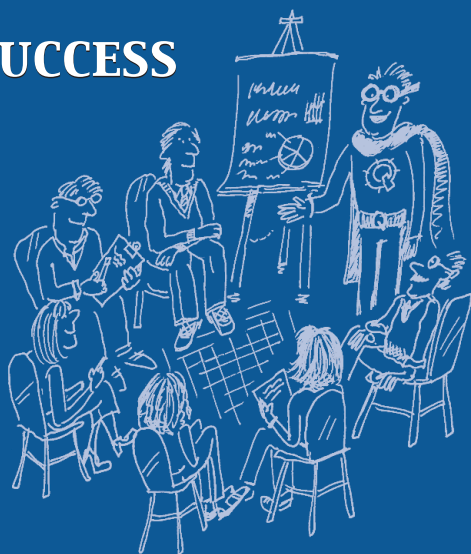


QUANTUM BUSINESS

ACHIEVING SUCCESS
THROUGH
QUANTUM
LEARNING

*Make Quantum
Leaps in
Your Business
and Career*



BOBBI DEPORTER

author of Quantum Learning

with **MIKE HERNACKI**

From Real Life to Business School and Back



What business philosophies are most likely to lead you to personal/professional success?



How do attitude and environment affect results?



What are some benefits of creating a “win/win” situation?

The workplace continues to change dramatically right before your eyes. With costs escalating, baby boomers retiring, and profits being squeezed, companies are “outsourcing” work to other countries where labor is cheaper, and still asking fewer people to produce the same amount of work. Maybe you or someone you know has been “outsourced” out of a job. Maybe you’ve been forced into a completely different job in order to preserve your career. Even if you weren’t forced to, you may have switched fields because you found that the one you trained for doesn’t offer the opportunities you want. Switching fields is more common than ever before. In the 21st century, we find that most college graduates in the U.S. are working in jobs outside the fields in which they hold their degrees. In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ ongoing 1998-2008 study, only 12.1% of college grads were working in their professional specialty after college. The more important news for business leaders and employers from this same study is that there will be a continual need for “educational upgrading” to provide the skill and education requirements workers need to keep pace with industry changes.

If you’re an employer, you may have experienced the agony of having to let people go when business is slow. This is especially upsetting if the people are good workers, but have not upgraded their knowledge and skills to keep pace with changes in your industry.

Today, technology is changing so rapidly and companies are trying so desperately to remain profitable that everyone is being challenged to learn, and learn fast. Employees are facing unprecedented changes in job descriptions and employer expectations. Learning a completely new job—or even keeping up with developments

**Captain “Q” shows you how
Quantum Business methods
help you keep pace with
today’s changing workplace.**



*Captain “Q” is a character we created to help
you visualize the concepts in this book.
He’s a superhero with a superbrain —
just like yours.*

