

Emerging as a **powerful**
human being...



...and an
inspiring leader

Insights into

CREATING ABUNDANCE

JEET KUMAR

INSIGHTS INTO CREATING ABUNDANCE

Emerging As A Powerful Human Being
And An Inspiring Leader

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To my family, my co-founders, and the In
Time Tec employees

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INTRODUCTION

By Tasha Wise

The first time I met Jeet, I knew he had a LOT to contribute to the world. Listening to him speak during meetings or company celebrations always left me feeling inspired. Everyone who met him was moved by the possibilities he was creating; I could see he was already touching so many lives through his caring and sharing. Yet his contribution was only impactful to those with whom he had a personal connection. Matt Fratzke, one of Jeet's business partners and a co-founder of In Time Tec, planted the seed. Matt said, "Jeet, the world needs to know what you offer to us at In Time Tec." Matt suggested that Jeet should start writing articles for Forbes, on LinkedIn, and on any other similar platforms. From there, the idea took hold and I was soon offered the opportunity to work alongside Jeet to help him take the ideas out of his head and turn them into shareable content.

What you will experience in this book are the first set of articles Jeet has created and shared on various platforms. The articles range from personal accountability to leading a team of powerful leaders. As with his podcast, Listen and Create, Jeet explores life and offers guidance and expert advice on how to be present and create an empowered life that is open to all possibilities. All the articles came from Jeet's personal experiences and creations that span from growing up in a third-world country to now leading a company in the most powerful country in the world. When you read these articles, read them from a place of exploration rather than taking them as an absolute truth or as a right/wrong conversation.

Through this journey with Jeet, I have taken the content of these articles to heart and chosen my best life. Because life is all about choices and I want to leave you with a possibility to choose your best life as well.

LIFE IS TOO SHORT. SUFFERING IS OPTIONAL: *How to Make Every Relationship Peaceful*

You have probably heard the first part of the Serenity Prayer:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; And wisdom to know the difference."

This is a well-known mantra meant to offer people peace in times of struggle. At our company, we take a similar approach when we are feeling unpeaceful about a relationship or engagement that is not set up for success.

When in any relationship that isn't working, personal or professional, we have three paths forward:

1. Courage to change
2. Humility to accept
3. Wisdom to walk away

Sometimes referred to as "toxic" relationships, these are the partnerships, significant others, friends, or family members that are not producing the desired results and causing tension and suffering for all involved. In every relationship, you are surviving or you are thriving; if you are just surviving, you are not peaceful.

It is one thing to know why it is important to choose one of the three paths, but it is life-changing to live that way and take action.

Reflect on Relationship

If you are not having meaningful conversations in every relationship, it can leave you feeling unpeaceful and unhappy. You might feel like you are wasting your time and your life. So the first step toward a successful relationship is to decide if you are committed to it. If yes, it is time for introspection. If no, then why are you wasting your peace? Suffering is always optional.

Additionally, determine if the other person is open to transforming the relationship. Are they willing to accept feedback, engage in meaningful conversations, and put in the work?

*Without openness, there can be no change
and the suffering will continue.*

Once you have decided you are committed to the relationship and you have evaluated the other person's openness, it's time to reflect and choose.

Introspection

Now that you are present to the fact that the relationship isn't working, it is time to get brutally honest with yourself and your responsibility in the matter.

- Are you making the other person wrong?
- Is it about you or about others?
- Can you love more, listen more, help more, provide more?

Sometimes you can't answer these questions yourself. In those cases, it is helpful to find an unbiased mentor or coach to help you explore what you are missing in your evaluation of the situation.

When you do this kind of reflection, there might be some concern that the other person will take advantage of you if you give more but let's be very clear; Taking responsibility for your role in transforming the relationship is powerful.

It changes the dynamic from one of tension to one of love. It doesn't mean there isn't accountability on the other person; it means that you are going to start first and decide on a plan of action.

Courage to Change

Why does it take courage to support another person in their transformation? Because there will be challenges along the way and our natural tendency is to protect ourselves while also avoiding hurting other people. In order to make meaningful progress toward a powerful relationship, you must have the courage to say what needs to be said in a loving way without worrying about what other person thinks. You must have the courage to willingly show up for

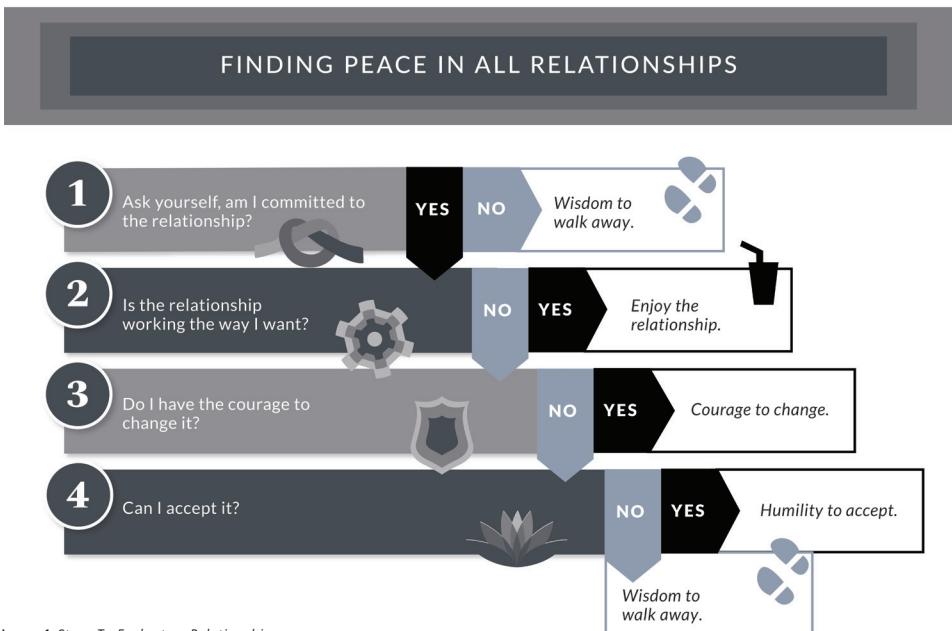


Image 1. Steps To Evaluate a Relationship

that person and be vulnerable. But courage belongs to both parties. Ask yourself, "Can I change myself and help the other person identify areas they need to change?"

Courage in action:

- Lovingly inquire if others know who they are for themselves
- Make sure they also see if there is a need to change in a relationship
- Agree on and create a common vision for the relationship
- Help them to overcome habits, moods, and feelings without making anyone wrong
- Know when you need to adjust yourself and work through differences together

A relationship where change was critical for me personally and for our business was with my business partner. When I first met him, I could see he wanted to make a difference in the world but he was caught up in his own narrative of why life was so constrained. There was willingness but no action. People around him were unhappy and he was unpeaceful. This showed up in his day-to-day life as anger and frustration so one day I asked him, "Why are you so abrupt and short? Why are you making others feel bad or small?"

He responded, "That's who I am."

"Do you like being that way?" I asked.

"... No."

I continued by asking him, "If you don't like it, why are you not changing?"

The world opened up for him in that conversation. He got present to the impact it was having on our relationship and business and then the common vision became clear. From then on, conversations changed and he realized he didn't need to be this way, that he had a say in who he was.

Since that conversation, it has been years of breakdowns and breakthroughs. He has done tough work to overcome his habits, moods, and feelings. In all that time, I have shown up as a vulnerable and courageous friend who holds him accountable and encourages him to continue his journey. He has always been a powerful human being who wanted to make a difference; now he has the courage to make it happen.

Humility to Accept

Sometimes there are relationships you can't walk away from — mainly family. In these relationships, you can either suffer or accept it as it is. Accepting does not mean that you accept forever. It means you accept for now with the commitment to the possibility for transformation later. And the reason it takes humility is because you care for them and your own desires or goals take a back seat. You have identified there is a possibility for growth but you also recognize it won't happen on your timeline or the way you want it to.

Humility in action

- Spend time with them in a way that is meaningful for them
- Listen to their moods, feeling, and concerns without judgment and evaluation
- Be there for them when they need you the most
- Let them experience your presence as love

My father passed away when I was two years old. My mother raised me and my four sisters on her own in India. My father's death, and the following hardships, caused her to be very untrusting, which made her angry and bitter towards other human beings. She became righteous to protect herself and her kids. As I grew older and worked on being peaceful in life, that mentality was difficult for me to be around. So I worked toward change. Despite all my effort, I was unable to help her see the possibilities in life. I tried one-on-one accountability conversations, reduced our communication, and gave ultimatums, but nothing produced the desired results. I realized I was going to lose my mom if I did not have humility to accept her and our relationship as it was. So I chose acceptance. Since then, she has experienced my love more authentically than when I was trying to change things. My acceptance made her feel safe and loved, which opened up a possibility for listening. Now she is more calm, more thoughtful, and more loving towards the world.

Wisdom to Walk Away

There are times when the other person is closed off and the relationship is not working at a level you want. If you have tried to talk through and explore the possibilities of the relationship but haven't seen progress toward a common vision, then you have a choice: continue to push and be frustrated, annoyed, and angry or you can walk away. Having

that kind of wisdom allows you and the other person to find peace; chances are the other person is also feeling stuck and you walking away will also free them up.

Wisdom in action:

- Have a conversation with the other person about what's not working and explore the options
- Create rules of the game; define what is and isn't acceptable in the relationship
- Communicate and document it to make sure everyone is clear and agrees on a win/win outcome
- Give time for other person to choose and implement. If the other person starts following the new rules, you're all set. Otherwise, plan a timeline to walk away.
- Make sure you're clear. Try everything and more before walking away. This is truly your last resort.

One of our first clients was also our biggest. We had 80 percent of our revenue coming from that client but our working relationship had become stuck. The client was making requests that were not reasonable for us to fulfill and setting the project up for failure. They wanted to define the scope, the schedule, and the resources and we did not have any say in the conversation. Additionally, the team was suffering because they could not find a balance, and the client was suffering because they were not getting what they wanted. We worked with the client to see if there was openness to reach to a common vision. After multiple tries, there was none. At that point, we used our wisdom to walk away. We simply gave them a choice — we told them what we could commit to that would provide a win/win or we could offload the knowledge and experience to whatever new company the client chose to do business with. The client chose the latter and we upheld our end of the deal before walking away. This choice allowed both companies to thrive since our parting (both In Time Tec and the client have at least doubled, if not tripled, in revenue) because we both were suffering when we were together. Walking away set both companies on a path of peace and growth.

