# *The* LEADER'S TRIAD

### The Power of Clarity, Team and the Individual

## PHIL GELDART

Author of *In Your Hands: The Behaviors of a World-Class Leader*

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## BY PHIL GELDART

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*To the Leadership Team at Eagle's Flight who themselves model the Leader's Triad daily.*

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."

*Psalm 20:7*

# TO THE READER

I've always felt the power of the Leader's Triad lies in its apparent simplicity. Taken at face value it clearly points to the three aspects of leadership so critical to success.

Yet, on the other hand, the depth of insight buried in these three simple phrases can provide considerable help with the day to day challenges we face as leaders.

I originally created the Triad to provide very senior and very skilled executives with a simple way to ensure they could always be as brilliant in their people management as they were in the other business areas of finance, sales, operations, etc. It worked very well to that end, but also became equally useful to those much earlier in their career. The impact any tool can have is clearly as much a function of the user as the tool itself.

As we strive to lead others well, in an increasingly complex world, I trust you'll find the Leader's Triad a valuable way to harness the energy, talent and motivation that resides in all those looking to us for that level of leadership excellence.

A word about "From Phil's Journal"…

I've added some pages from my personal journal at the end of each Triad section. While they can stand alone as "learning nuggets," I've linked each of them to an aspect of the Triad. My hope in doing so is that you'll find them useful as a way to make applying the principles of the Triad even more practical, and on a daily basis.

Enjoy the journey!

# CHAPTER ONE
## *The Leader's Triad*

The Leader's Triad is a powerful model, as it serves as a guide to every leader in two very important aspects of leadership:

1.  **Planning for Success:** Before setting any initiative in motion it provides guidance on how to optimize the chance of success.

2.  **Readjusting when Required:** Once an initiative is under way, but not proceeding as planned, it helps to diagnose the source of the problem.

## THE MODEL



**The Power of Clarity** – This refers to the messages you send, or directions you give, and the way in which they are understood by others.

**The Power of Team** – This reflects the fact that all things are accomplished by groups who must work together.

**The Power of the Individual** – One person can make a massive difference, and this refers to the impact of harnessing that potential effectively.

# CHAPTER TWO
*The Power of Clarity*

## What is "Clarity?"

"Clarity" means, "I fully understand what you really mean."

It includes both hearing the words, and understanding their meaning. It also includes other less obvious things:

- **Intention:** What did you have in mind, that maybe wasn't expressed.
- **Urgency:**  The degree to which I should adjust my priorities based on your words.
- **Context :**  How I should interpret your words given the current and foreseen Future.
- **Initiative:** Your expectation of how much initiative I should take.
- **Outcome:** How fully I understand your expected outcome.
- **Accountability:** The extent to which I'm solely responsible for the outcome.

As leaders we often make the assumption that people "just get" all these implications when we speak. The more familiar we are with the person (maybe we've worked together for several years) the more we assume they "just know" what we mean, and there seems little need to often focus on "clarity" – after all, "It's obvious, isn't it?"

That which is clear to you is very probably not as clear to others, even after you "tell" them.

## Why is clarity important?

I may be very willing to do what is expected, and in fact be highly motivated to deliver what I've been asked to do. So...off I go! However, if my understanding isn't absolutely correct, then while all that effort and energy will produce results, they won't be the results expected, or all of which I'm capable.

When this happens, as leaders we often assume it's because the person on the task is less competent than we'd like, or less competent than others on our team. In my experience this is not necessarily the case. It could as readily be that they just lacked absolute clarity on what was expected. That makes the less than stellar results our fault!

How is this possible? How can intelligent, smart employees, not be clear on what I'm requesting? Surely "being clear" is not that big of a deal!

I think it is.

I think it's very, very hard to be really clear. Firstly, I myself have to know exactly what I mean. Secondly, I need first rate communication skills. Thirdly, I need to speak in terms of outcomes, not activities.

When we communicate mandates, tasks, goals, accountabilities or projects, we often don't fully understand all the implications ourselves, or we're rushed, or we're figuring it out as we go. These are all understandable, but they certainly don't help with "clarity." Simply assuming the other person will "know what we mean" doesn't guarantee they actually will.

Without providing really great clarity, I'm dooming the other person to most likely being able to deliver only a middle of the road result; while simultaneously we're all engaged in a wishful thinking exercise that the outcome will be brilliant. It probably won't be, but not because the person can't be brilliant, but because they don't know what brilliant really looks like in my eyes.

Can anybody really be that clear?

Absolutely, but it isn't always easy.

I don't think the issue is that everyone needs to sign up for more communication training. Rather, I think the issue is much more that we all need to appreciate the power of providing great clarity, and then taking the time to deliver that. That is really great leadership.

This "time required" falls into two areas.

Firstly, the time we spend upfront to think about what we're about to say.
• How clearly do we understand our soon-to-be-delivered message?
• How well do we understand the implications?
• And where are the areas we could be misunderstood, or not understood at all?

Secondly, adequate time to deliver the message effectively. This must include:
• Time to ask for questions or feedback
• Time to provide more information than just the "what," like relative urgency, context, accountability, and a very clear picture of the outcome

Often when I train leaders people say, "That's going to take more time." True. Great leadership means truly capitalizing on the potential of every employee, and to do so will usually take a few minutes longer. But the results are very much better. Plus, if there isn't clarity at the outset, it will take much longer later to deal with the results of a person committed to delivering on something that wasn't targeted to your exact expectations, right from the beginning.

One of the most effective ways to ensure clarity is to get feedback. Ask for it, or ask questions that will allow you to determine the degree to which adequate clarity has occurred. Feedback is what the other person gives us which we can in turn use to determine our own effectiveness. More time? Yes, but also more upfront clarity.

Feedback can take the form of:

- Questions (e.g., "How do you see this new task impacting your current priorities?")
- Asking the person to restate the expected outcome, context, accountabilities, etc. as if they were assigning the task to another
- Or simply encouraging them to ask questions before they begin to deliver the outcome

Chances are, if they have no questions then they haven't really thought it through for themselves yet, so you can safely assume they don't really have perfect clarity. It's very rare that I can explain something so perfectly that the other person – who must now go and deliver it – doesn't have some clarifying questions before they begin.

## Does "clarity" really just mean "SMART" goals?

I think when giving goals to others the SMART acronym (Specific, Measurable Actionable, Reasonable, Time bound) can certainly help to provide clarity.

But clarity goes far beyond that. In fact, if we think that's all we need to do, I believe we'll be lulled into a false sense of confidence.

As an example, I can have a long conversation with the Head of Marketing, after which we decide to agree on a course of action. In fact, we go so far as to write a series of SMART goals. I leave feeling we have great clarity between us; and the Head of Marketing leaves confident that she's clear on the agreed expectations. But is she really?

I suspect she's really clear on the tasks that lie ahead, and what they are to accomplish. This is good. But is she clear on the implications of failure, as viewed from my perspective? Is she aware of the degree of cooperation I expect her to receive from the Head of Sales? Does she viscerally understand how this mandate can either accelerate or derail our strategic plan? Does she know what additional resources are, or are not, available to be drawn upon?

It's not that the answers to these questions are elusive, or confidential. The point is simply that some or all may not have been discussed, or thought of. Consequently, my view, as her leader, and her view, as the implementer, are not entirely aligned. As a result she may make a number of decisions along the way which will, in the end, produce a good result, or only an ok result.

We may then agree, "It's good, but still needs some polishing, or additional work, but it's a good start." Why were the results of her labors just good, and not great? Because she didn't have the ability to deliver "great" from the start? Probably not. It was probably because the level of clarity necessary for great wasn't there from the outset.

Neither of us realized it, so didn't action it. But we could have. We could have asked the question, "Do we have absolute clarity, as defined by The Leader's Triad, not simply by SMART goals?" That would have done it.

## Ok. Ok. So how do I always deliver this level of clarity?

You have to consider two things.

