

Permission to Glow

What's in it for me? Learn how to unleash your full power, so you can help others do the same.

As a leader today, you face a unique landscape. Never before has there been so much pressure, competition, challenge, or stimulation. This could lead you to operate on autopilot – you simply don't have the time, energy, or focus to live each moment with intention. You're stopped from accessing full potential – both your own and the potential of others. And if you're a leader, that means you're cheating yourself of crucial resources. You need those resources to achieve more, to connect more deeply with others, and to live in peace. But by adopting the Four Permissions, you can disrupt this cycle of waste. In these blinks, you'll discover how the four permissions will set you on a journey to fully activate your inner power while helping others shine too. In these blinks, you'll learn

the most important button on a VCR's remote control; why you need to become an emotion detective; and what a 1980s cartoon about fighting aliens teaches us about leadership.

To grow as a leader, focus on your inner expansion.

Imagine you lead a team that delivers a wildly popular service. You know that as demand for your service increases, you'll need to grow your team. So, you hire more team members and expand your office space, to support your business development. This seems obvious: when demands on a business increase, you expand it to meet those demands. But what do you do when there's a rising demand for leaders, too? After all, you can't clone yourself. What you can do is expand your inner resources – the valuable qualities that allow you to foster the development of others. The key message here is: To grow as a leader, focus on your inner expansion. True leaders know it's their job to help others reach their full potential. Every individual stands on a metaphorical cliff that represents what is. On the other side of a chasm is another cliff that symbolizes what could be. It's not a leader's place to tell his team members how to navigate that chasm to reach the other side. His role is to support each team member in finding her unique way across, to the place where she can flourish. But to perform this crucial role, you need to know how to negotiate your own chasm, so you can tap into your potential and fully embrace your power. And this is no easy task. Every day, you're negotiating the competing demands of your role: moving projects forward, hitting targets, tending to your team. It's easy to lose sight of what's important with so much going on. If you want to become the best possible leader – one whose team thrives as much as you do – you need a set of tools to hone your awareness, so you can act with intention. What the author calls the four permissions are these tools and so much more. You'll learn about each of these permissions in the blinks ahead, so you can integrate them into your life and enjoy their ongoing benefits. You don't need to be managing a team to take advantage of the permissions. In fact, you don't even need to be a leader in the business world. Anyone who nurtures another person is a leader – whether that person is your child, colleague, lover, or neighbor. Learning to use these four permissions will help

anyone who wants to live their best life.

Living your vocation brings peace.

There's a distinct difference between someone with a career and someone with a vocation. If you ask the first what she does, she'll offer you her job title and explain a few projects she's working on. She might be content and even successful – but a certain spark will be missing. By contrast, someone with a vocation won't just be sparking – she'll be shooting out fireworks as she chats about her role and why it's important. And even more than that, she'll humbly express gratitude for what she does. It'll be crystal clear that she's doing exactly what she should be with her life. The key message here is: Living your vocation brings peace. Before we explore the four permissions, let's take a look at something every human craves – peace. When you're doing the right thing at the right time, you feel peace. This happens when your job is your vocation. Having a vocation quietens that little voice in your head, the one that constantly asks, Is there a better job out there for me? A vocation does this because your focus is on what you're already doing – not whether or not you should be doing it. You're at peace with your work life, even if it's challenging or demanding, because you know in your very core that it's the right place for you. It's important to accept that craving this peace is a natural part of the human experience. If you don't, you'll try to silence that little voice with harmful quick fixes. Drinking too much, comfort eating, numbing your brain with endless scrolling, even avoiding stillness by being overly busy – these are all methods you might use to appease that little voice. But if you acknowledge that you won't be satisfied until you're living your true vocation, you can start seeking out the conditions that'll bring you the inner peace you crave. You can use the four permissions to access this peace. They do this by providing you with what your soul needs – the space to expand so that you can foster your talents and deepen your connections with others. It's in this space that you can thrive and shine your very brightest.

To behave with intention, give yourself permission to pause.