Suffering is Always Optional

Humans cannot live without other humans on the planet; without humans there is no life. But life is too short to continue relationships that are not working. Every relationship is a work. It requires both parties involved to be committed to a common vision and work toward that vision. At times, it feels like a lot of work and situations might become messy. But if you're committed to live a life where every relationship works to the fullest, the outcome is always peace, happiness, and joy in life.

HOW YOUR KNOWLEDGE IS LIMITING YOUR CONTRIBUTION

In his Ted Talk¹ on leadership, Jim Whitehurst, former executive at Delta, jokes about being a recovering know-it-all CEO and explores what happens when all traditional leadership mentalities disappear. We were recently discussing this video in a meeting of our business staff and a question arose: "As a leader, shouldn't you be making more decisions because you have more knowledge?" Beautiful question. It allowed for a rich conversation about why knowledge is key in a leadership role and how knowledge can also limit a leader's ability to make a meaningful contribution.

There is a reason the common saying is "Knowledge is power" and not "Information is power," and that is because you have to work for knowledge. Information exists at the abstract level in the world regardless of what people do with it. It becomes knowledge once it is learned and applied in a meaningful way. Knowledge is power, but what you do with it determines whether it will be short lived and limit your contribution, or live beyond your life and expand your contribution.

How to Tell if Your Knowledge is Limiting Your Contribution

There is nothing wrong with using your knowledge to work toward your goals and check things off your to-do list. Your knowledge got you to where you are now. And still that knowledge is only serving you in this lifetime. More is possible for others and for the world if you share your knowledge. The question I want you to ask is: Are you only using your knowledge for your benefit and to achieve your goals, or are you expanding your knowledge through others so that it can live on and serve the world after you are gone?

One of your jobs as a leader is to help others become as good as you, if not better than you are. You can use your knowledge as power to accomplish your own work, or use it as power to mentor and coach other people so that they become powerful in their own ways. If you use

your knowledge as power to accomplish your own work, this will eventually limit you, all your employees, and your company.

Take a look at the following scenarios and see if you are acting as a leader who is limited by their knowledge, or a leader who is truly unbound and up to big things:

LIMITED LEADER <i>(Withholding knowledge)</i>	or	UNBOUND LEADER <i>(Sharing knowledge)</i>
A limited leader will make decisions without sharing why.		An unbound leader will bring the team along while making the decision.
A limited leader will keep information close to protect their job.		An unbound leader will share information to work themselves out of a job.
A limited leader will be quick to defend if someone challenges their knowledge.		An unbound leader will be quick to encourage the conversation about knowledge.
A limited leader will dump unwanted tasks on others.		An unbound leader will delegate learning tasks to others.
A limited leader will aspire to be valuable in a conversation.		An unbound leader will ensure everyone is valuable in the conversation.
A limited leader will go alone and go fast.		An unbound leader will go together and go far.

Image 2. Comparison Between Limited And Unbound Leaders

Now you may be wondering why you should care if you are limited? And the answer to that depends on what you are up to in your life. What is your role? If you are content with where your life is and what you have, then continue to use your knowledge to accomplish your own goals. However, if you are up to bigger things — if you are committed to seeing that the world becomes more powerful because of your knowledge long after you are gone — then you need to focus on coaching and developing others to be as good as, and hopefully better than you. That is the choice you must make.

How to Use Your Knowledge to Expand Your Contribution

Whenever a task, email, or project comes to your attention, ask yourself one question: Am I the only one who should be doing this, or is there someone who has the capability, or the potential for capability, that I could help grow?

Most of the time, there is someone else you can coach and mentor to complete the task. Then you simply have a conversation with that person and bring them on the journey of learning. Next time a similar task, email, or project crosses your desk, you can send it to them without even thinking.

Doing this will take extra time — time to have the conversation, teach, and approve — but the short-term time investment will pay off in the long term as those around you grow and learn to take on more of your tasks and free you up to acquire and develop new knowledge and therefore expand your circle of influence.

Lastly, make sure to give credit where credit is due. Without this, others can start to feel used. Recognizing others for their success in both learning and stepping into knowledge will inspire them to do more and create a space for future growth and contributions.

But What if...?

Sometimes there are scenarios that require your knowledge, or rather the presence of your knowledge. In those situations, it is important to understand why it requires your knowledge. For example, our company had a deal that couldn't be closed because the client needed to be assured of support from the executive team.

The client had an assumption about what our sales team knew and could commit compared to what I knew and could commit as a CEO. But even in those moments and with those assumptions, by being open with the client about the knowledge I was constantly sharing with my team with intention to empower them so that they don't need me in the long-run, I was able to bring my team with me. In doing so, we showed the clients that my team — my whole company — is interested and capable of making the same decisions that I could make.

If I had just stepped in and talked to the client alone, that would have set a precedent that I am the only one who can make big moves for the lifetime of the contract. That would require time and energy to be spent on that particular client when it could otherwise be used to continue to innovate and create new meaningful things

It is your responsibility as a leader, whether a CEO, a division head, or a manager, to identify the ways that your use of knowledge is limiting yourself and others. From there, you need to put in the effort to share your knowledge with your team and bring them along with you.

When you are truly unbound and contributing to the world, you shift your approach in a big way.

You go from achieving your own dreams to building a team that is achieving their dreams individually and collectively and making a real impact on this planet.

So the real question I ask is, do you have the desire, commitment and self-security to see the world flourish way after you're gone? Or do you want it to be only flourish while you're here. The choice is truly yours!

THE POWER OF DECLARATIONS

Our leadership teams recently had offsite retreats in Bend, Oregon, and Ranthambore, Rajasthan. Our rental in Bend had a wall of windows that provided a beautiful view of the town below while the national park at Ranthambore gave us a natural wilderness experience. All of us gathered in semi-circles and began our talks about life. We sat there for 15 hours each day; we took time to acknowledge each other, to address areas we were stuck, and create new possibilities. Muscles cramped, hunger set in, people got sleepy yet we pushed on. We pushed on because the five founders had made a declaration that In Time Tec would build its next generation of leaders and this was one way we were taking action on that declaration.

Building leaders is just one of the many declarations that I have made in my life and that we have made at In Time Tec. And that declaration to build our next generation of leaders stemmed from our larger company declaration and purpose: Creating Abundance. Beyond that, is the declaration I have made for my life: Life can be better for me and life can be better for those around me. That declaration has informed and guided every decision, interaction, situation in my life since I made it as a teenager.

Why Declarations Are Powerful

There is a theory in linguistics called Linguistic Determinism. It is the strong form of linguistic relativity (popularly known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis²), and it offers that people experience the world based on the language they regularly use. Put more simply: language creates reality.

This is not a new idea. There have been scientific studies done that prove people experience time³, view colors⁴, and feel emotions⁵ differently based on their language. But more powerful

proof exists in the lives and declarations of some of the greatest and most loving leaders in history.

- “We do not need guns and bombs to bring peace, we need love and compassion.” Mother Teresa
- “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.’” Martin Luther King Jr.
- “I want for India complete independence in the full English sense of that English term.” Mahatma Gandhi
- “People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” Nelson Mandela

All of those ordinary people became extraordinary once they created something that was otherwise not possible until it was declared. Their declarations have changed the world, and continue to do so. When you think about declarations for your life, do not underestimate the power of language. Once something is created in language, it becomes a possibility that did not exist before. You can create a new future for yourself and for others by making a declaration.

But there is more to it than simply making a declaration and hoping the universe delivers the results. You have to do the work.

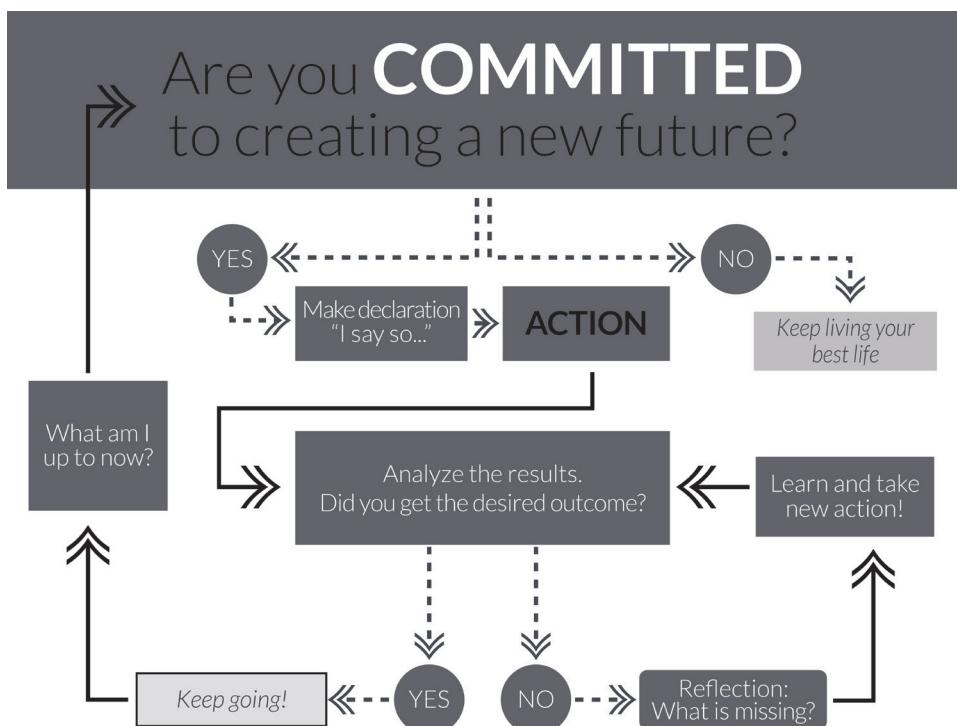


Image 3. The Commitment Process

Make Your Declaration

The declaration that In Time Tec will build its next generation leaders was our way of creating a new future. Our core leadership team recognized that we had gotten the company this far—\$10 million revenue, five offices in the US and India, and 500 employees—but we could not get us to the next level without expanding the team. We could no longer fulfill on our declaration to create abundance alone. So we made an additional declaration to build more leaders.

As you look at your own life, think about what you are committed to. What do you want to accomplish, what do you want to transform?