Firstly, the exact consequences you want from a successful outcome; and secondly, the capability (including experience) of the person tackling the assignment.

As to the outcome – the secret is to look not solely at the specific outcome, but also at the consequences of that outcome. For example, the outcome wanted from undertaking a complicated sales initiative with a potential new customer is a closed sale that is beneficial to all. However, the consequences of that might also include the potential for a long term partnership, or clarity on the pricing strategy going forward, given that discounting now to get the sale may preclude it from becoming profitable in the long term. The consequences might also include the desire to present and sell a larger product line, or get access to the parent company and global business.

Often a sales rep will say, after a successful close, "Oh! If I'd known that was what you had in mind I would have acted differently." In this case it's not that the objective wasn't met by a skilled person, but rather that the full consequences

foreseen were not made clear from the outset. So...the first consideration is: be very explicit as to the exact outcome desired and the consequences expected from that outcome.

The second consideration is the talent, capability, experience, and "get it" factor of the person taking on the assignment. But first a caution – in my experience it is a common fault of leaders to attribute their own strengths to others far too easily. We feel that others see things as clearly, or as readily as we do. They don't. Almost by definition others don't see it as you do.

Those on your teams don't have your experience or the same access to information. Leaders are placed in their positions for a reason. They bring insight, and wisdom that the organization felt was more evident in them than in those who were not selected for the position. Once there, leaders also have access to much more in the way of both information and the implications of outcomes. So...be careful not to assume that those on your teams, often who are themselves highly talented and intelligent, will automatically have your clarity.

Bearing that proviso in mind, the second component of ensuring clarity is to accurately assess the overall capabilities of the receiver. To use a metaphor, if your message is in the shape of a jigsaw puzzle piece, how well does the person you're talking to have a slot that matches the shape of your piece? Assessing this is easier with those we've worked with extensively, but this can also cause us to take things for granted that we shouldn't. In today's world, previous experience only goes so far, as virtually all tasks today have a unique spin to them.

Know the track record of those to whom you're assigning work – what have they done well, and why; what have they done poorly, and why?  Think about their willingness or reticence to ask questions. Consider their level of initiative, and whether they're essentially good "Lieutenants" (tactically strong) or whether they have good "General" qualities (strategically strong) as well. Depending on this assessment you can decide on the areas needing more or less clarity right from the outset.

I think it's a natural quality that we all share as leaders to want to give others "the benefit of the doubt." To "trust" them to "get it." We don't want

to send the message that we think they can't handle the task, or need to be "spoon fed." All these views can impede us from being truly clear; and in my experience, if tactfully presented, others always appreciate greater clarity, rather than less.

## Why do you say the "power" of clarity?

If I'm a highly motivated employee, and most are, or want to be, then I really want to know what's expected of me. What must I do to be perceived as brilliant? Once I'm clear on this, really clear, then I can bend my energies towards delivering that. I can really focus on bringing home the prize.

Think of the impact of this!

If everyone who we lead is able to completely channel all their energy into the task assigned the result would be incredible, because of the talent and ingenuity within each person.

You might ask: "But aren't they supposed to be doing that already?" Certainly they are, and most are trying. However, in the absence of outstanding clarity, they can only "give it their best shot." As leaders we get their best, but their best within the context of the clarity they have as a result of the interactions they've had with us.

The power of clarity is that it truly unleashes the full capability of the person tasked with the outcome. When they are fully aware of what needs to be done, what the impact of doing it can mean, and the boundaries within which they are to work, they are set up for outstanding success.

"Power" comes from some energy source. In this case the energy source is the confidence we've provided about what's expected, within defined parameters. Think about your own experiences for a moment...and how often you were unable to truly deliver all of which you were capable because, for some reason, some aspect or element of the initiative was unclear. With greater clarity of that area, you could probably have been meaningfully more impactful.

## Does this mean sometimes having to "talk down" to others?

Sometimes providing the level of clarity I've been advocating may mean that we feel like we're treating the listener like a child; or that we're "explaining the obvious," or in effect, "talking down" to them; and that this then becomes an unfortunate byproduct of being clear.

By no means does this need to be the case, nor should it be. Being clear is not about having to "sound superior." Instead, it's about being sensitive to the needs and understanding of the listener, and then choosing our words, and the degree of detail necessary, to give them the same clarity that we have.

If they fail to grasp it fully, it's more than likely that we've done a poor initial job, than that they need us to be impatient, or arrogant, or opinionated. They don't need or want to be talked down to...in fact, that is unlikely to add any additional clarity – only quiet resistance!
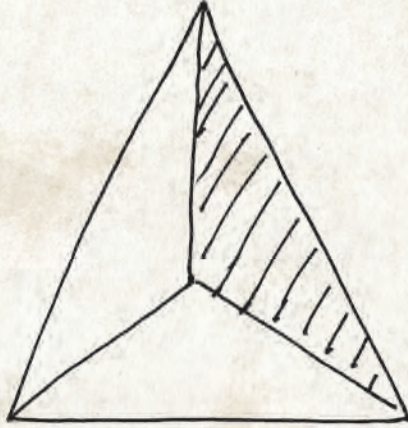
Do not mistake lack of understanding of a message for deliberate and intentional rejection of a message. Simply speak as you would like to be spoken to when you're trying hard to grasp the full implications of something as yet new or unfamiliar to you.

## What tools do I have with which to provide "clarity"?

Clarity comes in many forms, and with many delivery opportunities.

1.  **Goal Assignment:** when you're providing a clear mandate for action

2.  **Coaching:** when you're helping another to improve some aspect of performance

3.  **Discussion:** when you're providing rationale, detail, or answers around a specific issue

4.  **Performance Management:** when you're reviewing past performance with an eye to ongoing improvement.

5.  **Career Discussions:** when you're looking at future opportunities in light of past performance and experience

6.  **Conflict Management or Avoidance:** when you're in the midst of unravelling a thorny or emotional situation

7.  **Corporate Communication:** when you're part of the team delivering corporate messaging

8.  **Visioning:** when you're providing the motivation and direction for the future and its impact

9.  **Change Leadership:** when you're helping others cope effectively with a world changing around them

10. **Negotiation:** when you're presenting a previously defined point of view, or responding with an alternative to the point of view of another

11. **Decision Making:** when you must provide a definite go-forward decision after group discussion

12. **Thought Leadership:** when your role requires you to lead a clear path forward in an unclear situation.

Each of these instances requires clarity from the leader. The greater the clarity, the more effective the leadership....and the more productive will be the efforts of those you're leading.
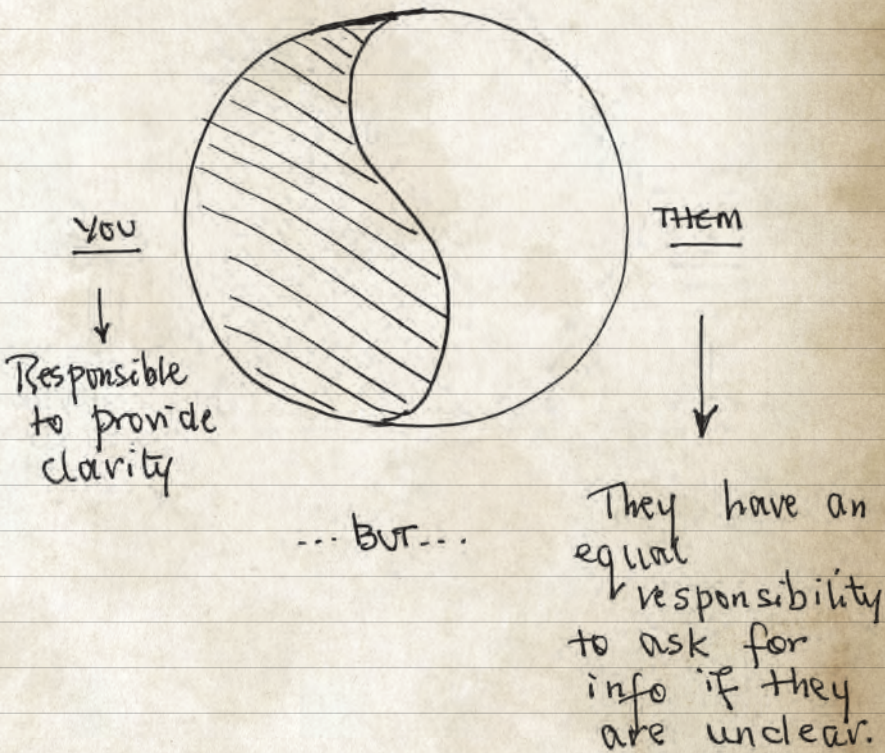
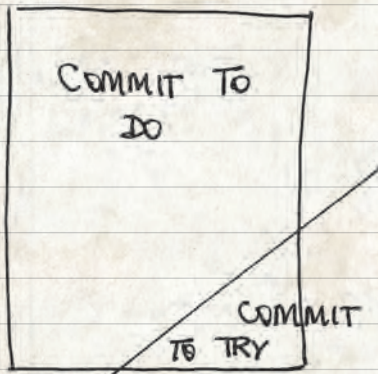THE POWER OF CLARITY

