**Aspiration**

Have a well-structured and time phased set of ambitious aspirations. They are clear, sequential and build on each other.

Have a broad range of self-awareness which is evident. You talk about skills that are innate and positive for you and at the same time, you frame your challenge areas with the possibility for growth.

Are able to forecast into the future and be specific about WHY you want to grow. Your WHY has synergy to it – you talk about overlapping skill sets and you convey a sense of excitement and passion when you talk about your ambitious aspiration. You are able to describe your trajectory forward and your growth area has an appropriate sense of scope and scale.

Are open and flexible about how things might unfold in the future and you ground these in the opportunities you see for yourself. You are honest about the uncertainty and you talk about your growth aspiration in a way that shows intrinsic motivation and resilience.

Have thought hard about why your ambitious aspiration is so important to you and you have anchored your thinking to be very aligned with your personal values.

Try to think hard about WHY you have chosen this growth goal over another area you could have chosen. Think about partnering with a friend and ask them to run a WHYs exercise with you. Ask them to keep asking you WHY until you have identified the root reason for why this growth goal is important to you.

Eg: if your growth goal is “to shape the future organisation”, your friend asks you:

“Why is shaping the future organisation so important?”

You: “I want to……”

Friend: “Why do you want to ……?”

Etc

Etc

You will likely find the intrinsic motivator for why you have chosen this growth goal and in turn, knowing this information will help you keep on track.

If your ambitious aspiration is quite narrow in scope, ask yourself the question: “What scope have I limited myself to in my ambitious aspiration and is that scope justified?”

**Inner voice**

Framed your failure with some sense of humor

Framed your failure in a way that has a clear sense of “release” to it. You indicated your personal lessons learned and the ability to move on.

Showed no overwhelming sense of shame or denial about your failure.

How you describe your inner voice as asking questions and running “what if?” scenarios.

Framed your failure in a way that has a clear sense of “release” to it. You indicated your personal lessons learned and the ability to move on. Furthermore you showed no overwhelming sense of shame or denial about your failure. These are all really positive indicators of a growth mindset.

Don’t really have outdated stories; the stories you shared all had a facet of growth and adaptability baked into them.

Are able to describe your inner voice accurately. When think about our negative inner voice, it’s a great path to help understand ourselves better. The key is to watch it, understand it, explore its cause – there is a huge amount of learning in there if you can figure out the logic and grammar behind it.

When your inner voice comes too loud and negative, you try to mentally PAUSE your thoughts and PULL BACK to evaluate the message you are sending yourself. You actively seek out memories of where you have been successful in similar tasks.

Have a couple of “go to” phrases you tell yourself when your inner voice is overly negative. Eg. “my work does have value”

When your inner voice comes too loud and negative, try to mentally PAUSE your thoughts and PULL BACK to evaluate the message you are sending yourself. Actively seek out memories of where you have been successful in similar tasks.

Try to speed up the time you take to “release” yourself from a failure. It’s tempting to spend a lot of time analysing and going back through perceived failures with a “what if” and blame oriented mind movie. The challenge here is that this can entrench a sense of blame and/or shame in ourselves which is counterproductive in a growth mindset context. Instead try to allocate yourself a fixed period of time to analyse and/or worry about the failure. Then be kind to yourself. Shift and reframe your thinking to “find the learning” - reflect on how the situation is an opportunity to learn and grow.

Get very familiar with a couple of “go to” phrases you can tell yourself when your inner voice is overly negative. Eg. “this feeling will pass”, “It doesn’t need to be perfect first time” “you’ve got this”

Melody Wilding encourages us to name our inner critic. This leverages cognitive defusion — a process by which you separate yourself from your thoughts. Defusion is shown to reduce discomfort, believability, and the stress of negative thoughts. It also builds capacity to steady your mind and manage your emotions.

If your inner voice continues to tell you “I told you that you couldn’t do it”, then direct your thinking to “Find the Learning”. This is about exploring what you were able to learn even if you weren’t successful on your first attempt.

