when we stop considering 'why?', we risk relying too much on our assumptions and we all know where assumptions lead us. Asking 'why?' is particularly important when we are leading and engaging people.

When leaders stop considering their people's 'why?', they risk their own success, which typically relies upon their people's motivation.

Great leaders not only excel at seeking to understand their followers 'why?', they engage their people to ensure they themselves are actively seeking to understand their own 'why?'.

What are the concerns for leaders when their people don't question their own 'why?'. They are two-fold.

1. **People don't know their 'why?'** – people who don't have clarity about their own purpose are challenging to lead. Without such awareness their response to leadership can be unpredictable.
2. **People don't have an engaging relationship with their leader** – perhaps they have yet to be convinced that their leader cares or at least understands the importance of their 'why?' and how it can be supported.

Just like the relationship between parents and children, successful relationships between leaders and followers are built on supporting people to find the answers to their questions of 'why?'.

Your success as a leader depends upon you asking 'why?' of your people and your people asking 'why?' of themselves. For nothing motivates people more than simply being understood.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: List who relies on following your lead.

Plan: Define their 'why?' – their purpose for following you.

Act: Assess how well you respond to their 'why?'.

Reflect: Consider the effectiveness of your engagement.

#40

LOVE YOUR SUCCESS BUT DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY

Difference doesn't matter when your duty is at heart

We all can be difficult.

In fact, "*the difficult people*", is the most common response I get when I ask people what they dislike most about their work.

While it is natural for most people at work to be different to you, it is not necessary for that difference to cause you difficulty.

Now some people may say "*well that's all great in theory, but tell that to the other person!*". I understand that response. I know that frustration. I also know that when I've looked beyond loving and protecting my own success, I've found space to accept difference – but only when I've let go of my choice to take things personally.

When people become distracted by their personal differences, such as communication styles, attitudes, beliefs and motivations, the following behaviours are commonplace:

- Responding emotively to suggestions and challenges;
- Superficial questioning of other's motives;
- Unproductive sensitivity to performance feedback;
- Adopting an 'us' vs 'them' mentality; and
- Avoiding conflict all together.



TIP: Think about the people you work with. How are they different? List their differences and why these are difficult for you.

While we are all told it is important to be yourself, this is the very essence of difference. But our personal differences can be accommodated when we pursue our success through 3 more inclusive and common perspectives: *system*, *role* and *self*.

1. **System** – we all exist in a system. Be it a group, team, business unit, company, community, family, or network, when properly run our systems provide common and inclusive purposes for all participants.
2. **Role** – we all have roles within our systems. Your duties in your systems, if defined correctly and known, should be complimentary and provide common and inclusive purposes with other's.
3. **Self** – we all bring our 'self' to our role. You bring 'yourself', I bring 'myself', they bring 'themselves'. Our 'selves' provide a common point of reference for understanding differences to others.

By seeking to understand people from the perspective of their 'self', in a 'role', in a 'system', we will be better placed to put aside the differences that may exist, or if necessary, resolve them.

When you shift the focus of your success from a personal perspective, you will find common ground to understand another's position and actions to resolve and address difficulties.

By all means love your success, but don't take it personally.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Identify the people that cause you difficulty.

Plan: List your commonality in terms of self, role and system.

Act: Take actions to resolve your difficulties.

Reflect: Determine whether your difficulty is now only difference.

#41

THE BIGGEST THREAT TO YOUR SUCCESS IS INACTION

Dreaming is good, goal setting is better, doing is best

Here's a simple proposition – the biggest performance mistake you can make is to not take action.

Dreaming is important. To have a future vision of where you'll be or what you will be doing is inspiring – it's motivating – it gets you moving.

Think about your future – do you get an adrenaline rush and become inspired to take action?

Once you have that exciting vision, effective goal-setting is vital. What do I mean by 'effective'?

There's plenty of material freely available about setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) goals. But there is no greater performance stopper than focusing on actions that won't obtain your goal. This is usually a result of not understanding what I call the 'building blocks' for success. So personally, I add another 'A' for 'Action-Orientated' to make it the SMAART acronym.