Is it to be financially free? To get a promotion at work? To create a stronger bond in your marriage? To build an exciting future for your children? Whatever it is, declare it. You can make short-term declarations; “I will be financially free.” Or you can make lifelong declarations; “I will create a loving environment for those around me.”

So you have your declaration, now what? You can’t just sit there and expect the declaration to fulfill itself. Now it is time to take action.

Take Action

When we made our declaration to build our next generation of leaders, we first had to decide who those people would be. Once that was decided, we had to identify the gaps in their skills and tools and what training and development would be needed to close those gaps. From there, we set up regular meetings and offsites to build those skills and tools.

What action do you need to take on your declaration? If you want to be financially free, a good place to start would be to analyze your current financial situation. From there, decide what debt you need to pay off and make a plan to do so. That might include cutting back on unnecessary expenses or taking on a second job. If you declare a stronger bond in your marriage, you could talk to your spouse and share with them your vision and decide on the action you can take together. So on and so forth.

But what happens when one of those actions doesn’t work or deliver the desired results? Take the time to reflect and reevaluate.

Reflect on Outcomes and Keep Going

After we began to take action, we took a moment to look at what was working and what was not. One area we saw that was working is our hiring. We had interviewed and hired 30 people on the US side and 150 people in India, all without much intervention or guidance from the core

leadership team. At the same time, we saw that some of our learning groups led by the new leaders were not working as effectively and powerfully as we knew they could. This caused us to pause and understand why they weren't working.

We checked in with our leaders and asked them what they saw as working and not working and in those conversations identified some knowledge gaps that the core leadership team could address. We identified a breakdown, figured out what was missing, and then made an additional declaration to provide the skills and tools.

In your own life, you will stumble in living your declarations. When that happens, there is no need to beat yourself up and give up.

Simply figure out what went wrong, what was missing, and then reflect, learn, and readjust.

I can see how these smaller declarations throughout my life and in our company align with the overarching declaration of my life. When I made the declaration that life could be better for me and life can be better for others, the idea of In Time Tec was born. We started the company in 2009 and over the last ten years, that declaration has spurred dozens, if not hundreds, of other declarations. At our leadership offsite retreats, we created 11 total projects that will move our company forward in huge ways and those things were not possible until we made them so by declaring them.

When you take these steps—to make a declaration, take action, analyze the results, and make changes to keep going—you are creating a new future for yourself and those around you. So as you think about your own life, really get present to the powerful future you can create by making declarations using language and make them real by taking action as if your life depends on it.

Create your possibilities, declare them, and take action for your new future. That's how you create your future and enjoy your present.

HOW ONE WORD CAN ENABLE TECH COMPANIES TO DELIVER THE BEST CLIENT EXPERIENCE

(Originally featured on forbes.com)

In 2015, my colleagues and I were sitting across a table from the decision makers of an \$8 billion company we hoped to work with. Despite our startup size, we were committed to big things and ready to share those things with them. They needed to build and test an application, but their budget was constrained, their scope was not defined and their schedule was tight. As I sat at that table with our director of engineering, our VP of business development and the president and co-founder of our company, their team asked some valid questions. They wanted to know why. Why should they work with us instead of any of the other companies they could hire?

Because we weren't asking to be hired. We were asking for a partnership.

"Money is not why we exist. We create abundance, and we want to create economic growth for your company," I said.

They wanted to know if we could do it.

"Yes. And we don't have the expertise in the area you want to build the application."

This was not the answer they expected. We explained, "We don't have the expertise, and if you come along with us, you will be our long-term, vested partners."

A lot happened in that "and." We shifted their experience from one of skepticism to one of partnership. The best client experience comes from someone who truly stands for others, not themselves.

So many options are out there, so why should anyone choose your business? Because of the relationships built on “and.”

Why Language Matters

Reality is created in language. Create the language, and you create your reality.

In that meeting with the potential client, we didn’t say, “Yes, but we don’t have the expertise,” even though that might have felt more natural. We said “and.” That’s because “but” is limiting; it would have created an immediate defensive reaction for the potential client and shut down any possibility of moving forward. However, with “and,” we created space for mutual growth.



Image 4. The Crossroads of “And” or “But”

Next time you’re faced with a situation where you might add a caveat to your promise with “but,” try “and.”

- We were on track to make the deadline, and a bug was discovered.
- The client requested a feature, and we didn’t know how to fulfill it.
- Our team had been working long hours and needed a reset.

Notice how none of those sentences limits the possibilities for a solution. All conditions and situations can exist without stopping forward movement.

To take it a step further, in order for your “and” to have any meaning, you have to build trust with the client.

Trust

Stephen M. R. Covey said⁶ trust has two components:

- High character: integrity and ethics
- High competence: skills and knowledge

Obviously, the main reason any client would even think to hire you would be because you have proven your competence, so what will set you apart will be the experience you provide because of the character you display. Do you show up to every meeting on time, and do you call or email when you say you will, and do you show you're committed to their success and not just your own? If you aren't doing those things, you likely won't be in business for very long.

Additionally, think about how the client wants you to show up. Some are intimidated by the thought of giving the client all the power, so consider what gets created when you show up how the client wants you to show up and how you're committed to showing up. It is possible to provide the best client experience and create the space for your software company to thrive by:

- Setting the tone: From the very first contact with the client, ask what they want and how they will know they got it
- Scheduling regular check-ins based on the standards set at the beginning
- Beyond that, asking how you can do better

When every person in your company delivers on the expectations, both technological and relational, they build, grow and sustain trust.

All-In

In order for the language to be meaningful and the trust to be present, every person in your company has to be committed to the same thing. For us, it is "creating abundance," and that manifests in our brand promise: ROI or you don't pay.

That may seem like a risky promise to make, but if you do what you say you will do and if everyone constantly shows up inside your company in a way that leaves the client touched, moved and inspired, the ROI is just a byproduct of great service.

There are a few things everyone in our company knows that you can teach in yours as well:

- **Brand promise:** Does it mean we do work for free? No. It means we are committed to our client benefiting from their relationship with us. Does it mean we have done work for free? Yes, and doing so grew the trust with the client.
- **Meaningful feedback:** We truly want to know how projects are going and if the client is happy with the work and relationship. We don't settle for "fine."
- **Course correction:** When we make a mistake, every single person knows how to restore integrity. We take responsibility and fix it. Then we ensure it won't happen again.

- **Win-win or no deal:** We win and the client wins, or there is no deal. If a client is trying to take advantage of us or if we recognize that we cannot offer value to the client, we'll walk away. Each employee is empowered to start these discussions.

We got that deal in 2015. It was a one-time \$100,000 contract that has since turned into \$1.3 million per year in recurring revenue. The client is now one of our key clients and would gladly speak to others about their experience because we were true to our word.

You can (and should) make providing the best client experience the No. 1 priority in your business. Be true to your word. Take a stand for win-wins. Enable and empower your team. Create the space for "and."

DISCOVER YOURSELF AS A LEADER

There are three phases to becoming an inspirational leader and all three require different types of work.

When my business partners and I started In Time Tec in 2009, we worked HARD. We all still had full-time jobs and were working on In Time Tec during any free time we had. We were often up early and going to bed late, spending most of our evenings and weekends in our home offices taking phone calls, closing deals, completing projects; seemingly sacrificing our time with family and friends for the pursuit of this dream. We did this until some of us were in a position to quit our full-time jobs and hire employees. Even then, we didn't stop working hard. We had to establish infrastructure and operational policies, address HR laws, set the vision and execute on strategy, build competencies, grow revenue, manage the finances, and learn so much.

During all this time, we were also beginning our journey of hard work. Working with other people is always more complex than working alone, because humans are beautifully complex creatures with different experiences and goals and values. Being individual contributors or managers in previous jobs had prepared us to start a business. It had not prepared us to be the kind of inspirational leaders we are today; that happened when we all got very clear about the kind of company we were building and the kind of leaders we needed to be to get us there.

Difference Between “Working Hard” and “Doing Hard Work”

These two phases are often interchangeable and you might not immediately know the difference. It is an important distinction to recognize as you look at the kind of work you are doing as a leader.

Working hard simply means putting in the hours and completing the required tasks. It requires knowledge and hard skills and often includes long hours, to-do lists, research, and plenty of productivity. It produces the desired results and helps move the needle forward.

On the other hand, doing hard work requires more soft skills and emotional intelligence. It means connecting with others in a way that leaves them touched, moved, and inspired to be more, do more, and have more in life. Hard work transforms human beings for the better and creates a healthy and productive company culture.

Both are required to be successful in your career. Only working hard will ensure you are a great individual contributor, while working hard AND doing hard work will make you a great leader.

There are three distinct phases people who are committed to making a difference will go through as they discover themselves as a leader:

- Phase one: Outstanding Individual Contributor
- Phase two: Emerging Leader (aka manager)
- Phase three: Inspirational Leader

Phase One

OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR



MAIN FOCUS: Producing great results

TYPE OF WORK: Complete tasks, set goals, create plans, execute relentlessly

SKILLS NEEDED: Prioritization, self-starter, knowledgeable in domain, committed to outcome

Image 5. Characteristics of an Outstanding Individual Contributor

As mentioned above, these people work hard. If you are in this phase on your journey, you are committed to producing great results. You have probably gotten a job that utilizes your skills and education. You are not necessarily entry level but you are not yet leading a team. You often feel the rush of a job well done and other people come to you when they need help solving problems or navigating something new. Sometimes you work overtime and you are constantly looking for ways to stay on top of trends and new education about your area of expertise. You probably enjoy coming to work and feel like you are working hard to contribute to the company in a meaningful way. Your work is important and necessary to the success of the company.

When in this phase, you have two options:

- 1- Continue to be an Outstanding Individual Contributor
- or-
- 2 - Close the gap and become an Emerging Leader

One day, you might see someone doing work that you want to do and feel inspired. Maybe you overhear a conversation between them and a peer and see the shift in how the other person viewed their work. Or it could be that you feel you are capped out in your current position and start to feel you want more; more impact, more money, more... something. If you start to see that you are not where you want to be, it is time to figure out why; it is time to close the gap.

Step one - Ask for help: Find someone who is doing the type of work you want to be doing or who has the job you want and ask them about it. What does a day in the life look like? How did they get there? What shifts did they have to make in themselves to show up powerfully in that role? What kind of person do they have to be for others to be successful in that role?