Your inner voice has a tendency to look for external validation as proof (Maria is doing this, Sarah has accomplished that, I’ve only done this) and there’s a tendency to frame the lack of traction or failure as high stakes or high risk. Try to reframe your inner voice to be more about competing to get better vs. competing so as not to lose.

For a growth mindset, competition is what makes us grow. We value and celebrate the success of other people because it inspires us to keep pushing. We appreciate that it took effort, not luck, for any successful person to achieve what he/she has in life.

Sometimes our outdated stories are literally wired into our brains after years of rehearsal. This means that they are likely to be inflexible and we also become attached to their content. Both these factors means that sometimes we cannot remind ourselves that they are, in fact, only stories. The best way to free ourselves from an outdated story is to step back and view it objectively. Don’t think about it - just notice it.

Ask yourself the following questions:

Where did this story come from?

Is this my story or someone else’s?

Is this story true of me now?

Is this story contributing to or undermining my happiness?

Do I choose to continue to live this story or is it time to write a new one?

**Reassurance**

Able to reframe rapidly and towards a positive or “growth” oriented mind set;

Can counter your negative inner voice with encouragement and reassurance. You mention forms of reality setting. You can acknowledge your limits in a reasonable way.

Are able to counter your negative inner voice with encouragement. You portray agility in your thinking and ability to identify options.

Your Inner voice is encouraging, mentions forms of reality setting, addresses and acknowledges limits but is reasonable. You portray agility in your thinking and ability to identify options.

Had a really good example of “letting go” which included adopting new skill sets. I particularly liked how you acknowledged setbacks and failures as a part of the process.

Are able to regularly practice habits towards a positive or “growth” oriented mind set; You recognise that physical energy plays an important role in your resilience and reassurance and you are able to spot warning signs and reframe negative thinking by good habits (like going outside, walking, meditating).

Use reassuring phrases, like “you can do this” to help counter your negative inner voice.

Use reassuring phrases, like “you can’t always please everyone or next time we will do it differently” to help counter your negative inner voice.

Are able to practice a technique that Rich Fernandez in his HBR article calls “Decentering”. It is the process of being able to pause, to observe the experience from a factual standpoint, and then to try to solve the problem. When we are able to cognitively take a step back from how we are feeling and label those thoughts and emotions, we are guiding our thinking to the more observational parts of our brains.

We often say negative things to ourselves that we would never say to any other human being. If your inner voice is becoming too shaming or negative, pause and say to yourself “take it easy on yourself” or “try to be kinder to yourself”.

It was a clear example of the spotlight effect — a tendency in which you misjudge and overestimate how much attention others pay to your behavior.

Try to keep your eye on the bigger picture to avoid the spotlight effect. This is when you zero in on a singular negative event. Instead, think of a bell curve: you’ll likely perform average or higher than average most days. Some days will be below average, and that’s normal.

If you feel good about a plan but start to experience the “Who do you think you are? You mustn't do this," feedback loop—that tends to be driven by fear. Try to reframe this fear by reflecting on the fact that the real risk is continuing to get the same results you’re already getting.

Try to think back to a time where you were able to let go of an old way of doing something. And remember the emotions you felt when you were able to let go. Channel that positive emotion to encourage and reassure yourself that whilst it feels uncomfortable now, it will feel good in the end.

Consider starting a journal for situations when **“fill in development area”** starts to feel more challenging. It will help you isolate situations which may trigger default behaviors. Being able to spot and anticipate situations where you feel more vulnerable is the first step to figuring out what needs to change to keep your positive momentum.

Ask yourself positive questions to reassure yourself and quieten your inner voice eg. “What else can I enjoy right now?” or “What IS going right in my life?”

If you are presented with a great opportunity but it appears too difficult because there are too many obstacles, instead of turning down the opportunity, reframe the challenge by asking yourself: “Perhaps navigating these obstacles IS the way that I move forward?”

Being able to openly admit mistakes within your team is one of the key pillars around creating psychological safety. One leadership skill in this area is to encourage learning from failure and disappointment and openly share your hard-won lessons learned from mistakes. Using candor when expressing disappointment in yourself conveys authenticity and credibility.