# 1 — JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES —

## Expect "Equal Onus"

YOU

↓

Responsible
to provide
clarity

...BUT...

THEM

↓

They have an
equal
responsibility
to ask for
info if they
are unclear.

$\boxed{2}$ – " DO " vs " TRY " –

ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY : 2 Parts:
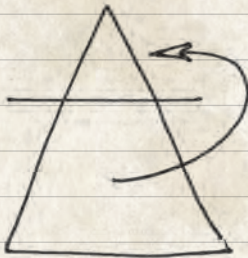
COMMIT TO
DO

COMMIT
TO TRY

The "try" is over and above
the "do" –
    (¹) Keep it as a second
       Priority to the "do"

    (²) don·t let it become so
       big it puts the
       "do" at risk.

## 3 — APPROPRIATE PUSHBACK —

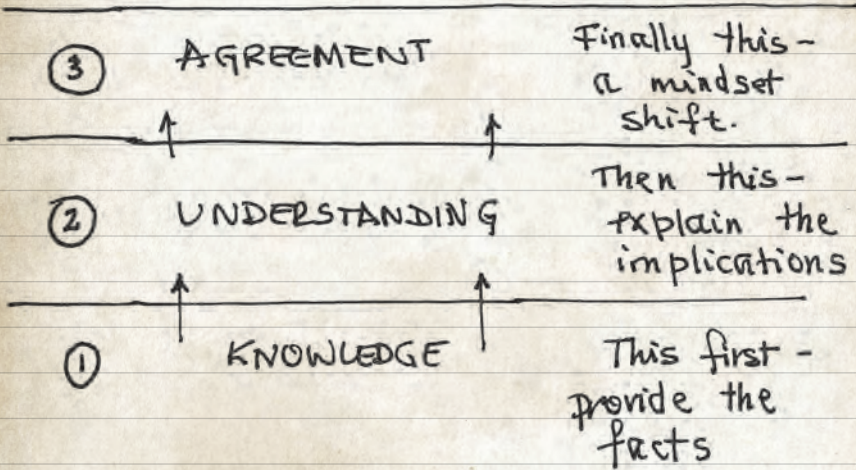Encourage pushback ...



PROACTIVE PUSHBACK ON THE LEADER

... Without crossing the line

(the leader is still the final decision maker).

## 4 – MINDSET –

Sometimes "mindset change" needs to be part of the mandate being given.

3 components to bear in mind:

③ AGREEMENT — Finally this — a mindset shift.

② UNDERSTANDING — Then this — explain the implications

① KNOWLEDGE — This first — provide the facts

"AGREEMENT" WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING IS OBEDIENCE, NOT A DIFFERENT MINDSET.

## 5 - EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES -

> THE EXECUTION OF THE
> WILL IS DIRECTLY LINKED
> TO THE APPRECIATION OF
> THE CONSEQUENCES.

Clarity is not just about
communicating what
must be done...

...it is also about showing
the impact it will have
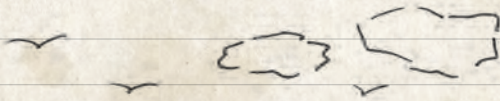once accomplished —
or not!

## 6 – RESULTS FOCUSSED –

The relationship between
activity & productivity
as influenced by clarity:

High | ACTIVITY

CLARITY

PRODUCTIVITY

where we
need to be
high activity
+
high productivity

Low

- Low clarity may still produce
  high activity

- But only high clarity can
  produce high productivity

## 7 — DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS —

" WE ALL LIVE UNDER THE
SAME SKY,

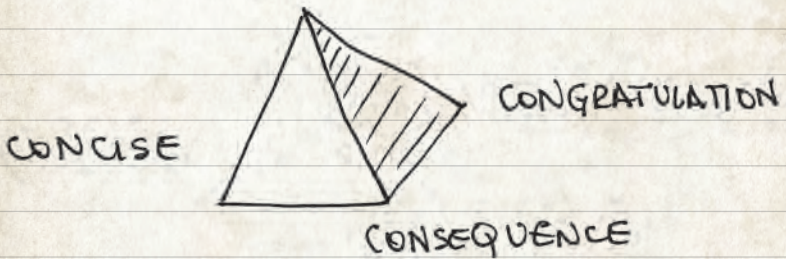BUT WE DON'T ALL HAVE
THE SAME HORIZON "

Remember —
Their perspective of
things may be very
different from mine ...
... even though they're
operating in the
same environment.

## 8 — BEING INTENTIONAL —

Keep these 4 in mind when
communicating —

CONVICTION

CONCISE          CONGRATULATION

CONSEQUENCE

- CONVICTION : show my own conviction
- CONGRATULATION : recognize their progress
- CONSEQUENCE : explain its importance
- CONCISE : stick to the point.

## 9 — PROVIDE UNDERSTANDING —

> LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT
> UNDERSTANDING,
> NOT AGREEMENT

Promote understanding. They may not agree, but they should always understand.

# CHAPTER THREE
*The Power of Team*

I've written extensively about Teamwork in another book, "The Seven Cornerstones of Teamwork," which details how to achieve world-class teamwork skills.

Here, the message is more around the "why" for teamwork, and the power of it.

We are constantly reminded about "teams" in today's world, whether they be sports teams, movie production teams, musical teams, Girl Scout teams, project teams, or father and son teams. Teams are an integral part of today's life, and becoming increasingly more so as life becomes more complex.

In fact, nothing can be done without teams. Even that which looks to be only about an individual is impossible without a team. The team may not take center stage, but it's there.

The around-the-world solo sailor has already used a team to manufacture and equip his boat, prepare and package his food, and be available at various ports of call. The robotic factory relies on teams of technicians to maintain and program the robots. The CEO must work through her team to see her will implemented. The solitary worker on an assembly line is part of a larger team working to build or package something for others.

Teams are everywhere, and must be everywhere.

Why then the focus on teams in The Leader's Triad? The reason is because I think that as leaders we often assume teams. We like them. We need them. We use them; but we don't necessarily release their full power.

## What does it mean to harness the power of the team?

This means that as leaders we need to intentionally think about the way in which we set up our teams, and ask if each task has the right team connected to it. It's not sufficient simply to be clear. Once clarity is in place then the real

work begins. If work has been assigned to an individual, is the right team support in place to optimize that person's result? If it's been assigned to a team, is that team composed of the right individuals?

A fully effective team has many attributes not immediately available to the individual.

**Within a team it's possible to challenge.**  Challenge the status quo; challenge the accepted way of doing things; challenge ideas; challenge strategies; challenge assumptions; and challenge tactics. As individuals it's often very difficult for us to see every facet of an issue; to be able to select the best option from among many. Within a team the various perspectives and experiences that each team member brings makes this far easier, and considerably more comprehensive.