If you grew up in the '80s, you might have had a VCR – a videocassette recorder that let you tape shows off the TV so you could watch them whenever you wanted. The VCR's remote had a pause button. This wonderful little button meant you could pause at any time to grab a drink, visit the restroom, or even make a phone call, then pick up exactly where you left off. Pausing is a powerful tool. It lets you step away from distractions, reflect, fact-check, and then resume in a more grounded mindset. When you choose to pause, it creates a space between a stimulus – like a piece of information or someone else's behavior – and your response to it. By pressing pause, the first of the permissions, you give yourself the chance to choose how you'll respond. The key message here is: To behave with intention, give yourself permission to pause. Contemporary Western society encourages you to work harder and faster, to out-race your competition. But without time to reflect, you can't make good decisions – about business matters or your own behavior. The only way you can operate in top gear is on autopilot, and that limits your long-term outcomes. Imagine what would happen if you gave yourself permission to slow down. By slowing down, you create space to consider what the right response to each situation is, overriding the need to stay on autopilot. When you slow down, you end up with better outcomes because you've reflected on them, instead of making them

reactively. This ends up saving you time and energy in the long run, because you don't take as many detours. The simplest way to give yourself permission to pause is by practicing meditation. Meditation increases your brain's ability to adapt to changes. It's a powerful way to cut through the busyness of modern life, so you can pay attention to the stimuli around you and how you respond to them. To introduce meditation into your life, start by sitting silently and breathing deeply for just five minutes a day. This will create a foundation of discipline for you to build on, so you can slowly extend the length of your practice until it's at least 15 minutes. In just 30 days, you'll start noticing the benefits, including how much easier it is to press pause during the day and step away from the pressure to rush.

To benefit from their insights, give yourself permission to embrace your emotions.

You can deny your feelings all you like, but the truth is, they're always present. They're in the tone of that email you sent, or what you said when your star employee resigned, or in your body language when your lover told you he's going on holiday without you. Social conditioning has trained us to think that mastering our feelings means not feeling at all. But this is impossible. As humans, we experience emotions, every minute of the day. So, to comply with society, we keep our feelings locked away and pretend they don't exist. But when we do this, we miss out on all the valuable information our emotions are trying to tell us. That's why the second permission is to welcome and experience every one of your feelings. The key message here is: To benefit from their insights, give yourself permission to embrace your emotions. Emotions are a bit like envelopes, full of useful information. If you give yourself permission to open them up and explore them, you can access the important bits. For instance, imagine you've just gotten home after a stressful day at work. Your partner greets you and asks what's for dinner. In response, you burst into tears. Your partner is confused – you'd both agreed that you were going to cook tonight. In fact, you'd been looking forward to it. You decide your outburst must mean there's something wrong with you – that you've lost control and can't cope the way you should be able to. But if you take the time to explore what those tears are trying to tell you, you might discover something different. Maybe there's a member of your team who isn't working effectively and you've been stewing over his performance. Or maybe your manager hasn't been available for a crucial consultation and that's putting pressure on you. Maybe, what your tears are telling you is that you need to have a conversation with someone, to clearly communicate your needs and how they might be met. If you want to benefit from the insights your emotions hold, you must give yourself permission to feel them, and accept that they'll always be present. The first step to doing this is to call on the first permission and press pause. Then, explore your feelings without judgment. What might have caused them? Tease out any important information they're trying to convey, so you can identify what you need.

Befriend your fear so you can give yourself permission to shine.

A person who's fully expressing themselves is like a flash of lightning – powerful and dazzling to everyone who beholds them. If you see someone in this state, you might wonder why you struggle to also unapologetically offer your unique gifts to the world, as you follow your true path. What's most likely stopping you is fear: fear that you'll overshadow others, or fear that you'll be reprimanded for standing out. But just because someone has embraced their true path doesn't mean they're no longer afraid. They just know that fear is part of the journey – a travel companion they're willing to accept. And so, they embrace the third permission. The key message here is: Befriend your fear so you can give yourself permission to shine. We all have egos and those egos have a specific role – it's their job to keep us safe. But our egos are a bit like an overzealous parent who wants to wrap us in cotton wool. At any hint of danger, they'll wave red flags at us, warning us to stay safely in our comfort zones. But no one can truly shine when they're comfortable. To explore our capabilities and unleash our full potential, we must venture into unfamiliar territory, where possibility awaits. To deactivate your ego so that you can give yourself permission to shine, you need to befriend your fear. Start by reminding yourself that fear is, has always been, and will continue to be with you on your journey. But having fear by your side doesn't mean you can't get on with living your dream. You don't need to stop, just because it's with you. Once you've accepted that fear will always be along for the ride, you can start transforming it into powerful fuel – excitement. There's just one physical difference between fear and excitement – and that's breath. When you hold your breath, your body assumes that you've encountered a threat, and tells you to be afraid. But transforming your fear into excitement is as simple as inhaling and exhaling steadily. When you breathe deeply, even in the face of fear, your body interprets the stimulus you've encountered as something to get excited about. By breathing – something you've done from the moment you were born – you can convert that fear into positive energy that can fuel your journey and feed your inner light.