**Curiosity**

Embrace a mindset that focuses on the importance of learning new things to help advance your ambitious aspiration. You are open to evolving your thinking based on new information and perspectives. You appear comfortable when reversing a decision and/or accepting a new viewpoint which is alternate to regular thinking.

Don’t have a problem coming up with something new that was learned.

Are prepared to examine your assumptions and clarify whether they are correct or not by seeking more information.

One tip to broaden your curiosity is a technique called assumption bowling. List what you consider as “truths” about your ambitious aspiration, now line them up (aim for about 5) and then try to bowl them over by asking yourself the question “what would I do if this was no longer true”? Capture all these ideas and you will find new areas to explore.

Ask yourself the question: “what information could I get that I don’t have today that would help me achieve my ambitious aspiration?”

Reflect on this statement: “In business today, it is not about what you know but how fast you learn.”

A sure way to increase your curiosity is by asking questions:

Why did he respond that way?

What could be a different interpretation of what she said?

Where does the informal power sit in the company structure?

Why did my thinking evolve that way?

How could I do it differently?

What, why, when, who, where, and how are the best friends of curious people.

Keep building your knowledge of engaging with people very different from yourself. With respect to the CEO of the new venture, seek out information that will help you understand better his perspectives and norms – it doesn’t mean you need to agree with them, simply understanding his perspective and frames of reference helps drive cognitive empathy.

Pat Heim’s book Hardball for Women, Winning at the Game of Business: Third Edition gives practical advice on decoding male business culture and helps women break patterns of behavior that put them at a disadvantage.

Consider running a values cards exercise – Richard Leider has a good set. https://richardleider.com/calling-cards/ This will help you unpack specifically what values are core for you and understand better why XXXX. You can then use this knowledge to continue making progress against your ambitious aspiration .

Be wary of making too quick and wide sweeping assumptions about situations and other people. Instead try a little technique called assumption bowling. This is when you write down 2-3 of your most strongly held assumptions and you "bowl" them over by saying "what would I think or feel if this were no longer true?". It is a great technique to help reframe how you think about a given issue or challenge.

**Autonomy**

Can show that you are intellectually autonomous by critically evaluating ideas, evidence and experiences from an open-minded and reasoned perspective.

Demonstrate that you have a strong sense of autonomy as you think about how you will make progress against your ambitious aspiration. You have control over your next steps and show motivation and energy to make them happen!

Being able to choose from different options is a big driver in helping to feel autonomy. Try to maximise the different options you can choose from to achieve your ambitious aspiration.

Try to focus on what you can control. Top sports coaches tell their players they can’t control the weather, the crowd, the stadium, the pitch but they can control E = your effort; A = your attitude; R = your response.

Practice feeling intellectually autonomous by critically evaluating ideas, evidence and experiences from an open-minded and reasoned perspective.

Our actions arise from our belief system. Normally we try to change based on a list of what we want which often ends up being listed down as a set of outcomes. An alternative way of thinking centers on who we want to become. Eg “identity based habits”. Eg. if our goal is to improve our ability to lead people, think about your identity as a leader and what you might need to do to accentuate and reinforce that identity.

Pay attention to what you tell yourself inside and how you show up in the outside world. Eg. maybe you often say yes to things you don’t really want to do or you do things to please others at the expense of pleasing yourself. This can eat away at your autonomy. Reflect on why you think that happens.

Here’s some techniques to try:

Practice the three C’s when you communicate:

* Be Confident: tell yourself you can handle this. You are composed
* Be Clear: state what you want to say simply and without exaggeration
* Be Controlled: mirror the other person’s emotions and remain in control

Remind yourself that you are valuable, your time is valuable and your ambitious aspiration is valuable. If you are setting or resetting boundaries to help with your growth, remember you are not responsible for the other person’s reaction to the boundary you are setting. You are only responsible for communicating it in a respectful way.

**Resilience/Reframe**

When facing tough times, you deliberately remember your WHY for embarking on your ambitious aspiration. Recalling the higher level purpose as to why you chose your ambitious aspiration gives you the necessary energy to get you back on track. This strong intrinsic motivation gives you the reassurance and energy to keep forging ahead.