**Within a team strengths can be emphasized, and weaknesses compensated for.** There is no need for one person to "be able to do everything well." Others, some with even greater strengths in some areas, are there to add their expertise. The team's mandate can be broken into component parts such that each part has a highly competent specialist working on it. I do strings, you do drums, she does horns, and he does woodwinds. Together we have an orchestra. A well-formed team has no weaknesses.

**Within a team the human need for interaction and affirmation is readily available.** We all feel strong, and so we should. But humans are fundamentally social; they like to communicate. They like to socialize and interact. We all appreciate feedback, preferably positive! It's good to be affirmed that we are on the right path, or have done something well. It's great to have a colleague there immediately to help us regroup after a stumble. Working in teams address all these issues, and by doing so can bring huge momentum to those working on any initiative.

**Within a team there is safety.** Outside the team there are those who are expecting great things, those who are relying on us to deliver, those who seem to live to criticize, those looking to find fault long before the final product is delivered, and those who, justifiably, simply want it "done right, on time, and on budget." But within the team there is tolerance, understanding and

patience. I say to those on my teams that we can make mistakes behind the walls of our team, but outside those walls we must be perfect and deliver as promised. Guaranteed safety inside, guaranteed success outside.

**Within a team there is innovation.** There is no question that we can all come up with great ideas, innovative approaches, and at times even creative solutions. However, a team well trained on Innovation can do far more. Together they can apply the Innovative Process to the task at hand when roadblocks surface; or when opportunities appear to reduce cost, improve efficiencies, or accelerate timetables. This capacity for teams to innovate well beyond the capabilities of a single individual gives them a strong competitive advantage.

So....what does it mean to harness the power of a team? It means recognizing what a world class team is possible of, and then providing the opportunity and skills for each team to perform to that standard.

## What must happen for every team to be truly great?

Three things are required.

Firstly, the standard of a world class team must be in place, understood by all, and then practiced by all. This standard is defined by seven statements:

1. Every team needs a designated leader.

2. The team's goal must be the focus for every member.

3. Communication must satisfy the needs of every team member.

4. Any subgroups that form must be dedicated to supporting the larger team's goal.

5. Every member must remain passionately committed to contributing.

6. All tangible resources, and the less tangible, such as ideas, must be freely shared.

7. Individual egos should remain in check at all times.

Secondly, the team must do an internal review of their performance against these standards frequently. From this will come an honest assessment of what the team feels they're doing well, and where they could improve. The assessment must include input from every team member, and each viewpoint must be accorded equal weight. The power of this assessment comes from the team's commitment to truly master the Seven Standards, as evidenced by the fact that they're consistently assessing themselves against those Standards.

Thirdly, after each assessment the Team Leader must decide what action is required, based on the input from the team's self-assessment. This action should be something that can be done which, once done, will improve team performance. For example, the majority of input from a team assessment may be around the collective need for more timely communication. The leader's action taken should then be to address that communication need, so that similar feedback does not reoccur in future.

By following these three steps the team will know the standard, and have a process in place to continually improve against that standard. With each improvement step the team becomes more effective, and more powerful, and eventually truly great.

## What can a leader do to help a great team stay great?

Assuming the team continues to adopt the three step process above, they will have done all they themselves can do to perform at a world class level. However, the leader to whom the entire team reports can also play a meaningful role.

As the team begins to make progress, and then ultimately achieve the committed result, providing recognition of their progress, and achievement, becomes key. The team is working hard to deliver a powerful outcome, and that hard work needs to be recognized, and the achievement celebrated. They want to be seen to be winning.

This recognition can take several forms: a note of thanks, an email to a wider audience complimenting progress, dropping in to a team meeting with donuts to say thanks, giving them time to present to you on their status to date, or featuring them in an edition of a corporate newsletter. The primary objective is to let them know their work is not being taken for granted.

Whether they're willing to admit it or not, people like to be appreciated, and especially when they themselves feel they're going, or have gone, "the extra mile."

Many times the work of a team is for some other group, such as an internal or external customer. It's not a good thing when the team gets more recognition from someone "outside" than they do from their own internal management! In fact, when some outside group for whom the team is working does compliment them, then that outside recognition can be an excellent message to spread internally to a wider audience, with your own comments attached.

A complimentary topic to recognition is reward. In this case the team's performance triggers some form of tangible compensation, or reward. For this to be optimally effective, it should be agreed to in advance of the project or assignment getting under way.

Rewards need not always be large, although at times that is appropriate. Smaller rewards can be linked to some percentage of salary as a bonus, for example; whereas larger rewards could range from large bonuses to promotion upon successful completion.

Rewards are important and powerful. However, they typically tend only to occur at the end of an assignment, whereas recognition can be throughout, in addition to at the end. The rewards satisfy a practical tangible need; recognition satisfies a less tangible, yet often more important emotional need. Both have their place, but we need to be careful not to rely too heavily only on rewards.

As leaders we need to care as much for the inner person, as the outer.

## How much latitude should a team be given?

This is an important question because teams are so powerful when properly set up and managed. It would be a waste of talent to have access to more power than the team is using, simply because they don't know they have more resources available to them.  Similarly, the team can cause significant internal problems if they feel they have more authority than they actually do.

I believe teams should operate within defined boundaries, or "sandbox." The edges of the sandbox define the boundaries for the team. The challenge is setting those boundaries in the right place. Doing it correctly will give the team the optimum freedom of action – not more than they should have, but not too little to impede their ability to perform brilliantly, i.e., to their potential. Setting the boundaries relies on a few parameters.

**The first is their experience, and track record.** Teams which have shown themselves wise stewards of resources and capital, who know how to operate well within the corporate political climate, and who have a proven track record of success, should have larger boundaries.

**The second is their courage to come forward with questions.** This may sound strange, but if a team has shown that they're very willing to come with questions, or to ask for more information, or to seek clarification, or proactively initiate conversations with you on the journey to achievement, then I would expand their boundaries. The rationale for this is that you can have confidence that if they move into uncharted waters, and something unforeseen surfaces, they will come to you for clarification or input. This is a great quality to have in your teams – the courage to ask for input.

**Next would be their combined competence.** If you feel the team is made up of highly competent people, and that individual weaknesses in one member are compensated for by individual strengths in other members, then you are probably safe with giving them larger boundaries. The only caution here is possible arrogance. If there is a flavor of that, then the team may use their freedom unwisely in their desire to "spike the ball." I'd simply address this with them as a potential hazard, and then personally keep an eye on it.

**The last key area would be their sense of personal accountability.**
Accountability means doing whatever is required, within the framework of
the company culture, to ensure commitments are delivered as promised. If
their accountability is high, which it will be in any world class team, then the
boundaries can be larger. They will need and want that maneuverability to
ensure they can respond to the unforeseen to get the job done. If their sense of
accountability is low, keep the boundaries small. They will tend to have many
reasons for it not working out as promised, so the less maneuverability they
have for excuses the better.

In my experience setting boundary size, especially for a new team, is difficult.
Two guidelines here may help.

**Firstly: set them smaller at first than you might wish to do.** It's easier
to enlarge them later for the team than it is to shrink them. As you see the
team perform, you can then increase the freedom of action you allow them.

**Secondly: review the boundary size frequently.** You may have set them
appropriately initially but, as the team gets stronger they will need to increase.
Similarly, if the team is not as strong as originally thought, the boundaries may
well need to shrink; either way, you want to keep a close eye on their defined
freedom to act.

Earlier I talked about "the power of clarity." This is an excellent example of the
need to apply that principle – as you establish the team's sandbox size, have
an open and thorough discussion with them. Explain where you're setting
the boundaries, and why you've chosen to do so. The discussion that follows
will be very helpful to them, and you. It will also make it easier to adjust the
sandbox size going forward, as and when required.

## Should a team be given "stretch goals"?

Earlier I talked about accountability. When a team commits to something, they become accountable to deliver that. There should be no question about "if;" rather a commitment to deliver should be as good as a guarantee. This is the very essence of accountability.