To increase your own power, give yourself permission to help others shine.

In the '80s, there was a popular cartoon called Voltron. Voltron was a huge robot which defended a distant planet from alien invasion. But Voltron wasn't a single unit. It was made up of five individual robotic lions – each with its own special talents. In every episode, when the aliens inevitably got the upper hand, the lions combined into Voltron, to obliterate them. This cartoon carries an important lesson; when you combine your light with others, you become an unstoppable force. That combined force can achieve far more than a single light. That's why you'll never embody your full potential if you try to do it alone. The key message here is: To increase your own power, give yourself permission to help others shine. Many of us live in societies that encourage competition. Fear of missing out – or not being enough – leads us to cut ourselves off to protect what we have, or stop ourselves from feeling hurt. But this isn't how it's meant to be. Every human craves connection. And it's not just to make us feel warm and fuzzy. Connection benefits everyone, including ourselves. In this way, humans are a bit like bulbs on a grid. Together, the grid gives off more power than the sum of each individual bulb. Together, we can power the collective good and help each other shine brighter. As a leader, it's your job to help others shine. When every bulb in your team can contribute their unique gifts and perform well, you'll all flourish. To achieve this, create space for

team members to determine how they execute each project. Before you start a project, share with your team why it's important and then, as a group, articulate what success will look like. Then, support your team in finding its own way to realizing that vision. Along the way, celebrate diversity by inviting different team members to share their thoughts and perspectives. To emphasize the value of diverse ideas and points of view, tell your team when an idea wouldn't have occurred to you. Shift your focus from what team members did for a project to the gifts they brought to it. Thank them publicly for their contributions and share what you've learned from them. That way, you can empower them to keep growing, and fuel their ever-growing lights. And when you do this, you'll discover a deep sense of fulfillment that comes with helping others.

Practicing the four permissions is a journey you must travel with self-compassion.

Putting the four permissions into practice is a journey from panic to transcendence. Permission to pause leads you out of anxiety and into a space where peace exists. Permission to feel reconnects you to your humanity, so you can gain useful insights. Permission to shine unleashes your potential. And permission to help others shine lets you transcend the self to support others. But this transformation doesn't happen overnight. Commit yourself to practicing the permissions every day, with awareness and intention. It's inevitable that you'll veer off the path now and then. But by summoning self-compassion, you can begin again from your new starting point. The key message here is: Practicing the four permissions is a journey you must travel with self-compassion. Learning any new skill has its ups and downs. It's particularly frustrating and uncomfortable being a clumsy learner when you're usually a high performer. So, cut yourself some slack and embrace your inner toddler – that determined kid who got back on her feet every time she stumbled while she was learning to walk. What mattered in the end wasn't that she never fell, it was that she never gave up. There are several ways to practice self-compassion on your journey to embracing the permissions. First, set yourself a specific goal for the next 30 days. Make it something you know you'll achieve, so your win is guaranteed. For instance, don't start by trying to meditate for an hour each day. Set yourself the goal to meditate for just ten minutes, four times a week. When you reach this target, you'll get a confidence boost that will support you on the next leg of the journey. Next, focus on consistency, not duration. Honor your commitment every day, even if it's just for five minutes. You're far more likely to form a new habit by consistently taking small steps, than by massive but infrequent doses. Finally, commit to the long game. Living with peace, awareness, and power isn't a checkbox on a task list. It's a lifelong commitment. You're on a journey with no end – and that's a gift. There's no limit to the benefits this journey will bring you or the inner expansion you can gain. The further you go, the more you'll discover. All you need to do is show up each day, and recommit yourself to fully embracing your potential.

Final summary

The key message in these blinks: True leadership is about supporting and guiding others to reach their full potential. To achieve this, start by following your true calling – the path that draws on the greatest gifts you can offer others and the world so that

everyone can benefit. Then, commit to pursuing that path to the best of your abilities, defying the fears and social conditioning that work to hold you back. Only then can you fully support those around you to do the same. And here's some more actionable advice: Add feeling to visualization, to improve your performance. Just like your body can't always distinguish fear from excitement, it can't always tell if an emotion is happening in the past or present. You can use this to create powerful emotional states that support you in important moments - like giving a presentation. Take a moment to summon a feeling of confidence that you've experienced in the past. Then visualize giving your presentation while feeling this way. This creates a simulation that combines the mental and emotional states you need to ace your presentation. You can draw on that simulation before the actual presentation to support your performance.