Show great resilience and grit to secure your undergraduate degree and gave several examples of your ongoing commitment to self-improvement and life-long learning. This growth mindset quality plays a major part in helping you reach your full potential.

Show a wonderful sense of experimentation and adventure when tackling new situations – this type of approach is at the heart of a growth mindset

Have developed techniques that “disrupt” a negative spiral of your inner voice to allow you to move to more productive thinking and reflection.

Have great reassurance techniques such that you are not affected by what other people think or say. I particularly liked your self talk around how people don’t think about you as much as you think they do.

Have great reassurance techniques such that you have learned how to remain strong and resilient in spite of what adversity you might encounter and what others might say or do. I particularly liked how a) you calibrate the setback ("no one's going to pass away if we get this wrong, there'll be opportunities for us to get it right"), b) calibrate emotions over time ("will you feel this same way in a month's time?") and c) engage in positive self talk "it may not go as you envision it, but you will get through"

Emotional support is correlated positively to resilience. When you are facing tough or stressful times in pursuing your ambitious aspiration, you seek out people in your life who can give care and encouragement. It’s been scientifically proven that this can help you positively adapt to difficult circumstances.

Recognise that setting boundaries is a form of self-care. It helps to create a clear guideline/rule/limits of how you would like to be treated. They let others know what is and what is not okay/acceptable. It honours our needs and wants so that we feel respected and safe.

Recognise that you have a tendency towards perfectionism and have worked hard to address it with your team. You seem to recognize the opportunity cost and time of your behavior and challenge yourself as to whether you are using your time wisely. This reflection and reframing is a clear indicator of a growth mindset (and is very hard to do, well done!)

One tip to help you reframe how you think about a specific issue is a technique called assumption bowling. List what you consider as “truths” about your ambitious aspiration, now line them up (aim for about 5) and then try to bowl them over by asking yourself the question “what would I do if this was no longer true”? Capture all these ideas and you will find new areas to explore.

We talked briefly about imposter syndrome. See my email for more details. I would encourage you to ask yourself the following questions:

When you think about those geniuses at the GCC Council…. Where is this story coming from? Where/how is this story being confirmed?

Think about defining a worry allocation e.g. I’m going to worry about not measuring up with these geniuses for a defined period of time. Eg. I’ll allow myself to do that until end October but after that I’ll have done my worrying and I’m going to move on to taking action.

When facing tough times, try to remember your WHY for embarking on your ambitious aspiration. Recalling the higher level purpose as to why you chose your ambitious aspiration can give you the necessary energy to get you back on track.

Emotional support is correlated positively to resilience. When you are facing tough or stressful times in pursuing your ambitious aspiration, seek out people in your life who can give care and encouragement. It’s been scientifically proven that this can help you positively adapt to difficult circumstances.

John Hargrave talks about mind hacking as a way to keep moving ahead in pursuit of our goals. He encourages us to think about our “mind movies”. They are constantly running in loops and so it’s important to pull back and observe your mind. “What was my mind just thinking and is that accurate?” These mental mind movies tend to be comprised of Emotions/Thoughts/Actions. The acronym METAL is a helpful reminder. It stands for My Emotion Thought Action Loops. When you reflect on your ambitious growth aspiration, write down 2-3 positive Emotion/Thought/Action loops that will help you make progress.

Martin Segliman in his book Learned Optimism encourages us to counter setbacks in three different ways:

1. Permanence – remember very few things in life are 100% permanent.
2. Pervasiveness – challenge yourself as to whether something is ALWAYS the case or simply an isolated incident
3. Personal – it might not always be your fault. Other people can have bad days too.

Don’t forget self-care. Eating well, exercising and getting enough sleep all contribute to your personal resilience when facing setbacks.

Rich Fernandez in his HBR article advises practicing a technique called “Decentering”. It is the process of being able to pause, to observe the experience from a neutral standpoint, and then to try to solve the problem. When we are able to cognitively take a step back from how we are feeling and label those thoughts and emotions, we are guiding our thinking to the more observational parts of our brains.