This ties to freedom of action in that each team must know the parameters within which they can work, so when hurdles occur they know clearly where their boundaries are as they work to overcome those hurdles, and so deliver their accountabilities.

If the accountability was properly set from the outset it will be challenging to deliver, and impactful when completed. There's probably not much extra to be had, which calls into question the validity and practicality of a "stretch goal."

Consequently, if you feel a stretch goal is possible, or warranted, I think it should be in a very different category from the team's primary accountability. Stretch goals should be something the team can agree to try for, but not commit to deliver.

Accountabilities are a "commit to do;" stretch goals are a "commit to try."

As such, any compensation, recognition or reward packages must be very different for the two: one for committed accountabilities, and another for any stretch goals. As long as this difference is clear, then I see no concerns with providing the team with an opportunity to tackle a stretch goal.

**What tools are available to me when harnessing the power of teams?**

There are many ways to harness teamwork.

1.  **On a Project:** when there is a clear task to be done requiring several different skill sets.

2.  **To Drive Innovation:** when a situation has surfaced when there is an opportunity to apply innovation tools

3.  **To Improve Processes:** by placing members from different functions, but who are all part of a single process, on a team where they can bring process improvement tools to bear

4.  **Problem Solving:** when an individual has encountered a problem deemed too large for that individual to resolve on their own

5.  **Alignment:** when aspects of the organization appear to lack alignment, teams of teams can be formed to bring cohesion and unity

6.  **To Do the Impossible:** it is truly amazing what the right group of people can do, which seemed impossible to an individual, or to a poorly formed team.

Using teams, selected carefully as to members, and managed with clarity and thoughtfulness, is to release incredible power in an organization!
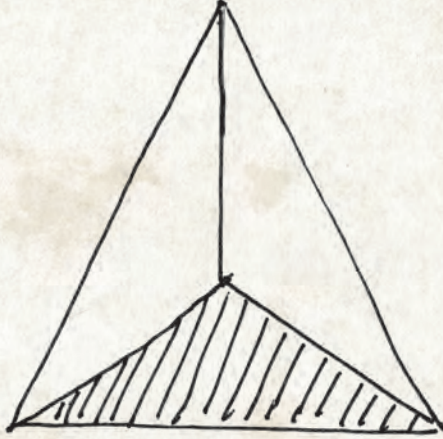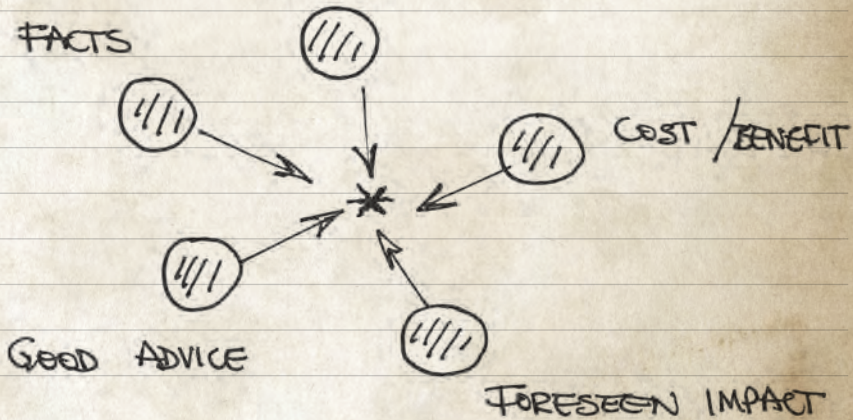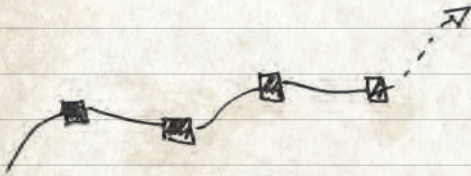
THE POWER OF TEAM

1 — TEAM DECISIONS —

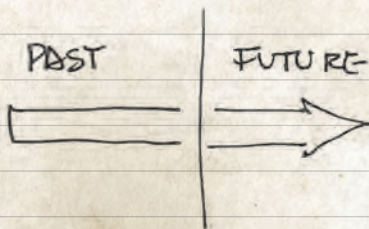Helping teams make the best decisons —

CONSIDER 5 THINGS:

EXPERIENCE

FACTS

COST /BENEFIT

GOOD ADVICE

FORESEEN IMPACT

2 – CONSIDER TRACK RECORD –

WHAT IS THEIR
TRACK RECORD ?
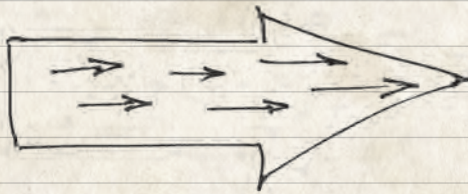
Based on this, decide
on their Sandbox size.

PAST | FUTURE

"Track record" is a superb
way to predict the future.

3  — COMMON UNDERSTANDING —

When providing clarity, ensure
everyone touching the
assignment — all teams and
team members — have the
same clarity.

UNANIMOUS FOCUS ON
A COMMON OBJECTIVE
AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

## 4 – "ONE" VS "MANY" –

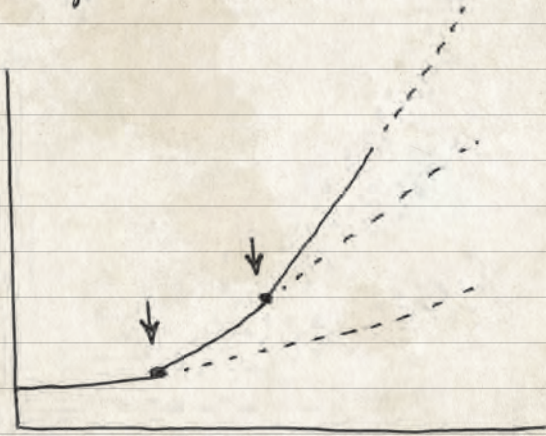TEAMWORK TRUMPS
INDIVIDUAL TALENT

Better a team functioning at a world class level, than an individual with great talent.

Better yet ... a team of talented individuals functioning together brilliantly.

# 5 — PROACTIVITY —

Encourage initiative!



THE TEAM SHOULD BE
CONSTANTLY TAKING
INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE
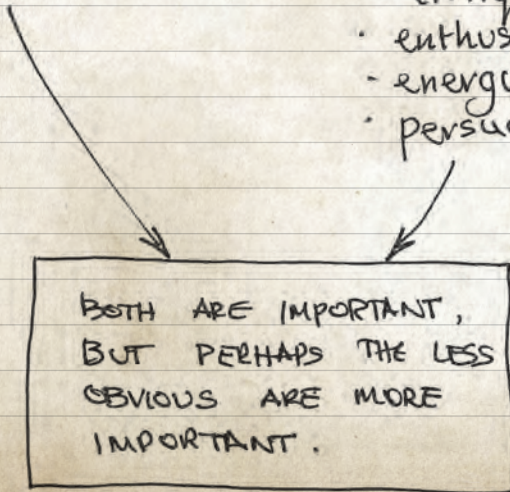THEIR OWN PERFORMANCE

## 6 — BRING "SOFT" SKILLS TO BEAR —

Team members can bring much
more to the assignment
than their talent and
experience ...

| OBVIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS | LESS OBVIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS |
|---|---|
| · talent<br>- experience<br>· resources | · ideas<br>· innovation<br>· judgement<br>· critique<br>· enthusiasim<br>- energy<br>· persuasion |

BOTH ARE IMPORTANT,
BUT PERHAPS THE LESS
OBVIOUS ARE MORE
IMPORTANT.

**7** — KEEP OTHERS INFORMED —

When the team provides regular updates then others know how and when they can be of help.