Step two - Start doing hard work on yourself: Question why you are the way you are. Do you have any habits or set ways of being that are getting in your way? Do you have a short temper that is just "how you are"? Maybe you are a slave to your moods and feelings. These are areas you need to get really clear on. Ask your friends and family how you occur for them. Ask them what they can always count on you for and what they can never count on you for. Ask them what they think your strengths and weaknesses are. When doing this, create a safe space and assure them that you are exploring this for your own growth and you genuinely need the feedback to take the next step in your life.

Step three - Work on a new being state: Once you understand where you want to go and have feedback from people in your life, you need to work on the actual changes. What got you here will not get you there so if you got feedback that you are always late, you need to start being early to everything. If people feel they can't talk to you about hard topics, figure out why and start improving your listening skills.

Step four - Pay attention to how others experience you: Do people start opening up to you more and trusting your reactions now that you have done the hard internal work? Is there more peace when you are in a group of people? People judge themselves by their intentions, and others judge them by their actions. You cannot rely only on what you think you are doing. Instead you must look at how your actions are landing on others. If there is no change in how others are experiencing you, you haven't actually closed the gap. But if there is a change, you are ready for phase two.

Phase Two



**EMERGING LEADER
(AKA MANAGER)**



MAIN FOCUS: Leading projects and teams

TYPE OF WORK: Complete tasks, define outcome and create strategy, lead the team to deliver results, coach and mentor teams to learn and grow

SKILLS NEEDED: Constant introspection, domain expert, compassionate listening, genuine care and concern for others, and holding others accountable for results

Image 6. Characteristics of an Emerging Leader

At this phase in your discovery, you have mastered the art of working hard. Most commonly known as a manager, you know your tasks and have begun the inner work to show up powerfully in your life. Not only do you know your tasks, but you have started creating a strategy for the future of the team or company. You probably have a team of people you are responsible for leading. These people come to you for work problems and sometimes life problems. You are beginning the hard work of shifting your listening and having deep and meaningful conversations. Things are really moving forward in your department or team; goals are being set and met, morale is up, productivity is up. Other people are starting to notice, and

they are curious about how you are doing it. You are now the person the outstanding individual contributors are coming to for guidance.

When in this phase, you have two options:

- 1- Continue to be an Emerging Leader
- or-
- 2 - Close the gap and become an Inspirational Leader

At some point, you may have faced a situation you did not know how to handle. Maybe there was a conversation that ended poorly, or you had a breakdown on your team. You might feel like you are not connecting with the people you are leading in a meaningful way. It is in these moments you realize you don't currently have the skills and tools to lead in an inspirational way. It is time again to close the gap.

Step one - Find a coach: Similar to step one in Phase one, you need to find someone who is doing work you want to be doing and pick their brain. Find someone who is really making a difference in the lives of those around them, someone who you and others see as powerful and inspirational, and then be courageous enough to share. Tell them what you see from them and express your genuine desire to learn from them. If this person is in your current social circle, talk to them in person. If they are not, find a mutual connection (LinkedIn is a great place to start) and ask for an introduction. I promise the people who are doing these types of things in their lives are happy to connect with someone else who is interested in a similar path.

Step two - Learn and practice: Once you have a coach to work with, a deeper level of learning needs to happen. This is truly the start of hard work or, said another way, heart work. The difference between phase two and phase three is a relentless love for other humans. You started to look at yourself and why you are the way you are to become an Emerging Leader; now it is time to look at others and appreciate who they are and how they got to be the way they are. This will take practice. You will not be a master immediately. Start with your closest friends. Share with them what you are doing so they know you will be practicing new skills. Ask hard questions during conversations. If a friend is complaining about their marriage or another family member, ask them what responsibility they are taking for the breakdown. Dance in the conversation with them as they explore.

Step three - Let go of looking good: This can be a difficult step to take because humans naturally want to look good so people will like them. They are afraid that if they look bad, they will not be liked. But to become an inspirational leader, you must be willing to make mistakes -- and clean them up -- because it will happen at some point. As you practice, you may try something that doesn't go over well or leaves someone else feeling bad. You may also give your word about something that you are not able to keep. These types of

situations call for a clean up, and cleaning it up means swallowing your pride. Pride doesn't exist in the next phase. Simply acknowledge the impact you had and commit to a new path going forward. You must also be willing to ruffle some feathers because the people you are leading don't know what they don't know and it will be uncomfortable for them to confront certain things as you coach and mentor them; they may not always like you for that.

Step four - Improve your listening: Stop listening for yourself and start listening for others. When you listen for yourself, you are only hearing what you want to hear and not truly connecting with the speaker. Pay attention to the whole human — watch their body language, ask why, clarify intentionally vague statements, don't accept "I don't know" as an answer. This might make people uncomfortable at first, but it will serve everyone in the long run. You will begin to really get to the heart of the matter, and the humans, when you practice this kind of listening.

Step five - Disappear yourself: Just as pride has no place in phase three, neither do ego or moods and feelings that don't move the action forward. An important distinction to make when closing the gap from phase two to phase three is that you cannot show up as an inspirational leader if you are showing up for yourself only and not for others. As your listening improves, you will be thinking less about your own opinions and more about what is going on for the other person. But sometimes those opinions and reactions and feelings will still show up. When they do, notice if they are moving things forward (someone is growing, something is being created, etc), or if they are stopping progress (dumping complaints, making someone wrong, etc). If what is showing up is stalling the situation or growth, reflect on where those feelings are coming from and how you can take responsibility. For example, if you are working on a project and have a different opinion on how to execute, ask yourself if it is because you truly think that is the best way to do it or because you want to prove something. Once you have mastered control and awareness over your pride, ego, moods, and feelings, you are ready for phase three.

Phase Three

When you reach this point in your journey, working hard is your default state. You complete tasks, set vision, and deliver results without even thinking. You have also done internal work to get complete with yourself, and you are showing up powerfully in your life. Others see you as a true leader and look to you for guidance. This is the phase when you are really making a difference in other people's lives. You are someone who is operating in complete integrity — you say what you do and you do what you say. You honor your word, and no one questions your motives or intentions. Because of your openness and hard work, you are in a position to influence others to follow the same journey you have been on. In fact, you love helping others become inspirational leaders. Your sense of purpose is no longer tied to what you can accomplish and become but instead to what others are accomplishing and becoming.

This phase is all hard work all the time. And sometimes the hard work in this phase looks like pissing people off because you don't mind giving people tough love if that's what is needed to rearrange their souls (to rearrange a soul means to get to the heart of a matter during meaningful conversations in a way that leads to breakthroughs and new ways of being). Those people you are inspiring are not always going to want it for themselves the way you want it for them, but here is when you need to be the strongest stand for them.

There is only one option to move forward in this phase: Continue to learn, grow, and contribute. There is no going back once you are in this phase. You will not want to or allow yourself to go back to just producing results as an individual contributor.



Image 7. Characteristics of an Inspirational Leader

Step one (and only) - Climb the mountain with no top: Once you occur for yourself and others as an Inspirational Leader, you keep going. Every morning, reflect on your being state and every evening reflect on what you created that day. (Read more about my morning and evening rituals [here](#).) Teach others to work hard and do the hard work, make space for creation, and accept yourself and others as a possibility.

There is a progression in this journey: phase one is all working hard. Phase two requires continuing to work hard while also learning about and practicing hard work. Phase three is all

about working hard on the hard work. You cannot become an Inspirational Leader without a background of hard work and heart work. Each of our founders, as well as every leader in our company is on this journey. There are different people in different phases, but each of us is committed to closing any gap necessary to be an Inspirational Leader. The impact of having hundreds of people across the globe on the same leadership journey is monumental in moving the needle for our company. Not only does it allow every team member to be fully self-expressed and inspired, it enriches relationships with partners and the communities. Our employees are committed to creating abundance and our partners want to be a part of that.

As you embark on your own journey, remember it is constant and never-ending work so don't get discouraged. Reach out to other Inspirational Leaders, grow your network of powerful humans, recommit to your purpose and possibilities. Every human has the potential to become an Inspirational Leader; it is just a matter of willingness and openness. If you are willing, if you are open, and if you are constantly learning and growing, you have the ability and power to make the world a better place to live by enabling and empowering other human beings.

WHY INTEGRITY IS KEY TO LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

We have all read the books about leadership. We have watched TED Talks and joined mentorship groups. We have led conversations about what it takes to be a great leader. So why are most people still struggling in their jobs, finances, businesses, and personal lives?

Do a quick google search for “leadership” and you will find millions of blog posts, articles, and books on qualities, skills, and definitions for leaders. However, I am willing to bet the majority of those results are written by people who have a marriage in shambles, or children who hardly talk to them, or employees who talk behind their backs, or more debt than they would like to admit. More than likely, they lack true integrity.

Integrity is not only a moral issue. But as defined⁷, it also means “the state of being whole and undivided.” It is about doing what you say and saying what you do. Integrity in life and in leadership is keeping your word, both spoken and implied or expected. More than anything, integrity is all or nothing. You either have integrity or you don’t.

- If you show your love and affection to your employees in your monthly company meetings but go home at night and snap at your spouse, *you are out of integrity*.
- If you coach your employees on how to have meaningful conversations with clients and then intentionally ignore the teller at the bank when they ask about your day, *you are out of integrity*.
- If you insist every software developer deliver the committed functionality on time with quality but then chose not to respond to emails when promised, *you are out of integrity*.

In all the above examples, you are saying one thing but doing another. It doesn't matter that the situations are different because that is at the core of integrity.

When people are in integrity, they are peaceful. And historically, any innovation is from people who are at peace and fully self-expressed. The key to innovation is peace, joy, happiness and love. When people are consistently operating at that level, they have the freedom to create big, industry-changes.

What does this have to do with running a successful company?

Everything!

Think of integrity like a clock. All pieces, numbers, and hands are needed to function as it is designed to function. If you take away the numbers, you might still have an idea of the time but it isn't 100% accurate. If you take away one of the hands, you might be able to guess the time based on the position of the others, but again, it is not in integrity—whole and complete. Without all the elements, if it becomes obvious that something is missing. When people in your company are operating out of integrity, innovation suffers and the company cannot grow.

Here are three actions we took in our company that you could take to catapult your company from surviving to thriving.