TIP: Think about one thing you are procrastinating about right now. If you believe you should do it (purpose) and you understand all the possible outcomes, then it is likely you are not entirely sure how to go about it. Do you know exactly what you need to do?

Firstly, a sporting example – the game of tennis.

Would it surprise you that the best way to improve your standard of tennis doesn't necessarily involve a tennis racquet?

A fundamental building block for being proficient at tennis is your speed of movement around the court.

The better your position relative to the ball's trajectory at the point of impact, the easier it is to execute a shot and the more likely the ball will follow its intended course.

Secondly, a home economics example – cooking a meal.

Would it surprise you that the best way to improve your standard of cooking doesn't necessarily involve how well you 'plate up'? A fundamental building block for serving great meals is to understand the relative cooking times of ingredients and master the use of heat. This enables you to time the cooking of ingredients to create a perfect meal.

Goals that focus on the building blocks for success are more likely to result in greater success. Why? Because the building blocks are the critical drivers for success. As illustrated above, we often gloss over the building blocks by solely focusing on measuring the outcome of our efforts. When we get inputs right and execute the associated process correctly it is not surprising that success will take care of itself.

Putting effort into defining your vision and forming goals without considering the 'building blocks' that make the goal action-oriented is a missed opportunity.

Remember, life without action is a dress rehearsal and dress rehearsals don't usually feature in acceptance speeches on award nights.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Think of at least 3 building blocks for an important task.

Plan: For each 'building block' build a SMAART definition.

Act: Take the one action that will lead to greater success.

Reflect: Assess if the right building blocks have been addressed.

#42

YOUR MOTIVATION MOVES YOU TO AND FROM SUCCESS

Sometimes you will be surprised at what gets you moving

When were you last motivated to take action?

Was that motivation to move away from a current state or move towards a future opportunity? At a basic level, we are either motivated by attraction or repulsion. That is, we can be motivated to take action either by our attraction to a future opportunity or by our repulsion away from a current state.

While some people may favour attraction or repulsion, if you're like most people, there will be occasions when you will be inspired to seek a goal, and others when your dissatisfaction provides an impetus to move.

So why is knowing your preferred basic motivation important for your success? Well like most things in life, too much of one thing can be detrimental.



TIP: Consider all of your projects, activities and tasks that are currently in progress. List them and identify whether they are currently motivated by movement toward a new desired state or movement away from an existing undesired state.

If you are predominantly motivated to change by the attraction of a new state, you risk not fully utilising the existing state and continually moving on to the latest and brightest new thing. This is the risk of underutilisation.

If on the other hand you are solely motivated to change by the dissatisfaction of an existing state, you risk not recognising new opportunities and unnecessarily enduring the frustration associated with your existing state. This is the risk of overburden.

Your results are the best indicator of your need to change your motion of motivation: towards or away. If you measure success regularly, you should know how your success is trending. So if you are experiencing a lull or downturn in your outcomes you can ask yourself 2 questions about your motivation.

1. Is my motivation being distracted by alternate new states? Am I underutilising my existing states?

For example, sometimes we can be attracted by a seemingly easier approach to solving a problem that doesn't require as much effort. In time, however, we discover that if we had just done the work in the first place, we would have achieved the outcome. Personal fitness and health regimes spring to mind!

2. Is my motivation being diminished by not accepting the limits of my current state? Am I overburdened by my existing state?

For example, sometimes our levels of dissatisfaction may not yet have reached a point where we're prepared to change our approach, despite no likelihood of an improvement in our outcomes. Difficult personal relationships or financial hardships are often endured until they become too much to bear.

It is natural for us to be drawn to new pathways or run from existing dead-ends. So make sure you understand how your motion is impacting your overall motivation and success.

Avoid underutilising what you have and overburdening yourself with what you have too much of. It's a balancing act – so is your success.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Think about what motivates you to change – the new or old.

Plan: Identify where you lack motivation and why.

Act: Define actions to focus motivation back to now or into the future.

Reflect: Consider how you now feel about your motivation.