One way to do this is to isolate the number one thing that is most stressful in your challenge and develop a plan to resolve it. Achieving the first small step in overcoming your challenge gives you the energy to keep building your momentum.

Explore the Pomodoro Technique as a way to help you get to grips with tasks that don’t fill you with energy! You mentioned your research literature review for example.

Step 1: identify the research paper to be reviewed.

Step 2: Set the pomodoro timer (traditionally to 20-25 minutes) – you can buy a Pomodoro timer on Amazon!

Step 3: Work on the task.

Step 4: Stop work when the timer rings and put a checkmark on a piece of paper.

Step 5: If you have fewer than four checkmarks, take a short break (3–5 minutes) and then return to step 2; otherwise continue to step 6.

Step 6: After four pomodoros, take a longer break (15–30 minutes), reset your checkmark count to zero, then go to step 1.

When managing perfectionism, recognize the opportunity cost and time of your behavior. Ask yourself: “Am I using my time wisely? Am I being productive?” Reflect on your thinking and reframe if necessary to maximise the impact of your work. Invite others in early on to calibrate your standards - you may discover it’s “already good enough”.

Work on your time management in these areas:

1. being more aggressive with your delegation to your team (for those who want it and can handle it, whilst remembering to capability build whilst doing so).
2. extending the time horizon for how you plan your week, month, year.
3. remember to work on upward communication if you have 5 urgent, burning hot priorities from your line manager, it’s very productive to engage with them, listing them out and saying “which order of priority do you wish these actions to be handled?”

When you feel like you are too affected by what other people think or say, remember these points:

1. People don’t think about you as much as you think they do.
2. There’s only one and unique you. Try to reframe your thinking. Look at it differently and remember that you are the only version of you: you are unique, special and perfect in your own way.
3. Think hard about how does someone else’s opinion really affect you and your life (if someone disapproves of something you’ve done or said). In two weeks, will you care as much?
4. Try to stop worrying about something someone ‘might’ do or say in the future. Be ever present in the here and now and remember that you have full responsibility for your own thoughts.
5. Psychologist, Raj Raghunathan Ph.D describes it as “Hurt people do hurt people.” Even if you do your best to be kind and considerate, you may still be judged negatively by others. This is not a reflection of your failings; rather, it is a reflection on where others are coming from. People often behave in the only way they know. Recognizing this can help you become a little more compassionate towards others, and thereby, lower your worry about what others think of you.
6. Work on trying to control what you pay attention to. This is about making a conscious choice about what you want to focus on and directing your mind away from those things on which you do not wish to focus.

Nonviolent Communication is a communication and conflict resolution method developed by Marshall Rosenberg to communicate in a respectful, yet powerful way with other people, avoiding several traps in communication due to clashing egos and/or making the other person feel he or she is been treated unfairly or disrespectfully.

The NVC method has 4 steps:

1. Observe and identify the situation without evaluating or judging

2. Identify the feeling inside of yourself

3. Identify your need or desire

4. Formulate a request

The background of NVC is each person is responsible for his own life, and one cannot force others to feel, think or act in the way one wishes.

In Train to Speak, Elaine Doyle says: Changing focus, changes everything

Try these focus changing exercises that will flip your mindset toward a positive one.  A positive way to improve your public speaking confidence and negate a fixed mindset in other areas in your life where negative closed mindset thinking creeps in.

1.Choose to focus on the positive what ifs – what if they smile and clap, what if they come up to congratulate me and tell me how much they enjoyed my speech, what if they contact me later?

2. Choose to focus on the audience rather than yourself.

3. Focus on the preparation of your speech, not as a speech but rather a gift to the audience.  The audience may have attended for information or insights.  You might be telling them about something they don’t know about yet, that would benefit them.

4. Consider your speech delivery as the time to give the gift, delivering the speech with the same level of enthusiasm, sincerity and joy.

5. Evaluate your progress in speech writing and delivery.  Celebrate your existing skills and challenge yourself to go outside your comfort zone, team up with a mentor or “speaking buddy” or work with a communications coach.