Live Your Own Life in Integrity

Once an employee makes a commitment to us, we make a commitment to them. A commitment to figure out what they are up to in their lives and hold them to it if and when they start to lose their way. The ONLY reason we are able to do that successfully is because I and the other four founders (and subsequently every single leader in the company) have a commitment to operate with integrity. We have taken a deep and honest look at our own lives to ensure everything in it is working the way we are committed to it working.

Look at every aspect of your life and see what is working and what is not working. From the moment you wake up, relationships, finances, health, communication with others, and many other elements of life need to be examined. If you are feeling "stuck" in any area, reflect on why, make a declaration for change, and then take action.

*If you don't learn to do small things right,
you can never do big things right.*

Observe the behavior of your next-level leaders (they can check on everyone else) to see if they are whole and complete. Are they in their own heads and talking themselves in circles in conversations? Do they make comments about being tired and stressed? Do they make excuses

for others? These are just a few examples of behavior or habits showing they are holding back or resisting something in their lives, which means they are out of integrity.

From there, help them examine every area of their lives. It might be uncomfortable at first, but growth is uncomfortable. And if they see you living in integrity, they will trust you to support them in taking a look at their own lives.

The most important element of uncovering this layer is to see how they are viewing their own lives, the company, the projects, or the people in ways that might be keeping them stuck. Then guide the conversation in a meaningful way to help them uncover the root and, just as you did for yourself, identify the action needed for them to get unstuck and restore integrity.

*Getting unstuck frees up mental
and emotional capacity to focus on
innovation and contribution.*

Allow Your Employees to be Fully Self-Expressed

All of this reflection and action will have a trickle-down effect. Soon, every single employee in the company will be fully self-expressed and living as leaders.

When this happens, all the noise will be gone and instead of worrying about who is offending who or making excuses for behavior, people will begin to use all that energy to handle problems, projects, and clients in a new way. And the most encouraging and supportive thing you can do at that time is to get out of their way. This may sound easier said than done but guess what? This will come naturally once you are living your own life in integrity and setting the best example.

Innovation comes from a place of freedom and peace. Living with integrity, holding your leaders accountable, and allowing all your employees to be fully self-expressed will transform your company from surviving to thriving and from merely average to a market leader.

WHY LISTENING AND LEARNING IS KEY TO EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

One of the most profound lessons I have learned throughout my leadership journey is the importance of listening and learning before you lead. In fact, I find it to be so essential to successful leadership that I hung those words on the walls of In Time Tec.

The artwork is more than just decor — the words serve as a constant reminder for the leaders in our company. We see these words in our offices daily and often gather beneath them during all-staff meetings. They inform and guide every employee in our office since we truly believe that anyone can be a leader, regardless of title or role.

In the Ted Talk⁸ on this topic, Stanley McChrystal says, “I came to believe that a leader isn’t good because they’re right; they’re good because they’re willing to learn and trust.”

When a leader comes into any domain, or an area where they need to lead, one of their main responsibilities is to make things progress forward. However, an individual is not in a position to be a leader until they have both listened to and learned from those around them. This is because it is difficult for a leader to effectively progress forward until they are aware of why things are the way they are, and why people are the way they are.

Listen

Listening is key throughout the entire process of being a leader. Distinguishing the difference between hearing what someone is saying and listening to what someone is saying is crucial. Hearing is simply defined as the process, function, or power of perceiving sound. Whereas listening is to hear something with thoughtful attention in order to understand. Listening requires focus and attention, hearing does not. Furthermore, it is important for a leader to

listen to understand, rather than to listen to reply. Imagine you are walking through a grocery store; all the sounds of shopping carts, voices from the distance, and music playing in the background you are simply hearing. Now when your child tells you that they are in pain, you will listen to understand where the pain is coming from and how you can help alleviate it.

In order to listen to someone, you need to have compassion. Make it clear that you care about what the other party has to offer. It is also important to keep in mind that listening does not equal agreeing with someone. You can listen to someone and acknowledge their opinion without agreeing with what they are saying.

Listening to someone starts with an internal conversation with yourself. In this conversation, you must acknowledge that there may be something in the other person's sharing that you may not know. Next, you should externally ask the other person questions to deepen your understanding. Then, you need to do the intellectual work by analyzing their answers. This is when you should ask further exploratory questions until you create a common understanding with the other party. By the end of the conversation, you will see the other person's point of view and have helped them to understand yours. Until you do that, continue asking exploratory questions. I like to call this dancing in the conversation. Keep in mind, you can only dance in the conversation when you know that you do not know everything.

Learn

Additionally, it is crucial that the leader takes time to learn why things are the way they are. Furthermore, learning is necessary in order for a leader to be trustworthy and get people to buy in. In doing so, they should learn the domain and earn respect/trust from their followers. Stephen M.R. Covey states in his book, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*, "Trust is equal parts character and competence... You can look at any leadership failure, and it's always a failure of one or the other." Without establishing trust, it is nearly impossible to enroll others. If you want people to trust you as a leader, you must first demonstrate that you are capable of leading them to a better future. The best way to learn and build the competence is to ask questions. There are three types of potential questions to ask:

- **Leading questions:** "Don't you think that another more tenured employee is more capable of completing this project?"
- **Avoiding responsibility questions:** "I don't understand how to finish this project. Can you do it for me?"
- **Seeking to understand questions:** "You want me to look into this project. Can you explain to me a bit more why you want me to work on this project? What outcome are you looking for? What timeline? What skills do you want me to bring forth?"

The first two types of questions will not lead to any learning. But the third will open up a conversation that allows you to learn about the domain you are stepping into. You must learn how the domain works and have the expertise, capabilities, and competencies needed to be a successful leader in that domain or you can not be an effective leader. You can only build competency when you learn and you need to have a discipline to learn the domain that you are leading for.

To do so, you need a platform that is in alignment with your existing skills and knowledge. For example, I can be a powerful leader at In Time Tec, but if I were to walk into a hospital, nobody would care what I have to offer because I don't have competency in the medical field. However, I can build competency in a domain such as public speaking because that is aligned with what I already know and am committed to learning more about.

It is important that you do a clear audit for a given domain. Find out what is required for that domain. Then ask yourself, what do you have that will contribute to this? Identify the gap between what you know and what is required — what do you need to learn? There are multiple "approaches to learning. You can teach yourself, find a coach to help you, find an area for you to practice with people who can help you, or find a feedback loop where you can complete a task and receive feedback. Then you should make adjustments accordingly.

If you are open to listening and committed to learning, leading is easy.

Lead

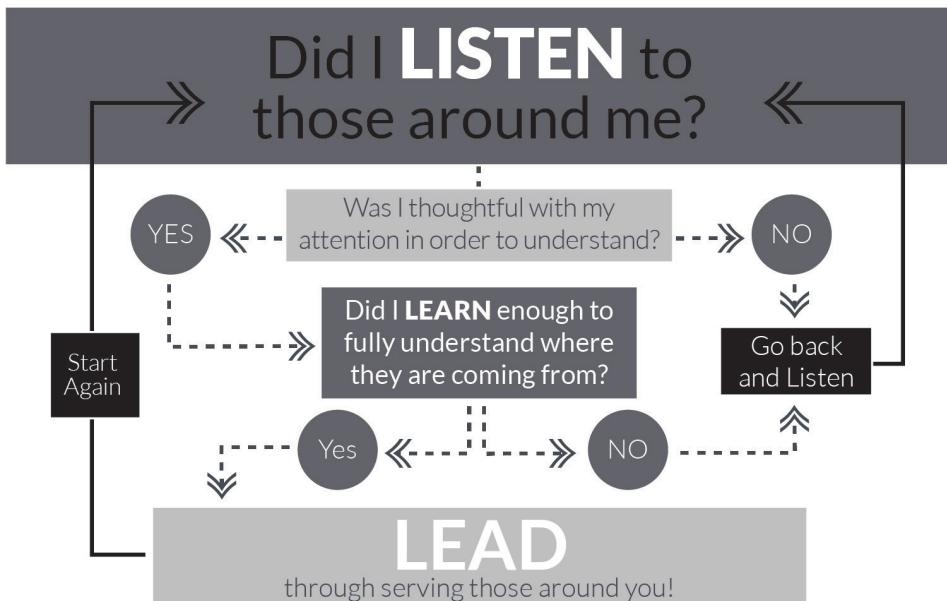
After listening and learning, leading others becomes easy. By default, you will become a servant leader because you are serving others; you have engaged with them on a level where they feel heard and you have learned the domain and proved your capabilities so they now trust you.

When you try to lead without understanding (listening and learning) the current situation or people, you will make everyone wrong in the process. Another side effect of not listening and learning before leading is that the leader will not know what other people are thinking and therefore will not know how to improve. After listening to what your employees need and learning why things are the way they are, you will be informed about the mindset of the people you're leading and therefore be able to lead them more successfully.

If you are so gotten by the domain in which you are leading, your contribution will create a better future. Leadership starts with love and trust. Love is experienced when you show compassion and you can't have compassion without listening. Similarly trust requires competency and you can't have competency without learning. Therefore you cannot lead without listening and learning.

Steps for servant leadership:

1. Show love and compassion
2. Create a compelling and shared vision
3. Communicate the created vision clearly
4. Take actions to make the vision a reality
5. Evaluate results and focus on the process
6. Keep doing it until you achieve the desired results

**Image 8.** Determining Readiness To Lead

Anyone can be a leader. But, by listening and learning before you lead, you will gain the necessary respect and attention from the people you're leading to progress forward. Leadership is just like entering a pool — you can either canon ball in for attention and upset those who were already in the pool, or you can wade in and integrate seamlessly with the rest of the participants. I encourage you to pay attention to the ways and reasons you are leading. Are you trying to make a splash to prove you are the best leader, or are you wading in and truly seeking to understand, committed to learn whatever is required so that you can forward the action and make a difference you truly stand for?

HOW TO IDENTIFY AND GROW INSPIRING LEADERS

At In Time Tec, we are very intentional with our approach toward success. We look at how leaders and their teams can work together toward a shared vision on page 55. We explore our commitment to results and our ability to shift focus when necessary on page 59. But one of the most important aspects of our success is our ability to balance the results produced and the people working toward those results.

Our company has 500 people worldwide. Of those 500 people, we are currently coaching about 150 people to build the future of In Time Tec. They are the group who will be developing the people, producing the results, and driving our company to the next level. Notice I listed "developing the people" first. Because you need people to produce results and reach the next level.