#43

THE 7 BASICS FOR YOUR TEAM'S SUCCESS

Team success is simple – get back to basics

Don't worry if your team is struggling right now.

There are many stories about the team that lost its way, only to eventually realise its success, despite adversity and conflict.

Sometimes a team transforms as a result of a change in leadership, at other times a change in the environment or personnel. Interestingly, despite different catalysts for change, one common action usually exists: getting back to basics.

When asked to explain the new found success, team members are often heard saying two things. Firstly, they'll say something such as *"there's no one special reason"* or *"it wasn't that we tried anything radically different"*. This is often an admission that they eventually did the hard work necessary for success.

Secondly, they will follow up with a comment about getting back to basics, such as:

- We just focused on what was important;
- We started to look out for each other;
- We focused on the reasons why we are here; or
- We recognised that we weren't on the same page.



TIP: Ask your team what they believe to be their biggest strengths and weaknesses. Have them consider what has changed over their time together. If it is getting harder to succeed together have them identify what they can do differently.

In theory, teams should be operating in a known and agreed operating state, based on the agreed goals, roles and responsibilities of its members. It's like the line-up of a sports team, everyone has their known position and role.

In reality, the dynamics of team member personalities and relationships within an often changing operating environment creates uncertainty which can challenge teams – especially those teams that don't have the basics soundly in place.

From my experience, these are the 7 basics for team success:

1. **Purpose** – people are clear on the team's purpose and success.
2. **Recognition** – people look out for opportunities to recognise the success of others.
3. **Objective** – people are responsible for objectively addressing team issues.
4. **Job** – people understand their job and responsibility.
5. **Effectiveness** – people work to standardise procedures to drive the effectiveness of decisions and actions.
6. **Communicate** – people are informed of matters that affect anything and anyone.
7. **Think** – people are encouraged to think for the betterment of the team.

If you have less than 3 of the basics in place, then it's time to stop the game, take a time-out and reassess where your team is heading – because success only heads onwards and upwards

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Assess your team's success against the 7 basics.

Plan: Identify your team's top 3 strengths.

Act: Action your team's top 3 opportunities to improve success.

Reflect: Reassess your team's success against the 7 basics.

#44

YOUR SUCCESS IS A BUMPY ROAD SO RIDE THE BUMPS

Consensus is best born from conflict than conformity

Have you ever ended a meeting with words left unsaid? How are you feeling? What do you do?

What would 'your success' expect you to do? It's an interesting choice between the potential of conflict and conformity.

Sometimes your success needs the bumpiness of conflict over the smoothness of conformity to progress its journey.

Let's return to the meeting scenario. When the 'elephant in the room' is being ignored, wedged up in the corner, and you're all waiting for one of you to say what everyone else knows needs to be said, there is no time for conformity.



TIP: At meetings, announce to the group that you will take on the role of a 'real team player' whose responsibility is to test the team's resolve by calling-out conformity and generating positive conflict.

Positive conflict is particularly important if your success is dependent upon a well-functioning team.

Unlike sporting teams, whose performance is typically regulated by an umpire witnessing the play (imagine having independent umpires attend meetings!), work teams play in an adaptive environment that is subject to changing rules, objectives, roles and responsibilities.

The reality of adaptive environments is that success is not always achieved by playing by the rules and the bumps are better absorbed than avoided.

Importantly, your success in an adaptive environment depends upon your ability to address difference and conflict through a diversity of thinking and behaviour. At times your success will be subject to unexpected and unpredictable challenges for yourself and your team.

People that operate in an adaptive environment will face challenges to their world, their roles and their reputation. Without conflict, characterised by opposing opinions, divergent views and heated debate, teams are at risk of failing to fulfill their true purpose.

There's no doubt conflict can be confronting. We have our ego, we have our pride and our own sense of fairness that we are willing to protect. Furthermore, given the uncertainty of an adaptive environment, it is natural for us to, at times, respond with resistance. While many of us would prefer to avoid such conflict, this is exactly what an adaptive environment demands and your success needs.