REGULAR UPDATES

THE TEAM

HELP AND SUPPORT

RELEVANT OTHERS
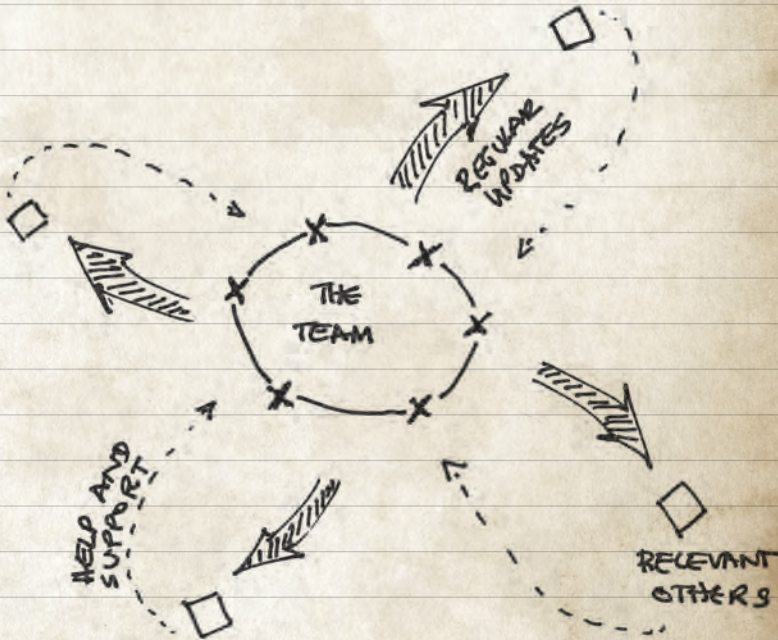
## 8 — ASSESS MOTIVATION —

Periodically check the motivation of the team, and adjust it if necessary.

### ⌐ MOTIVATION ⌐

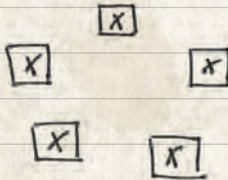| NEED TO ACCOMPLISH | NEED TO LEARN | NEED TO IMPRESS |
|---|---|---|
| Good ! | Valuable, worth encouraging | Not Productive. Success is what's impressive. |

Typically contributes to accomplishment

## ⬛9⬛ — TRUE TEAMWORK

Promote team, not individual, focus.

### THE MARK OF A WORLD CLASS TEAM
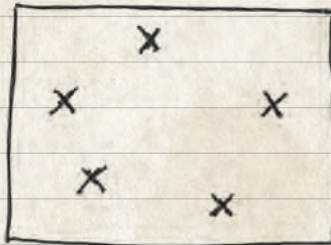
NOT··            A TEAM OF
                 INDIVIDUALS

--- BUT          A SINGLE
                 COLLABORATIVE
                 ENTITY

Each individual team member
must make team results,
not individual achievement,
the overriding focus.

# CHAPTER FOUR
*The Power of the Individual*

One person can change the world.

Throughout history this has been seen repeatedly, whether the field of influence be political, religious, scientific, literary, artistic, visionary, creative, imaginative, military or social, there are numerous examples of a single person having a massive impact.

At birth each of these highly significant individuals were not what they would become, but the potential was there. Then, through circumstances, training, experience, education, influences, and a myriad of other factors, their potential developed, the individual took action, and the world felt the impact.

The same phenomenon is happening constantly on a lesser scale – individuals doing great things in their own context, but not necessarily of global influence. This is not because that person is not as "important" as much as it is that the activity of the individual is simply less far reaching.

One could look at an even smaller scale: consider the parental influence which resulted in a child doing something great for humanity, or for the community, or for the people next door, such as rescuing someone from a burning building. We may never know the names of the parents who raised their child to be a hero, but surely they themselves were heroes, contributing significantly to the saving of a human life.

There is massive potential in every human being.

True, this potential does not always develop, or develop fully, but that doesn't mean it's not there. It is on this premise that the third aspect of the Leader's Triad is based. As leaders we need to first recognize the potential is there, and then harness it....this is the mantle of leadership all leaders wear.

## What is this "Mantle of Leadership" to which you refer?

A mantle is like a cloak, used to cover the wearer. When we accept the role of leader we also accept certain responsibilities; one is for those looking to us for leadership. We are, metaphorically speaking, covered in this responsibility, like a cloak or mantle.

As leaders we become responsible for much that has to do with other people: we assign tasks, give feedback, assess performance, coach, encourage, criticize, and in many cases create the framework, or environment, in which others must work. Doing all this well goes with the job – it's part of the mantle.

When it comes to individuals, if we fail to realize the vast potential in every human being, then we fail those looking to us for leadership; and we also fail those who are compensating us with the expectation that we will use the human resources with which we are entrusted to optimize shareholder value.

So, we must first learn to see the potential in others, and then to harness it.

## How does harnessing potential link to "the Power of the Individual"?

At the core of this issue is the fact that we can manage others poorly, adequately, or brilliantly. As goes our management, so goes their performance. If we understand the potential is there for doing great (or relatively great) things, then we act so as to bring that greatness to the forefront. In so doing we've harnessed the power of that individual – their power to perhaps accomplish more, or complete an assignment faster, or with less waste, or in a way that leads to a competitive advantage.

We must realize that the quality of the performance of others can be directly linked to the quality of our leadership. Think about the leaders you have experienced, and the impact you have been able to make when working for each. Typically our contributions have been the greatest when the person to whom we were responsible was the best. The capabilities of the leader influence the performance of those led.

Hence, when we assign a project, mandate, or accountability to another we need to do so in a way that capitalizes on the potential of that individual for greatness, and in so doing utilize the power of the individual. There are several practical ways to do this.

Based on the first two principles of the Leader's Triad, the initial steps are to ensure we provide real clarity as to what's expected; and the second is to provide as much team support as is warranted. Beyond that, there are a number of things we can do.

**Provide Ongoing Coaching.**  As the work progresses you can probably serve as a coach at periodic intervals. Sometimes this will mean giving an opinion, sometimes a suggestion, and at other times sharing your experience as to a better way to approach an issue. Coaching can also take the form of simply being a sounding board, or a reference source for navigating the corporate structure. Whatever the activity, you're availability to coach – not to be confused with doing the work for them – will allow others to excel beyond what they would otherwise be able to accomplish without your involvement.

**Encourage Personal Development.** Individual performance is directly linked to individual competence. Competence is a combination of knowledge and skill. As leaders we can encourage others to grow in their skills through consistent training, and in their knowledge through exposure to the many sources of information available today. Often individuals will try to deliver on their accountabilities by drawing exclusively on their own existing talents. However, we can increase their capability by encouraging a focus on competency improvement, and making that a priority for them.

**Provide Support.** Success will not always come from every endeavor. As hurdles or setbacks surface we need to provide encouragement, or perhaps even suggestions how these setbacks can be overcome. Our job is not to commiserate with failure, or looming failure, but rather to support renewed effort to ensure success.  Show confidence in their ability.

I once failed significantly at an important step of a larger project, and offered my resignation. My boss rejected the offer, saying he didn't want me to leave, but to fix it!  He showed confidence in me, and support for me at that time. I then drew on that to fix the problem I'd created.

**Give Them Room to Act.** Competent people are tenacious and driven to succeed. As they work towards an accountability they need room in which to operate. We need to be careful not to smother, or micro manage. Having said that, I would add some caveats: coach where required, and ensure they're operating within the right size sandbox. If those things are in place, then give them room to apply their own ingenuity, plans and initiative.

**Encourage Benchmarking.** In its broadest form benchmarking is learning from the success of others. It can be very powerful, and a way to rapidly accelerate progress – by not reinventing the wheel. However, individuals often do not feel the freedom is available to them to take the time to reach out to other organizations, or do a site visit.  Spending time with the Disney organization to learn about their people practices can be extremely worthwhile, but can also be seen as simply a paid vacation. As leaders we must encourage those we lead to learn from others, make this learning accessible and acceptable, and then expect results from those benchmarking activities.