The Balance Between Results and People

Whether it's a sports team, a business, or any organization, you need people: people who come together to achieve a common goal. Any organization at any level needs to have a goal — to win the championship, to surpass last year's numbers, to increase visibility — but if you only focus on the goal and ignore the well-being of the people, you become obsessed with the outcome and the people feel neglected, which could ultimately lead to them leaving.

However, you also have to reach that shared goal. And if the people involved are only focused on each other, then the reason they came together cannot be realized. Therein lies a dilemma. Should you focus on results or on the people?

What I have found to be true throughout my leadership journey is that if you take care of the people, they will take care of the customers and the business. However, you cannot take

care of the people at the expense of the business. Sometimes leaders see it as a “one or the other choice.” But neither of those options are true leadership and there are consequences to favoring one over the other — or ignoring both altogether.

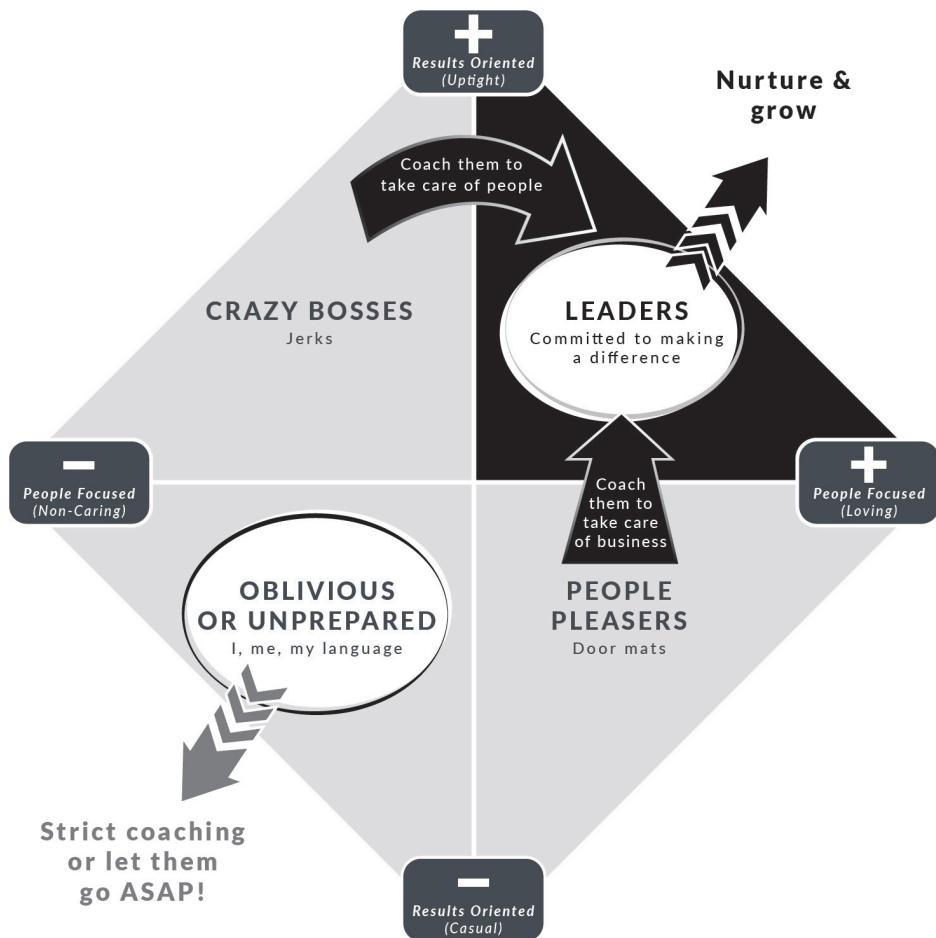


Image 9. Identifying and Growing Leaders in the Work Force

Oblivious and Unprepared

These are the managers who don't pay attention to the people or the results. This type of person has gotten stagnant in their career. They might have previously been a high-producing individual performer or a leader only by title in another department or organization. They are oblivious to the importance of their role and often use “I,” “me,” and “my” language.

Consequence: No contribution to the business, people are neglected, and possibilities are limited.

Action: I suggest letting them go or coming up with a very strict coaching plan that both outlines

the change needed in team morale and sets strict expectations for results. This will take a lot of focus and work so sometimes it is not even worth the time and energy, particularly when that time and energy can be used to coach others in the organization.

People Pleasers

There are also the so-called leaders that just want to make people happy. The people pleasers want to take the team out for lunch or drinks after work and be their friend but have no idea what the company's goals are or how their team is contributing to them.

This type of person may have some underlying emotional baggage they are carrying. They may have unfulfilled acknowledgement and love from important people in their lives. Perhaps they want to please others because they want to be liked. Or, these people lack capabilities and are generally not equipped to produce the necessary results. They tend to compensate by loving people to hide their incapabilities. The people pleasers think that by taking care of people, they will gain respect. But in actuality, they will not.

Consequence: Business with no clear accountability, favoritism toward certain people, and untrustworthy workplace.

Action: Train and educate people about the reality of not producing results. Tell them if their results do not meet expectations, you will still be there for them but explore with them why results are not being produced. Help them to understand that delivering results doesn't mean giving up on the people; it just means finding a balance. Show them how to measure the progress and hold people accountable when results are not up to par. This will be challenging for leaders who are people-focused because they don't want to look "bad" by being direct and demanding that their team delivers. You should keep reiterating that people are critical and company is critical too, as its survival depends on producing consistent results.

If you please people, it's about you but if you take a stand for people, it's about them.

Crazy Bosses

On the other end of the spectrum are the crazy bosses. They are too results-focused and their team feels micromanaged and doesn't have the space to create their own contribution to the goal. This can be discouraging and the team won't want to do anything if they feel they are just a number.

Just like the people pleasers, crazy bosses have emotional baggage they are carrying. They are afraid to let themselves and others down. They are the people who see the world in relation to what they achieve. They think, "If I do not produce results, people will not respect and like me." They feel they must deliver by any means, at any cost. These are also people who believe they

don't have time to care about others. It's go go go! As soon as this type of person completes one task, it's on to the next.

I look at it as treating employees as machines. They may produce big results, but people are unhappy and unmotivated around them. The outcome is that those people produce results, but it is not sustainable because the people feel used and will burn out over time.

Consequence: Unpredictable and unsustainable business results, unmotivated employees, and high pressure, unhappy workplace.

Action: There are many ways to help this type of manager focus on the team. When someone at In Time Tec is neglecting the people, I tell them I don't need their results and I want them to focus on loving and caring for people. For a period of time, I don't want them to talk about anything other than how they are taking care of people. During this conversation, I tell those managers that I will measure their performance based on how well they take care of the people and I re-emphasize they should never be producing results at the expense of their team. This means that I or other leaders may have to step in to help keep the business going and growing but the extra work is worth transforming these crazy bosses into inspiring leaders.

"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." - African proverb

Inspiring Leadership

To become an inspiring leader is the ultimate goal. This kind of leader clearly expresses love towards people while not compromising results. Taking care of the people while delivering on business objectives is their default way of working. This type of person lets their team know that each project is critical, results need to be produced, and without the team there is no project. They tell their team that they care for them and if they burn out or feel unmotivated at any time, they must let the leader know. It is a leader's commitment to take care of both the people and the business results.

Outcome: Sustainable and growing business, motivated team, happy and joyful workplace.

Action: There are no corrective actions to take when someone is showing up as an inspiring true leader. But there are things that can be done to continue to grow and improve.

It is important to include the team in creating and achieving the shared vision. Define the vision with the team and then ask them these questions:

1. What future are you committed to create?
2. What is the best way to achieve that future?
3. What time and resources do you need to realize that future?

That's the only way to ensure the team is fully bought into the shared vision and committed to the results.

Although that may seem like a lot of work at first, it's like climbing a mountain; when you look at the peak from the base, it can be scary. But if you inspire the team by enrolling them in the shared vision, give them the right skills and tools, and be there for them when they need you the most, then the peak is not actually that far.

Remember that a good leader takes people where they want to go, but a great leader takes people past the place where they think they want to go.

In order to produce results, you need to inspire and support people. Without people, there is no business. Without a business, there are no people. They go hand and hand and when you combine them, so many possibilities can be created. I encourage you to audit yourself and the next level of leaders on your team. The goal is to move towards the space where the people are taken care of and the business is growing. Once you reach that place, the world expands. That's true and inspiring leadership.

THE MOST IMPORTANT JOB OF ANY BUSINESS LEADER: LOVE AND LISTEN

I want you to think of all the people in your life and identify someone who is not living up to the potential you believe they have. It could be a friend who is always complaining about their job, a family member who is constantly fighting with someone, or an employee who doesn't seem to have found their spark.

Now I want you to get really present to how life must be for them. Do you truly know what their life looks like? Their fears and insecurities? The bigger hopes and dreams? How their relationships function? What their past holds? What does a day in their life entail?

You likely don't *really* know the answer to those questions.

Jamshed Bharucha⁹, President Emeritus of Cooper Union, has this to say on relating to others: "...keep trying to put yourself in the shoes of others whose frameworks or cultures are alien to you, and have an open mind to different ways of parsing the world. Before you critique a new idea, or another culture, master it to the point at which its proponents or members recognize that you get it."

Bharucha is asking you to lose your own opinions, judgements, evaluations, and beliefs to the point that others KNOW you relate to and understand what they are communicating. That kind of listening and acceptance creates a level of trust and love that can open up life for you and others. To be a fully supportive and loving leader in any area of your life, you need to disappear yourself to show up for the other person.

Every group (including families and friends), organization, or company — including yours — has a set of beliefs and network of conversations: shared visions, values, goals, and stories. Without

sharing those elements, there is no group culture. And without culture, the group won't last. However, you cannot create any of those things until there is listening, compassion, and love for each other.

Now here is where you lose yourself in your listening: Love and compassion creates growth within that group. This means that you love others so much that you sacrifice your opinion and expectations in the interest of other human being's growth and progress.

You so fully accept others and help them explore what is possible in an effort to help them grow and in turn grow the group, organization, or company. Without that kind of acceptance, others will not have a willingness to listen to you and could miss out on an opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute.

Now think of the person you identified earlier; recall the potential you believe they should be living into. And now understand that is the potential YOU have identified for them, not their own. So first, **let go of that**. And then make time to sit and really talk to them.