Remember, your success has a clear purpose and if it is well-formed will serve you. However, there should be no expectation that this is necessarily a smooth journey.

When you are part of a team in an adaptive environment you must encourage conflict and ride the bumps.

Does a team really need to exist if it does nothing but agree? Will your success prosper if it is constantly taking detours to avoid the bumps?

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Write down a description of your current targeted success.

Plan: List the bumps you are currently riding to be addressed.

Act: Take action to address the bumps head on.

Reflect: Consider how positive conflict has aided your success.

#45

SUCCESS NEEDS YOU TO ACT FIRST, INNOVATE LATER

There are some things in your day that just need to be done

You know the feeling when you avoid the action that needs your immediate attention and effort.

And despite that dread, if we put off action frequently enough we can end up convincing ourselves that our procrastination can only be solved by a new solution: a tool, a book, a method, a person or a coach.

While an innovative approach may be appealing, there are fundamental actions critical for our success that are simply better done than contemplated.

I'm the first to admit that my best life lessons have come from my most challenging moments. One of my biggest learnings is to be clear about what is important for my immediate success and doing it. Not finessing it.



TIP: Identify one thing you are currently 'finessing', that you are over-working by continually retouching, without even being sure it will make any difference for those who you intend will value it.

Here are 7 actions I commonly observe that are important for the success of professionals and business owners. While you may not always get them right first time, practising and learning these fundamental actions will support your ability to 'act and achieve' over 'innovate and finesse'

1. **Frequently prioritise time** – plan, do, assess and plan again the use of time in small increments.
2. **Immediately handle disruptions** – address the unexpected without delay to avoid greater inconvenience later.
3. **Give feedback generously** – proactively identify opportunities to give valuable feedback to people important to you.
4. **Delegate tasks considerably** – ensure the work you provide to others has a positive impact and inspires them to want to do more.
5. **Build rapport authentically** – engage other people with their interests at heart and develop trust that prevents differences becoming difficulties.
6. **Open mindset willingly** – challenge your 'first response' to events and find alternate views that serve your greater purpose.
7. **Take responsibility courageously** – accept what you are responsible for and honour that responsibility with conviction.

Our ability to make progress is dependent upon our willingness and readiness to take action.

Learning is a key output from us taking action and our mistakes and failures from action can be our ultimate learnings.

Identify what you need to do well for your success and do it. Sometimes your success just needs you to get the important work done first.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Rate how effectively you execute the 7 fundamental actions.

Plan: Call out 1 action you will improve now.

Act: Practise your committed action daily.

Reflect: Assess the extent to which you have improved your action.

#46

SUCCESS ONLY MATTERS WHEN IT IS MEASURED

If success is relative, then be sure you have a reliable scale

Imagine playing in a competition that does not keep a score.

Would that impact your motivation for participating? That may depend upon your reasons for playing in the first place.

For the majority of people who find purpose in competition, just as they find purpose in their work, it is important to know the score to understand the result of their performance – have they been successful?

But how frequently do we lose sight of our performance – the value of our efforts – our success?

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are commonly considered to be the business equivalent of keeping the score. In fact, they are much more than that, because when used effectively, KPIs will also predict your success.



TIP: If you set KPIs for your own performance, ensure you do so at 3 levels. The first level are the outputs, the second level are the inputs and the third level are the behaviours. There should be a clear path of causation – that is, if you complete the behaviours effectively the result will be the inputs, which when executed effectively will result in the desired output.

KPIs should include both 'lead' and 'lag' indicators. Lag indicators measure output and are historic. Lead indicators measure behaviour and input and are predictive.

The past 40 years have seen a revolution in the use of predictive metrics, particularly in sport. I recall as a kid that the only metric that was regularly announced listening to the football was the score itself. Now it's preceded by at least a dozen predictive measures.

To be truly valuable, KPIs need to focus on those activities and behaviours that are the foundation for high performance.