**Involve Them Whenever Possible.** One way for an individual to become more capable – and so develop their potential and hence improve their performance – is to have the opportunity to participate in meetings they would not normally be at. Often they're not really "participating," but rather observing. They are being given the opportunity to see issues from a different perspective, to hear opinions to which they might not otherwise be exposed, and to gain a better understanding of the bigger picture. If they are invited to sit in on meetings where issues are being discussed that touch their own accountabilities, then this added insight could help them with their own work, and may well even increase their motivation to succeed.

## What tools do I have to focus on the "Power of the Individual"?

There are several, many of which I've mentioned already.

1. **Coaching:**  when you see an opportunity to help.

2. **Training:** when there's the opportunity to provide them with new skills.

3. **Knowledge Transfer:** when additional information will improve their final deliverable.

4. **Mentors:** when there is someone in the organization who could help this individual to develop faster, or in new ways.

5. **Clarity:** so all effort is focused in the right direction.

6. **Recognition:** celebrating meaningful progress, or a job well done.

7. **Responsibility:** not giving in to the temptation to treat well-meaning effort as the job actually being done – hold them accountable

In the application of these tools or resources you make it optimally possible for the person assigned the task to deliver to the best of their potential.

## So...in summary?

In summary, I would say this aspect of the Leader's Triad can be summed up in one word: "conviction".

Your conviction is that there is great worth in every human being.

Your conviction, that as a leader, it is your responsibility to both develop and harness this potential.

And your conviction that, if managed well, each person is capable of brilliant performance.

If we bring these convictions to bear, we can expect to see the power of the individual unleashed every time they tackle an accountability.
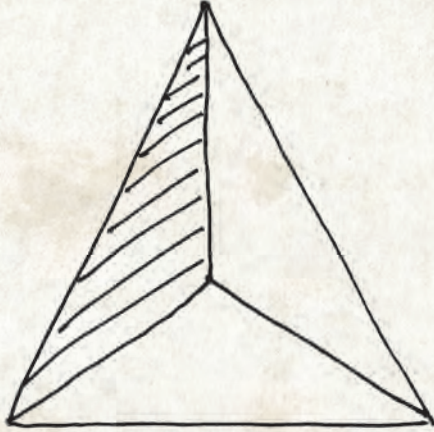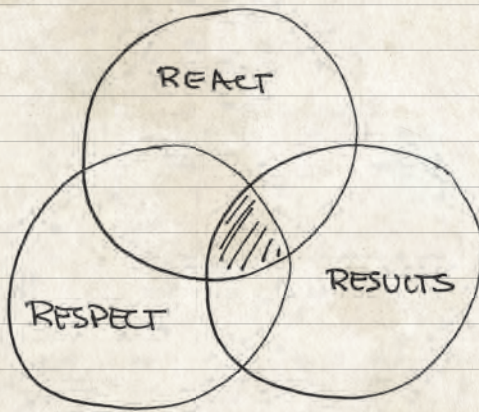
THE POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL

☐ 1 — FEEDBACK —

When providing feedback, consider
3 aspects



- REACT : be as close to "in the
            moment" as possible

- RESPECT : be considerate in your
            choice of words

- RESULTS : speak about the
             consequences, present and
             future.

## 2 – RAISING THE BAR –

Have high expectations, and challenge individuals to meet them.



IT'S GREAT WORK
TO REACH A
CHALLENGING
SUMMIT, BUT...

... HIGHER
SUMMITS ARE
POSSIBLE.

Encourage individuals to celebrate, but not be satisfied with, great accomplishment ... reach further, more may well be possible!

## 3 — MANEUVERABILITY —

Encourage initiative!
Set appropriate parameters,
but don't "box them in".



- TARGET : the goal, project, mandate
  or accountability.

- TACTICS: steps taken to deliver
  the target

- INITIATIVE: using all resources
  available, including
  coaching, to ensure the
  project (target) is delivered.

4 — BEING CONSIDERATE —
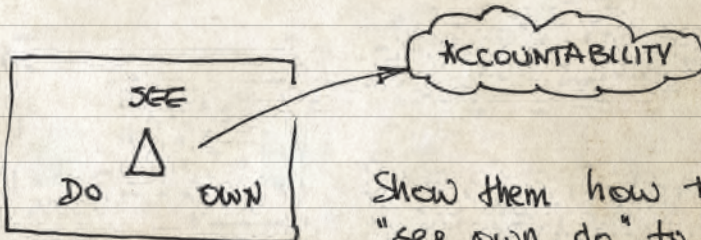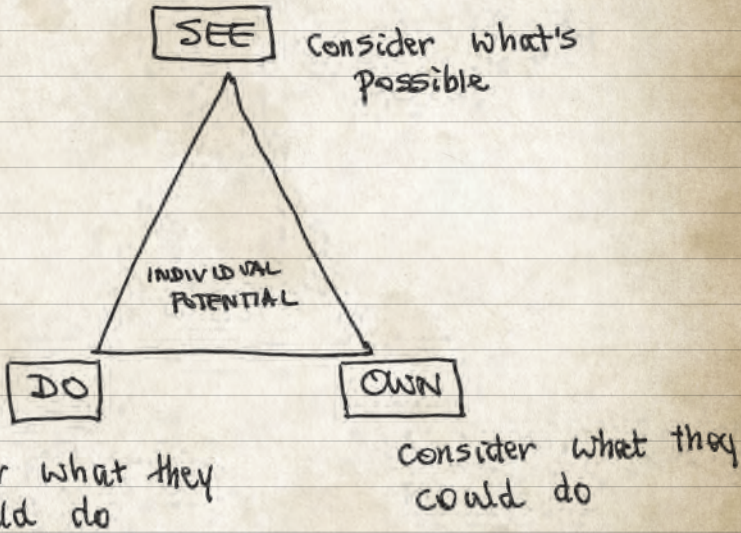
Always consider the whole person...

ANY MESSAGE I DELIVER

SPEAK TRUTH

SPEAK WITH TACT

SPEAK WITH RESPECT
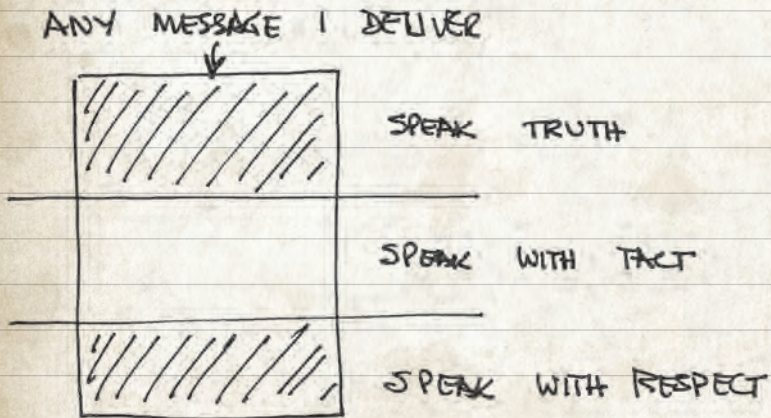
"THE "HOW" OF THE MESSAGE
IS AS IMPORTANT AS
THE " WHAT".

**5** — FOSTER. SUCCESS —

Setting them up for Success —

SEE — Consider what's possible

INDIVIDUAL POTENTIAL

DO — Consider what they should do

OWN — Consider what they could do

ACCOUNTABILITY

SEE
△
DO    OWN
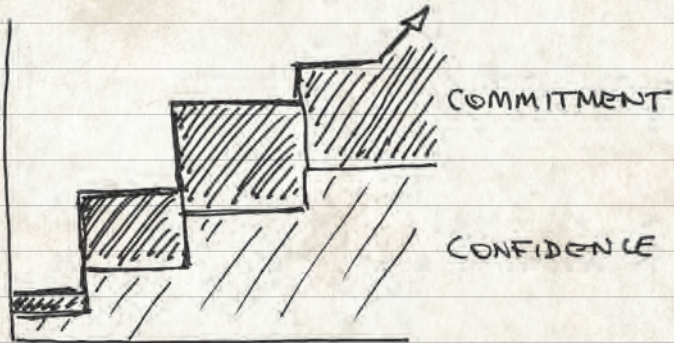
Show them how to link "see, own, do" to their accountabilities.