Here is a list of questions you can start with:

- How is life for you?
- What are some things you feel you're good at it?
- What is an area you believe you need to improve?
- What are you committed to in life?
- What are some areas of your life where you would like to produce results and feel you are not able to?
- What are some areas of your life where you face persistent challenges; money, career, health & fitness, relationship, or something else?
- Are you mostly a peaceful, happy, and joyful human being or do you feel life isn't fair?

As they respond, remember to listen to learn, not to evaluate. Opinions and judgements will show up. Ignore them. Keep listening and keep supporting the other person as they share.

People will be hesitant to share and that is okay. Keep working to show them that they can trust you. Create a safe space by reassuring them that nothing they share will ever be shared with anyone else. (And then honor your word.) Do this over and over again. Share out of your own life. It shows you are also willing to be vulnerable and that you trust them as well. Continue making time and asking questions to understand them. Though it takes time, it always works.

Once you get past the surface level answers and trust is present, it is time to dig into the real reasons why this person is the way they are, and if they are happy with who they are. The book Nonviolent Communication¹⁰ by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD., is a great resource for this next level of love and connection. Essentially, by listening for feelings, needs, and underlying requests, people can relate to each other in a meaningful way and get to the heart of the matter quickly and with empathy.

More often than not, people just want to be heard.

Once they are heard and know that you're there for them, they will be open to input and exploration about new possibilities that would impact their lives in a meaningful way. It is in these possibilities that you both can create new openings for growth and contribution. Share with them the potential you see for them. And then ask if they see the same potential. If they don't, ask them why. Help them navigate their answers.

Every human is capable of great things. And a great business leader will help them uncover that greatness by listening with love; that means listening without your own judgements and beliefs, which can get in your way to make a contribution in their lives. Ask meaningful questions to create a safe space for sharing. Then ask more. And finally, share what you see for that person and ask how you can support them in achieving their own fullest potential. After showing up in this way, you will have no problem answering all the questions mentioned at the beginning of the article because you would have truly lost yourself in your listening and love for the other person.

Every extraordinary human being was an ordinary human being in the start. *The ordinary human beings become extraordinary when they see what is possible.*

As a business leader, you are not only in the business of achieving numbers, you're also in the business of inspiring people to become extraordinary; and you can only inspire people to become extraordinary when you listen to others empathetically and love them unconditionally.

A KEY TO CREATING THE FUTURE:

The Leader, Followers, and Their Relationship

Everyday when I wake up, I ask myself three questions:

- Is something bothering me?
- Am I incomplete about anything?
- Am I being someone who can show up as a leader today?

Some people pray, some people meditate, some people go straight for the coffee, I reflect on my being state. This ritual allows me to become very present to what is missing that could get in the way of me showing up as the leader I am committed to being.

As a CEO of a global company, there is little to no room for error or ego. I am expected to be my best self every minute of every day. And that is great. It is also impossible, because I am human. I was recently faced with a situation in which an employee challenged my intent in a leadership meeting. While I was not upset by this, it did cause me to reflect on the possible gap of understanding that can exist between some leaders and the people they are leading.

Show Up For Yourself as a Leader

In order to show up as a leader for others, you must first show up as a leader for yourself. I treat myself and my thoughts with dignity and respect. I make sure I am healthy, peaceful, and joyful in all areas of my life. After all, if I don't show up for myself in that way, how can I expect others to show up for me that way?

I also make sure I am complete with myself so I can give my whole self and full attention to those I am leading, which starts with the above questions I ask myself every morning. The

importance of this ritual was made very clear when the situation at the leadership meeting arose. I was not upset by the challenge, because I was complete with myself and fully listening to what the employee was actually trying to share. I was able to be present and recognize what was missing for the employee in that situation.

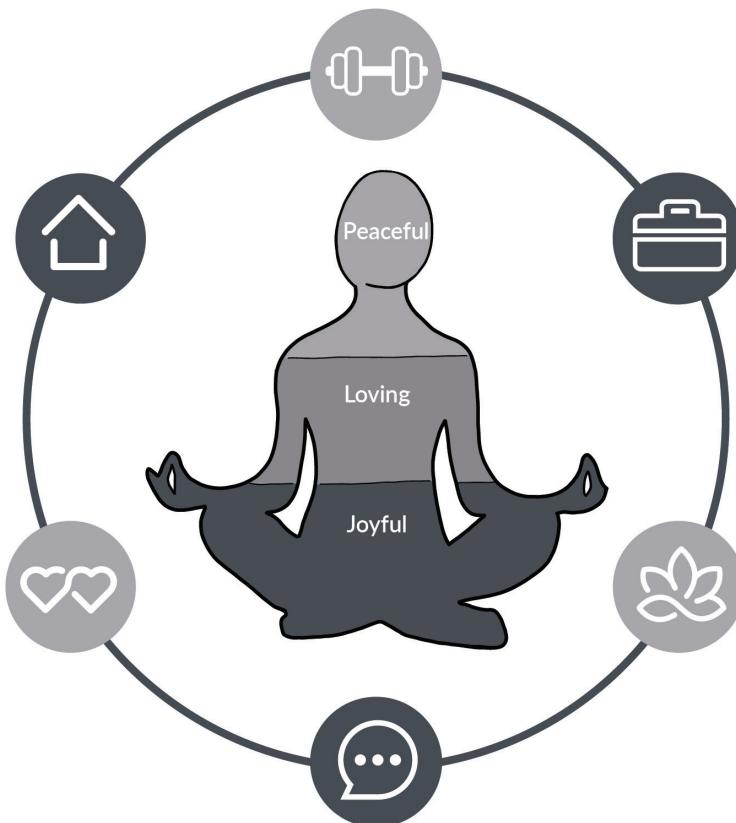


Image 10. Peace in All Areas of Life

Equally as important as starting your day with the three questions is reflecting on your leadership at the end of the day. Ask yourself: How could I have shown up differently? Was there a situation in which I missed something that I need to clean up tomorrow? Then, make sure to take the required actions right away.

Relationships Between Leaders and People They are Leading

Leadership isn't one-directional. It is a two-way street where both leaders and followers should be open, communicative, and caring. Additionally, it is a constant journey both parties are involved in. This creates an essential time for followers to offer their leaders what I like to call feed-forward. I refrain from using the word feedback, as you can't change the past but you can always create the future. Without providing feed-forward, the leader won't know what needs to improve. That being said, the leader needs to be open to hearing feed-forward from the followers and implementing the shared insights into their leadership.

Leaders are never perfect. In fact, I look at perfection as a recipe for disaster. Both leaders and followers need to leave room for failure. If not, expect to be disappointed many times. With failure, both the leader and followers need to be committed to being open. Without openness, the leader is bound to fail in the end. The relationship between a leader and those they are leading varies constantly. Since we are all human, it is important that both sides offer each other grace for their mistakes. Followers should offer grace to the leader for their first mistake.

***A leader must earn followers' trust and respect,
while followers must treat the leader with
grace and kindness.***

However, if the leader continues to make the same mistake, followers should hold the leader accountable and make sure that it does not happen again. When a leader is met with resistance, it most likely means they are not listening to something in their follower's sharing. In the end, both the leader and followers are working towards achieving the same goal, and until their relationship is based on love, care, and openness, the desired outcome won't be attained.

Creating a shared vision is the key to a successful relationship between leaders and followers. As a leader, I always make sure to be transparent about why we are together. I clearly define the "what," "why," and "how" of the vision to ensure the followers are aligned with the vision. Sharing the success metrics is an additional way that I involve my followers in the process. The last critical step in this process is for a leader to make sure it is clear with the followers what to expect when the team falls short. If the leader lacks this transparent communication, their leadership could be undermined.

Ways For the Leader to Listen

The leader should always share with their followers what they can count on them for. I always explicitly let my followers know that I am open for feed-forward. This gives me an opportunity to improve and make changes.

In order to get feed-forward, the leader should be upfront about it. I like to ask questions such as:

- "What should I start doing?"
- "What should I stop doing?"
- "What should I continue doing?"

These questions give the leader an opportunity to figure out what is working well, and what is not working well. By continuously asking some of these self-reflecting questions, I have been able to improve my leadership skills and strengthen my relationship with my followers.

Ways For the Followers to Share

As a follower, you must hold the leader accountable in order for him to lead the group effectively. This is where it is critical that followers have the courage and trust to provide feed-forward. This step will benefit both you as a follower and the leader. Followers should always focus on the “thing” that is not working for them, rather than on the “person” who is leading them.

For example, instead of saying, “It bothers me you are always late to meetings,” you can share that the meetings are not effective if the leader is late. That ensures the leader is not being attacked while still allowing a conversation to lead to change. While providing this feed-forward, it is also necessary that you remain kind and loving towards the leader. When followers help support the leader to get better, everyone benefits from it and the group achieves remarkable results.

Living Leadership

It is important to note that leadership is not a switch that you can turn on and off. If you are committed to being a leader, it is essential to ensure that you are constantly living leadership and must be consistent with everything that you do.

In our related podcast discussion, our followers share a few ways that leadership is lived:

- Empathize with followers
- Let your ego go
- Want the best for every follower
- Connect big picture to day-to-day tasks
- Show up with followers in any situation and be there with them

Leadership is a life-long journey. It can be challenging at times, but the reward of helping others to reach their highest potential is remarkable.

The group moves forward and amazing results are produced when leaders make a commitment to being whole and complete all the time and show up for their followers with the leadership mindset. At the end of the day leadership is all about serving others so, if one isn't serving the followers, one shouldn't be a leader.

Whether you're in a leadership position or following someone, I encourage you to take a look at how things are happening around your life. If you are in a leadership position, ask yourself, “How am I showing up for my followers?”, “Do I work hard to lead my followers effectively?” If you are a follower, ask yourself, “How am I showing up for my leader?” “Do I work with my leader shoulder-to-shoulder and help him to lead effectively?” The relationship between the leader and followers most of the time decides whether a group achieves mediocre results or great results. If a group of people is committed to creating the future, the relationship between the leader and followers is the key; the leader must earn followers' trust and respect, while followers must treat the leader with grace and kindness.

HOW TO ACHIEVE EXTRAORDINARY RESULTS WHILE ENJOYING LIFE

There is a distinction between commitment and attachment. One focuses on the process, the other focuses on the results. One can leave you peaceful and constantly improving and the other can leave you disappointed, frustrated, or generally unhappy.