If you do set your own KPIs to measure your success, here are 3 suggestions for you to apply to make them truly effective:

1. **Know how to use the KPIs** – unless you know how to measure and apply your KPIs, you won't be in a position for them to drive your behaviour and predict your success. Be careful adopting other's KPIs as your own. They need to be operable by you.
2. **Make the KPIs meaningful** – if you don't understand the relevance and purpose of the KPIs, you will have no reason to be motivated to use them. KPIs must relate to your success and the actions and behaviours you have identified that lead to that success.
3. **Ensure the KPIs drive performance** – you should respond to the insights that the KPIs provide and purposefully adjust your actions and behaviours accordingly.

You need to ensure your KPIs are usable, meaningful and drive performance, otherwise you risk your success being at best a nil-all draw, at worse, an avoidable loss.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Define a success you are currently pursuing.

Plan: Identify the 'lead' and 'lag' indicators of that success.

Act: Routinely measure the indicators over an appropriate period.

Reflect: Consider the KPI feedback on your progress.

#47

HOW PROJECT DISCIPLINE CAN INCREASE YOUR SUCCESS

Life is a series of great and small projects that you sponsor

Have you ever managed a project?

Now some of you may have formally managed a project at your company, organised a social function or birthday party, undertaken renovations at home or planned a holiday. Or perhaps all at once?

Whether you have formal qualifications or not, most people will be familiar with the disciplines and behaviours necessary to successfully complete a project.



TIP: If a project of yours is stalled or failed to deliver the outcome you intended, consider the roles people have or haven't played. The outcomes of projects are highly dependent upon the effectiveness of the people involved in the project. Invariably, projects fail when people act when they should be thinking or think when they should be acting.

In my experience, there are 5 project management principles that are particularly critical for success. Even more so, these principles have application to your work as an employee or your business as an owner.

1. **Stakeholders** – successful projects clearly define stakeholders and manage their needs accordingly. Make sure people who depend upon what you do are as interested today as they were yesterday about your work and outcomes. Priorities change and if no-one cares anymore about what you do, or doesn't care about it as much as you do, then it's time for a new challenge. This particularly applies to your boss and customers.

2. **Scope** – successful projects define what's in and out of the project mandate before committing effort and resource. If you are employed, have you got a Role Purpose Statement or Job Description? If you are a business owner – do you have a Customer Value Proposition? If not, write one based on what you are doing right now! If you do have one, then make sure you're actioning at least 80% of your goals and responsibilities.
3. **Risks** – successful projects objectively assess risks and manage their likelihood and consequence. While prevention is better than reaction, it typically costs more. If you depend heavily on the performance of others, a simple 'How are you?' phone call to check-in can go a long way to mitigating risks that may threaten your ability to do your job or win new customers.
4. **Schedule** – successful projects set a realistic schedule and plan and mitigate time carefully. If there is one thing people wish they had more of, it is time. Yet, instead of starting work early and finishing late, become more aware of how you schedule and how you spend your time.
5. **Benefits** – successful projects agree benefits early and deliver to meet those benefits. Nothing resonates more with your boss or customer than the demonstration of realised and tangible benefits. If you can't identify any benefits then go back to the first principle and re-ask yourself, *"does anyone really care about what I do?"*

By applying these five principles diligently to your role or your business, you will see an improvement in your success.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Assess your role or business against each principle.

Plan: Identify your opportunities to address any gaps.

Act: Carry out the required actions to address opportunities.

Reflect: Determine how your actions have improved your success.

#48

YOUR SUCCESS NEEDS YOU DOWN IN THE DETAIL

The benefit of big-picture thinking is in the high-detail action

If you're like most people, you probably should be spending more time down in the detail.

Few of life's challenges get resolved successfully without getting down in the detail. Think about it.

When there's a misunderstanding – get down in the detail, when you can't see a solution – get down in the detail, when you are putting off the inevitable – just get down in the detail, when you can't get that DIY furniture built – get the instructions and get down in the detail.

As easy and preferable as it would be to get by with your head in the clouds or by focusing on the big picture – it sometimes happens – nothing will serve your success better than understanding and controlling the detail.



TIP: If you doubt the importance of managing the detail, then recall a current challenge and ask yourself: *"Is it at all possible that this issue could be alleviated with more insight about the details?"*

Managing the detail demands we go beyond plans, strategies and objectives to understand the internal mechanics of our purpose and work.