6 — INVEST IN DEVELOPMENT —

COMMITMENT INCREASES AS
CONFIDENCE GROWS

COMMITMENT

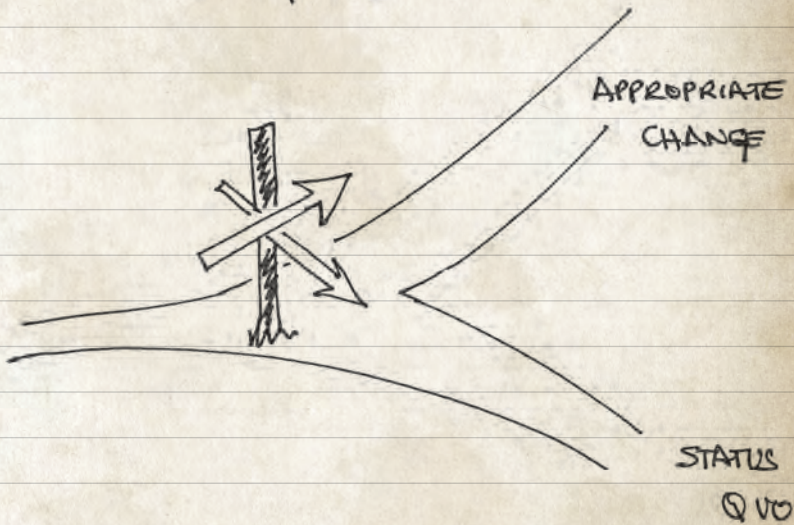CONFIDENCE

Build confidence in individuals.
Competence is a powerful way to
grow confidence.

INCREASING COMPETENCE → INCREASED CONFIDENCE
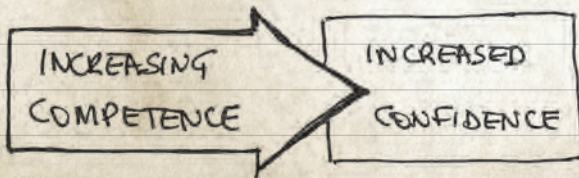
## 7 — BE OPEN TO CHALLENGES —

Encourage the challenging of assumptions –

APPROPRIATE CHANGE

STATUS QVO

Match the responsibility to personal competence.

```
        RIGHT      RIGHT
       PERSON      WORK

           RIGHT
          RESULTS
```
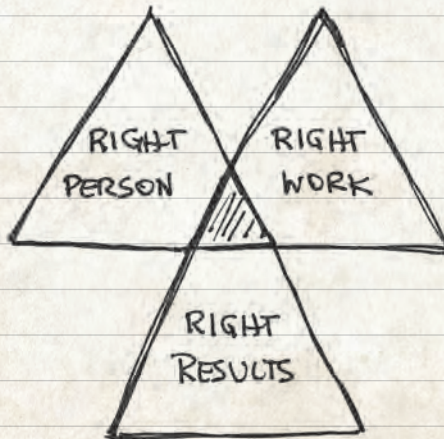
Given what really must be done (right results) can this person really do what's required (right person)? Is it in their skill set (right work)?

## ⑨ – ASSESSMENT –

Individual Assessment Tool...
is this the right person
for this accountability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **HIGH** | WILL NEED STRONG MANAGEMENT SUPPORT | A GREAT FIT |
| **OVERALL COMPETENCE** | NO | WILL NEED SOME ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT |
| **LOW** | | |
| | **LOW** | **HIGH** |

PAST PERFORMANCE ON
SIMILAR ASSIGNMENTS

# CHAPTER FIVE
*Applying the Leader's Triad*

The power of the Leader's Triad is that it is easy to apply, and can be used repeatedly without loss of impact.

There are two primary situations when you would reference it.

1. **When assigning work in the form of a project, mandate or accountability.**

   In this case it's simply a matter of asking yourself three questions:

   1. **Did I provide the best clarity possible?**
   2. **Have I considered how best to integrate teamwork?**
   3. **Is there anything else I can do to harness human potential?**

   Another, simpler, way to remember these three questions is to link them to the Triad:

   1. **Have I taken full advantage of the Power of Clarity?**
   2. **Have I taken full advantage of the Power of Teamwork?**
   3. **Have I taken full advantage of the Power of the Individual?**

The most crucial thing is to personally use the Triad, and the corresponding questions, every time you assign work.

Sometimes one or more of these questions can be in the form of a discussion with the person to whom you're assigning the responsibility. Sometimes they are questions you choose to discuss with a peer before assigning the work; and sometimes they are simply a personal checklist you mentally run through before meeting with the person about to receive the assignment.

If you develop the habit of checking the direction you're about to provide against the three components of the Leader's Triad, then you know you've covered the three most crucial components for success.

2. **In the midst of work underway when you feel it's not going as it should.**

   Again, as in the situation above, there are three questions to ask yourself. In this case though they are diagnostic in nature.

   1. **Is the problem as a result of lack of clarity in some way?**
   2. **Is the problem as a result of poor team performance in some area?**
   3. **Does the cause of the problem lie with an individual?**

In this way you can focus your attention where the solution most probably lies. It may be a combination of these three, for example 40% a greater need for clarity, 50% a need for more effective teamwork, and 10% related to an individual.

Regardless of the makeup of the percentage of your diagnostic, the Triad allows for focus when solving the problem, as well as insight into where to look.

At this point there may be need for you to drill deeper into one aspect of the Triad to implement the actions you feel will resolve the situation. At that point, consider the tools at your disposal, as outlined above.

## Summary

The Leader's Triad provides an instantly available tool that combines virtually every aspect of great leadership into three distinct categories.

It can be used to ensure assigned accountabilities have the best possible likelihood of success, and it can also be used to diagnose issues in execution, and help to prescribe solutions.

The Triad can be used either at a topline level, using only its three essential components; or it can be used in much greater depth by looking at all the tools it encompasses.

Its consistent use will provide clarity, leverage the power of teamwork, and help release the potential of those looking to us for leadership.

The Leader's Triad enables each organization to truly benefit from the power of great leadership.

# THE LEADER'S TRIAD

**The Power of the INDIVIDUAL**

1. Coaching
2. Training
3. Knowledge Transfer
4. Mentors
5. Clarity
6. Recognition
7. Responsibility

**The Power of CLARITY**

1. Goal  Assignment
2. Coaching
3. Discussion
4. Performance Management
5. Career Discussions
6. Conflict Management or Avoidance
7. Corporate Communication
8. Visioning
9. Change Leadership
10. Negotiation
11. Decision Making
12. Thought Leadership

**The Power of TEAM**

1. On a Project
2. To Drive Innovation
3. To Improve Processes
4. Problem Solving
5. Alignment
6. To Do the Impossible

# OTHER BOOKS BY PHIL

**IN YOUR HANDS**
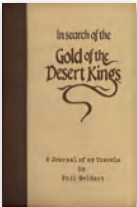The Behaviors of a
World Class Leader

**LEAD YOURSELF,
LEAD OTHERS**
Eight Principles of
Leadership

**THE SEVEN
CORNERSTONES
OF TEAMWORK**

**CULTURE
TRANSFORMATION**
Purpose, Passion, Path

**IN SEARCH OF THE
GOLD OF THE DESERT
KINGS**
A Journey of My Travels

**THE 5 SUMMITS
OF WINNING**
The Importance and
Nature of Accountability

# TO THE READER

If you'd like to:

1. Enroll your organization's leaders in a one-day training course on The Leader's Triad, available with pre and post-course reinforcement;

2. Have Phil speak on The Triad within your organization;

you can do so by contacting Eagle's Flight at:

### www.eaglesflight.com

International Phone: 1-519-767-1747

Canada and USA: 1-800-567-8079