When I was a child, I started to base my worth on the results I produced: my good grades meant my mother would compliment me, better cricket skills meant I was more popular with the kids in my village. The better the results, the more attention and love I got. It didn't matter how I got there, as long as the end result was impressive. This is common for most humans. Young children cannot distinguish why they are getting the attention and only look at what causes it. So my young brain rationalized that I was being rewarded for the results I was producing and this led to a relentless pursuit of success through my teen years and most of my early adulthood.

But something was missing. Each time I did not meet a goal or achieve a result I aimed for, I was extremely displeased and I began to see myself as unworthy or not good enough. I was so attached to the result that I did not pay attention to the process taken to get there. I had to shift my approach to success in order to actually be successful.

Commitment vs Attachment

It is important to distinguish the difference between commitment and attachment. Most people don't give much thought to the difference but the meanings of each can change how the word is interpreted. Below are the Merriam-Webster definitions:

Commitment is the state of being dedicated to a cause.

Attachment is being emotionally connected to something.

Notice the use of “state of being” in the definition of commitment. In other words, your whole self is so dedicated to what you are up to that it becomes who you are. In every step in your journey to achieve results, you show up as the kind of person who produces the results you are seeking without worrying about the actual outcome. For example, if you are committed to living a healthier lifestyle, you show up everyday as the kind of person who lives a healthier lifestyle. You don’t even give a second thought to eating cleaner because that is just who you are. That is commitment.

On the other hand, if you are attached to living a healthier lifestyle, you are emotionally attached to what that lifestyle can give you. Maybe it is a smaller pants size or to be able to hike a mountain. So when you don’t see those results, you have an emotional reaction — sad, frustrated, disappointed, or defeated.

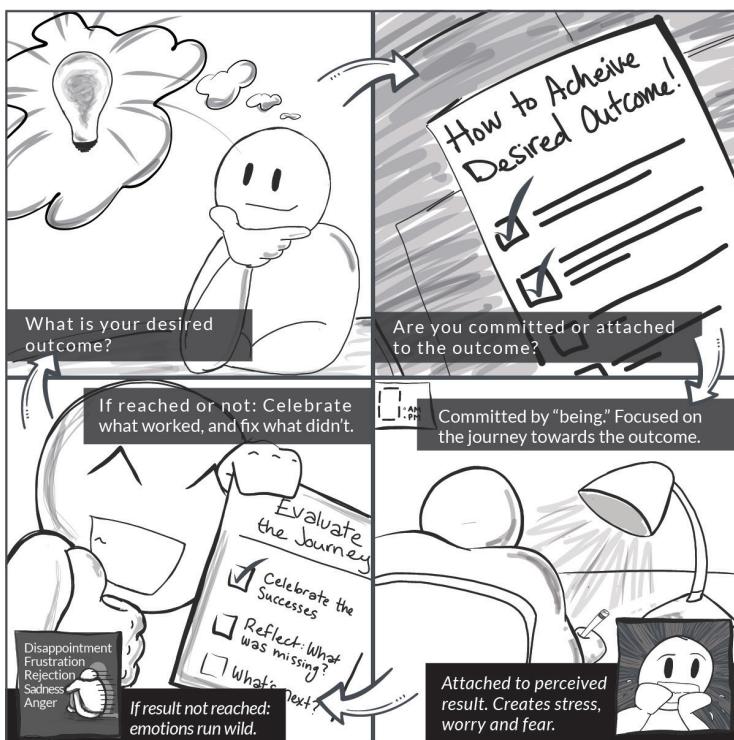


Image 11. Committed VS Attached Outcomes

When In Time Tec was founded in 2009, all five co-founders made a declaration that our company would focus on creating abundance. We had no emotional attachment to any actual results, but we were deeply committed to the process of creating abundance. We were dedicated to HOW and WHY we were doing things and not WHAT we were looking to get out of it. Yes, we still set goals, we still had milestones, but we took our time to ensure that the process to achieve them was intentional, meaningful, and in line with our core values of trust, transparency, integrity, and leadership. Our state of being was dedicated to consistently being the type of company that achieved those results the right way.

Focus on the Process and Evaluate Progress

As the game you are playing gets bigger and more meaningful to you, you cannot produce results until you focus on process. You might try but until you are intentional about how to get there, you will inevitably be faced with a negative emotional reaction to the outcome.

Everyone has heard the quote by Norman Vincent Peale, "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars." What he is saying is that even if you don't reach your original goal, the work you did to get there will still provide incredible results. So if you are committed to living a 100% clean-eating lifestyle and sometimes fail, you will still see massive changes in your health that would have otherwise not been possible. And those changes will be consistent because you focused on the process and not the end result.

A nice side effect is that you'll be happy, peaceful, and enjoying life while going through the process.

Similarly, in business, if you are committed to an ambitious goal and focus on how and why you are going to achieve it, even if you don't meet that exact goal, all the work you did in an attempt to reach that goal has still moved the needle in the right direction. This kind of approach to any declaration you make will be the most effective way to produce consistent results, regardless of outcome.

One important thing to look at along the way is your actual progress. Are you on track to reach your goal? If so, keep going. If not, you need to figure out what is missing that could be causing you to be off track.

Analyze What's Missing

You may reach a point in your journey that you are no longer seeing the benefit of or finding joy in the process. Either you have run out of patience or you know the results are not going to come. At this point, it is time to step back and analyze.

You need to figure out what is missing. Why are you no longer finding joy and lacking patience or not seeing the results? It will take time and concerted effort to work through the process. So if you are just frustrated about the timeline, you are not committed. With a healthier lifestyle, if you are still not able to hike that mountain, you might want to give up. But what you might be missing is that you can now hike farther up the mountain than you could four months ago. What you have accomplished by focusing on the process has moved you closer to your goal.

Furthermore, think about what is missing if the process is no longer working. Are you not tackling the right tasks, are you not spending enough time, are you really just not that

committed to the outcome? It might be that your internal drive is not in alignment with your goal. If it is no longer inspiring to you, it could be time to declare a different outcome.

Life will move forward whether or not you produce results or achieve your goals.

What matters is that on a daily basis you are invested and committed to the process. The outcomes you seek are just by-products of the process you are focusing on every day.

At In Time Tec, we are committed to becoming a \$100 million company by 2024 so everyday we show up as people who build \$100 million companies and we focus on the process it will take to get there. If 2022 comes along and we are not on track to meet that goal, we will adjust our expectations but never give up. We will identify what is missing, how we can change course, and what it will take to get there.

For us, because we operated in the space of commitment to creating abundance over the past 10 years, we now have a company culture where all of our employees dedicated their lives to creating abundance for themselves, their families, co-workers, clients, and the communities we live in. As you think about your own life, consider changing your approach to your goals and the results you want to produce.

Are you attached to the outcome or are you committed to the process? A simple but powerful distinction between these two will affect whether **you're achieving a lot of results but not experiencing life or having a lot of fun and living a meaningful life.**

JEET RECOMMENDED READS

- 1 Good to Great by Jim Collins
- 2 Built to Last by Jim Collins and Jerry I. Porras
- 3 Execution by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan
- 4 Leading Change by John P. Kotter
- 5 Magic of Thinking Big by David J. Schwartz
- 6 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey
- 7 The Saint, the Surfer, and the CEO by Robin Sharma
- 8 Developing the Leader Within You by John C. Maxwell
- 9 Developing the Leaders Around You by John C. Maxwell
- 10 The Untethered Soul by Michael A. Singer
- 11 The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle
- 12 The Speed of Trust by Stephen R. Covey
- 13 The Three Laws of Performance by Steve Zaffron
- 14 Tribal Leadership by Dave Logan, John King, Halee Fischer-Wright
- 15 Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari
- 16 The Surrender Experiment by Michael A. Singer
- 17 Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Above all, I want to devote this book to my wife, Vijju. I could not even imagine my life without her. Thank you, Vijju, for being on my side in good times and not-so-good times. You have been the inspiration and cornerstone of my life. No words can ever be enough to express my gratitude for the scarifies you have made to make me the person I am today.

My kids are my source of joy in life. Jai and Jiya, you taught me the value of love and offered me a real-life example of what is possible when you shower people with an unconditional love. Thank you for becoming the kind of humans you both have now become. If not for you both, I could not have been peaceful and joyful in life. And without peace and joy in life, not only this book, but many other creations would not have been possible.

Growing up was full of scarcity, but I got a lot of comfort knowing that my mom and sisters were on my side. I will be always be indebted to them for taking care of me in those formidable days of life and shaping me into the kind of human being I am today. The experiences I had in those narrow alleys of my native town in India taught me that life could be better for me and could be better for others. This sense of realization gave me the purpose to be more, do more, and have more.

Also, this creation would not have been possible without my business partners – Dan Puga, Sandeep Jain, Matt Fratzke, and Rakesh Sawan. Their unshakable commitment and tireless efforts have created the platform that is In Time Tec. I am blessed to not only call them co-founders but also brothers.

To all In Time Tec employees, thank you for being a stand for yourself, for the company, for every client, and for CREATING ABUNDANCE. Seeing each of you grow into a powerful human being and seeing you what you create truly answers my life's "why."

To the communication team - your creativity, your hard work, and your dedication have brought this book, along with so much more, to fruition.

To all those listed above and all those who have read this book - Thank you, I love you all so much.

Endnotes

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A Quick Look Inside...

Insights Into Creating Abundance is a collection of articles by Jeet Kumar, ranging from self-reflection and growth to leadership skills and tools. Over the course of his life, Jeet has gained unique insight into how to be a powerful presence in your life and in the lives of those around you. Immediately inspiring and endlessly actionable, these articles offer new perspectives to common experiences in a way that leaves the reader excited to take on life and leave an impact on the world.

"In navigating modern work and cultures, Jeet's lessons are important preparations for any aspiring leader. They are a galvanizing reminder to continually pour selflessly and without ego into your tribe, to create true abundance."

Sheli Gartman, CEO Women Ignite, Speaker, Organizational Culture Expert

"Jeet has taken time not only to master inspirational leadership but to then demonstrate his integrity by documenting and sharing his experience, giving us the opportunity to learn by his example and shared wisdom."

Adam Boswell, Director of Engineering - Kount



Jeet Kumar

Jeet Kumar is the CEO and co-founder of In Time Tec, a multi-million dollar global software company. Jeet has dedicated his life to creating abundance through his company, his content, and his relationships. He lives in Eagle, Idaho with his wife and two kids.