The extent to which we need to address the detail is dependent upon the complexity of both the work at hand and the size of our investment in the work at hand.

Accordingly, the higher the complexity or the investment, the greater the need for insight and management of the detail.

Managing the detail is best done by asking yourself 3 questions:

1. **What do I understand about how my working environment operates?**

This is assessing the entire system you operate in and how all the components are integrated to produce its output.

2. **What do I know about the drivers that influence my performance in that environment?**

This is understanding not just the 'building blocks' of your performance, and ensuring measurement of key performance indicators. This is, importantly, considering your own internal drivers, such as your beliefs and values that influence your performance.

3. **What capability do I have to influence those drivers to achieve success?**

This final question returns to the heart of *Learning Dangerously*. Your capability to influence your external and internal drivers is dependent upon your ability to realise, plan, act and reflect on your performance and experience.

Answering these questions leads to smarter insights about your success.

While the detail is often thought to be just a more granular level of information, it's where the deeper catalysts for your success reside – such as your beliefs and values.

While it is certainly pleasurable to be up amongst the clouds, the reality of your future success is you're going to be getting your hands dirty – but success is closer than you think.

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY

Realise: Apply the 3 questions to a current performance.

Plan: List 3 learnings that the detail of these answers reveals.

Act: Identify 1 new behaviour to implement from the learnings.

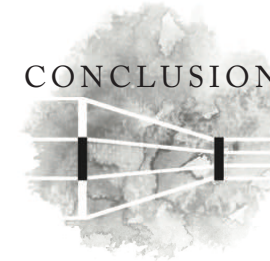
Reflect: Consider the impact of your new behaviour.



**Your success
is closer than
you think...**

What do you notice about the two bold vertical lines above? *Learning Dangerously* challenges us to seek new and deeper perspectives about the world around us. What lies around the corner may not be what it seems at first – but when we are able to see beyond our initial perspective we are *Learning Dangerously*. In the case of the two bold vertical lines above (and the two green vertical lines on the front cover), despite first appearances these lines are the same length.

The image is derived from the *Ponzo Illusion*, named after Italian artist and psychologist *Mario Ponzo (1882-1960)*, being a geometrical illusion that produces misjudgment of relative line length. This misjudgment reflects our tendency to perceive two-dimensional geometric illustrations in certain contexts as if they were three-dimensional objects in our environment¹.



CONCLUSION

By now you may have realised that your success is closer than you think.

In fact, you may already have experienced success by *Learning Dangerously*.

Then again, *Learning Dangerously* is not about getting it right first time. It takes commitment, patience and a willingness to experiment with your experience to improve your learning, influence, performance and success.

Remember the *Learning Dangerously* method is: *realise, plan, act, reflect*. It's not: *do, succeed*. The latter method is what we often wish for but rarely experience.

Learning Dangerously addresses the reality of our adult-lives: we fail to recognise the numerous daily learning opportunities to improve our mindsets and behaviours.

Being committed to *Learning Dangerously* accepts that it will take consistent and frequent effort to realise positive and sustainable change. You must be willing to experiment.

Everything you have read in this book about your *learning, influence, performance* and *success* are opportunities to experiment with the way you approach your work, your play and your relationships.

Learning Dangerously is about a better way. The greatest benefit of *Learning Dangerously* is to challenge your known world and venture into new worlds of *learning, influence, performance* and *success*.

For in new worlds there are always new opportunities awaiting you.

Happy Learning Dangerously!

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY TEMPLATE

The Way of Learning Dangerously comprises the 4 steps of: *realise, plan, act* and *reflect*.

Having read any of the 48 articles in this book, you may be motivated to address an issue or opportunity by applying the 4 steps.

The *Learning Dangerously Template* can be used to plan actions and record outcomes. To do so, firstly record under the Issue/Opportunity column, a brief description of:

- The **situation** or state presented by the issue or opportunity;
- The **target** state or outcome that you desire;
- The **alternate** state that will arise if no action is taken;
- The **timing** for the completion of key activities and goals.