**Feedback**

Growth mindset people embrace feedback as valuable information that allows them to improve. Sometimes it’s a question of reframing how we think about negative or developmental feedback. Check out Thanks for the Feedback by Sheila Heen and Douglas Stone – it helps us deconstruct some of the reasons why we find developmental feedback hard to hear.

And remember….

All feedback is perception. As a result, any single piece of feedback you receive is clouded more by the giver’s filters than by what you actually did. So do remember that when you hear critical feedback, think about it as “this person’s perception of a specific behaviour”. Developing this perspective allows you to stay in that judgement-free mindset when you hear something that you believe is unfair or inaccurate.

Think about feedback as information. You can choose to use it (or not) as a single piece of information in your pursuit of your ambitious aspiration.

**Reward**

Have an extremely clear understanding of the payoff you will experience if you are successful in achieving your ambitious aspiration. You recognise that your payoff will allow you to lift up, inspire and guide many more people in your community. You are clear on why this is important to you and how it links to your broader mission on this earth. I particularly liked how you were able to link it back to your “younger self” experience and how you now want to pay it forward to help others in the same way. The powerful intrinsic motivation you have will power you forward even if you face difficulties along the way.

Think carefully about how you are defining the payoff or reward you will get when you achieve your ambitious aspiration. If you define it only based on external rewards (like a salary increase or a promotion), this may not be sufficient motivation to get you through the hard times. Try to find motivators that link to WHY you are pursuing your ambitious aspiration – things like how will it bring value to your life, how might it help others and how it fits into your broader life picture.

**Network**

Recognise that a quality network of safe colleagues who can deliver reinforcing feedback and also share the straight tough news when needed is a key facet of a growth mindset.

Are genuinely interested in meeting and engaging with new people irrespective of role, title, background etc. Your curiosity to understand them and what they need means that you capture new information all the time. By not filtering or overly analysing who you bring into your network (eg. the CEO, you had no hesitation in engaging with him through hierarchical fears or otherwise), this naturally helps you access people in your “out group” which invariably brings more learning.

Check out “Winning the Long Game” by Steve Krupp and Paul Schoemaker – the first three steps in their strategic leadership model (Anticipate, Challenge, Interpret) are all greatly enhanced by outside/in thinking which is accelerated by wide, diverse networks.

Rob Cross, one of the world’s experts in network analysis advises us to prioritise our network expansion efforts in three areas:

1. specifically nurture contacts who help us innovate
2. spend time with those who help bring energizing interactions to our life.
3. intentionally connect in ways that link to your own purpose in life.

Try to step outside your comfort zone of safe people to gain new perspectives on your ambitious aspiration. Here’s some tips to get you started:

1. Commit to asking an admired colleague out to lunch and talk to them about your desire to expand your network.
2. Identify two or three people on Linkedin from your industry sector/school or university alumni network whose profiles reflect the type of ambitious aspiration you want to achieve. Reach out with a simple invite “I’m trying to achieve X and I’d really like your advice and perspective on Y…..” You start with a common bond (your school/university) and you will be surprised at how generous people are with their time when they feel their advice or perspective is valued.

Try to think less about networking in the sense of trying to meet as many people as possible. Network analysis shows that top network performers do the following things well:

1. invest well up front in relationships, mostly giving, before they expected to receive things
2. focus on bridging – their networks tend to cross functional lines, hierarchical levels, physical distance, and expertise capability areas
3. are great, consistent energizers in their networks. They attract and inspire others by their energy and commitment to the networking relationships they build.

Try to think about non obvious people or profiles that would be good at the **[fillin skillset]**. Eg. What kind of jobs require people to be really good at this skill?

Rob Cross, one of the world’s experts in network analysis advises us to prioritise our network expansion efforts in three areas:

a) specifically nurture contacts who help us innovate

b) spend time with those who help bring energizing interactions to our life.

c) intentionally connect in ways that link to your own purpose in life.

He also notes that top network performers do the following things well:

a) invest well up front in relationships, mostly giving, before they expected to receive things

b) focus on bridging – their networks tend to cross functional lines, hierarchical levels, physical distance, and expertise capability areas

c) are great, consistent energizers in their networks. They attract and inspire others by their energy and commitment to the networking relationships they build.