Once the Issue/Opportunity has been defined, you may then proceed to apply *The Way of Learning Dangerously*. For each of the 4 steps of the method, you can record the outcome/state in the right-hand side column.

Realise: describe what your motivation is to change – your realisation;

Plan: describe actions you can take to address the Issue/Opportunity;

Act: describe the actual actions taken, including variations to your Plan;

Reflect: consider the outcome and assess your progress.

Upon reflecting, if you're satisfied with your progress, then record a final commitment in the bottom section to cement your new mindset or behaviour.

Otherwise return to the *Realise* section, record your new learnings and recommence the process.

Happy Learning Dangerously!

LEARNING DANGEROUSLY TEMPLATE

ISSUE/ OPPORTUNITY	LEARNING DANGEROUSLY	OUTCOME/ STATE
SITUATION	REALISE	RESULT
TARGET	PLAN	RESULT
ALTERNATE	ACT	RESULT
TIMING	REFLECT	RESULT
COMMITMENT		

ARTICLE NOTES

PART 1

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LEARNING DANGEROUSLY MODELS

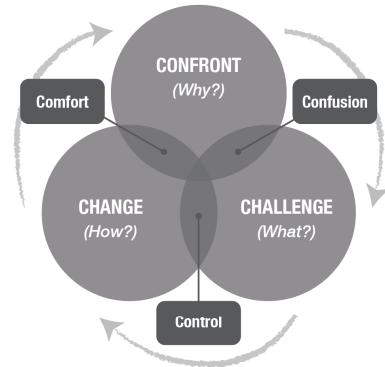


Figure 1 - The Motion of Learning Dangerously
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Figure 2: The Way of Learning Dangerously
Page 13

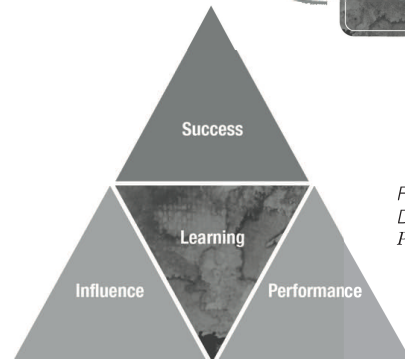
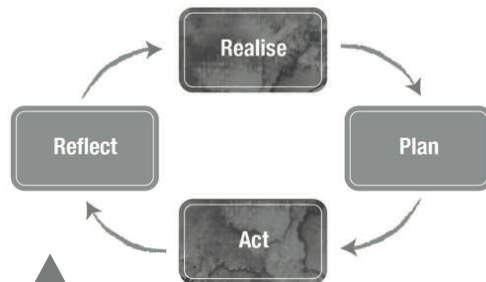


Figure 3: The 4 Learning Dangerously Domains
Page 14

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Craig Stephens is an energetic performance expert who has transformed the personal and working lives of managers and professionals for over 20 years.

His corporate experience includes senior roles in banking and finance, quality assurance, project leadership, executive management and chartered accounting.

Craig's fascination is performance. He is committed to challenging people, teams and businesses to understand, measure and improve their performance outcomes across a number of performance domains, including: leadership influence, innovation and efficiency, career enhancement, communication impact, personal development and performance leverage.

'Value through Presence' is Craig's philosophy for enhanced performance.

Value is about aligning the purpose and effort of performance - without *value* people risk being distracted by the past and future and fail to realise their success now.

Presence is focusing on the immediate performance - without *presence*, people risk being spectators to their work, business or life.

Using a results-focused approach and a pragmatic understanding of business and personal performance, Craig designs and delivers outstanding personal and professional development experiences. In particular, Craig's methods are considerate of the practical challenges of adult-learning and address capacity, capability and mindset to transform the performance of people, teams and businesses.

Craig is a qualified Organisational Coach, Neuro-Linguistic Programming Practitioner, and Six Sigma Black Belt. He is also a Chartered Accountant; holds a Diploma of Project Management; and holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Melbourne.