Often it’s when we go to the “out group” that we get really different perspectives on what we are trying to achieve. Here’s some tips to get you started:

Week 1: Go to a networking event with someone you already know and stay just 30 minutes.

Week 2: Go to an event with someone you know and introduce yourself to at least one new person.

Week 3: Go to an event with someone you know and introduce yourself to three new people.

Week 4: Go to an event by yourself, greet everyone you’ve met before, and introduce yourself to three new people and follow up with one of them to meet for coffee or a drink

Here’s a networking challenge!

Often it’s when we go to the “out group” that we get really different perspectives on what we are trying to achieve. Here’s some tips to get you started:

Week 1: Go to an event with someone you know and introduce yourself to at least one new person in the “out group” eg. Not IT, not Govt.

Week 3: Go to an event with someone you know and introduce yourself to three new people.

Week 5: Go to an event by yourself, greet everyone you’ve met before, and introduce yourself to three new people and follow up with one of them to meet up to discuss each other’s experience about e-transformation.

**Next steps**

Your next steps are manageable, implementable, and sequential. You have a whole host of small steps, and first steps lead to others. You convey a sense of enthusiasm and options to share in your path forward

Your next steps are manageable, implementable, and sequential. You have a series of steps and first steps lead to others. You convey a sense of enthusiasm and options to share in your path forward. I noted:

Your next steps are implementable and sequential. You convey a sense of enthusiasm and options to share in your path forward. For even stronger performance, try to set specific, time bounded steps. eg. do X by tomorrow, do Y by next week, do Z by next month. We look for small steps, and evidence that the first steps then lead to others based on the new knowledge you achieve. For your own next steps I noted:

Try to make your next steps feel small enough to be manageable. It’s also helpful to set time bounded steps eg. do X by tomorrow, do Y by next week, do Z by next month. We look for small steps, and evidence that the first steps then lead to others based on the new knowledge you achieve.

Think some more about road blocks you may anticipate on your journey. It’s not a weakness to do this – in fact, it makes the plan for achieving your growth aspiration more robust and achievable. Identifying road blocks means that you can think about alternatives ahead of time.

Try to make your early steps involve things that you can achieve by yourself eg. don’t make them too reliant on external factors or people

Research from Ohio State University tells us that people tend to be more committed to their goals after they share them with someone who they see as “higher status,” or whose opinions they respect. So seek out someone who fits that description in your network and share your ambitious aspiration and immediate next steps with them!

In addition to specific next steps, also think about which habits you are going to adopt to help reinforce your willpower to make the change you are trying to achieve.

Charles Duhigg writes about the habit loop. A habit loop starts with an external cue, followed by a routine, then a reward. If my goal is to increase my thought leadership in my field of expertise, a habit loop could be:

Cue: green post it note by my computer

Routine: when I see the green postit, follow 10 new people on linkedin in areas adjacent to my field of expertise and read their output daily

Reward: feel great because I’m creating unique thinking by connecting disparate dots and data points with my new knowledge.

Our actions arise from our belief system. Normally we try to change based on a list of what we want which often ends up being listed down as a set of outcomes. An alternative way of thinking centers on who we want to become. Eg “identity based habits”. Eg. if our goal is to improve our ability to lead people, think about your identity as a leader and what you might need to do to accentuate and reinforce that identity.

Try out NirandFar’s habit tracker tool: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1G087RRibQCu7a9eouPIEGMbczhNlRyvo886-SvKzGHE/template/preview>

John Hargrave talks about mind hacking as a way to keep moving ahead in pursuit of your goals. He encourages us to think about our “mind movies”. They are constantly running and so it’s important to pull back and observe your mind. “What was my mind just thinking?” These mental loops tend to be comprised of Emotions/Thoughts/Actions. Remember the acronym METAL which stands for My Emotion Thought Action Loops. When you reflect on your ambitious growth aspiration, write down 2-3 positive Emotion/Thought/Action loops that will help you make progress.