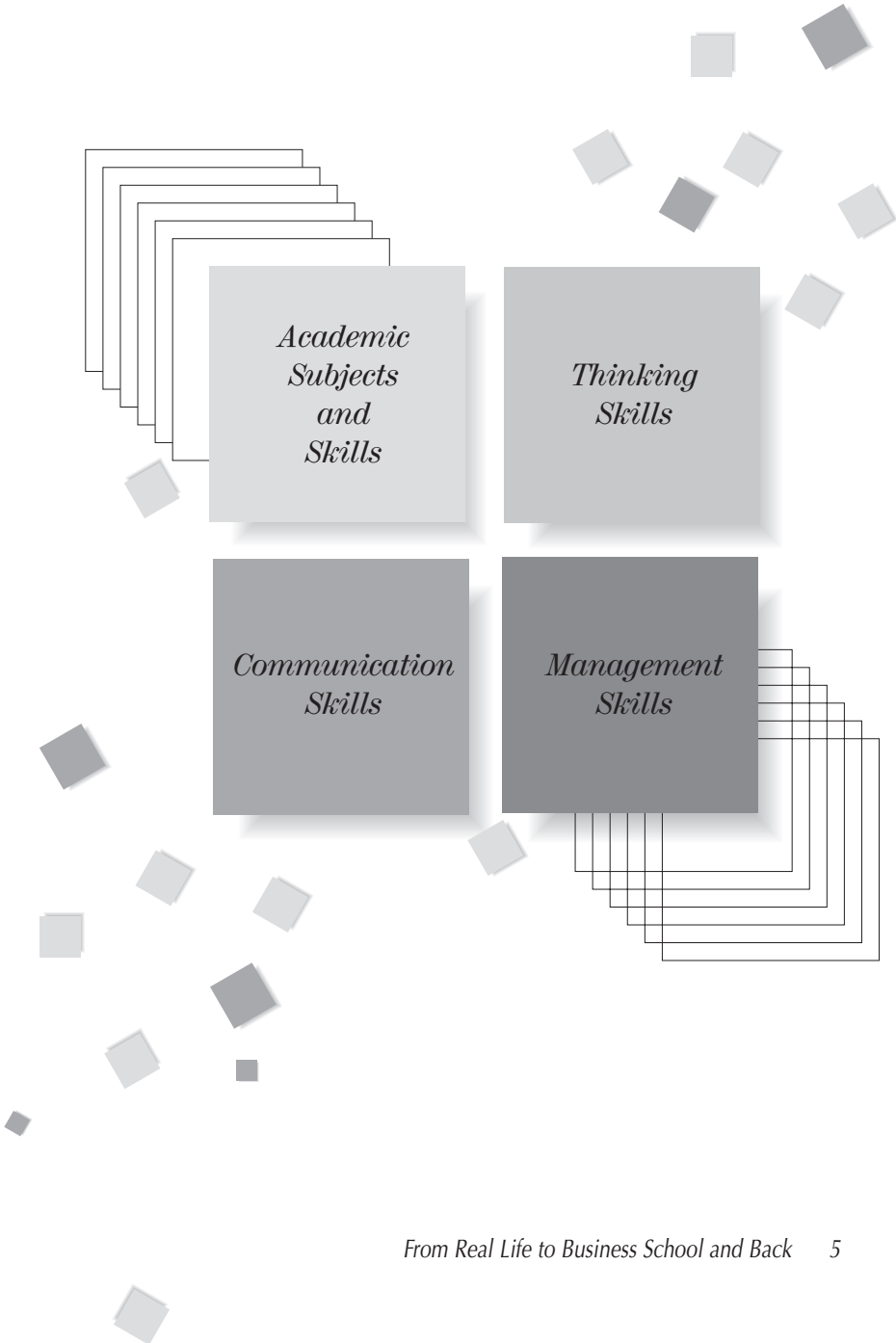
in your old job—can be frightening. But how much choice do you have? Whereas once workers were receiving benefits such as flexible hours, part-time work, and the freedom to telecommute, now thousands of people are seeing their positions “reengineered” out of existence. As a result, most people are grateful just to have a job.

While the pace of change is taking its toll on businesses of all sizes, a small business is particularly vulnerable if it doesn't have the ability to adapt. Entrepreneurs must constantly learn new systems and technologies to stay profitable and make their businesses more competitive. If you're in business for yourself, you may find yourself falling behind, despite your best efforts.

Going through tremendous changes can leave you feeling lost, lonely, and powerless. But you do have power—more than you may realize. It is inside you right now, the potential to take control of your life, to jump-start your career, or move your business ahead. The key to this power is learning—and by learning, I don't mean just learning to read and write. The spectrum of learning covers far more than academic subjects and skills. We all must learn how to think, interact with others, manage our work, and our lives.

Learning isn't only something you do in school, or in seminars. Learning is something you do all day, every day. It includes the foundation and principles upon which you build your life. It includes the environment in which you spend your days and nights. To say that learning is the key to a successful life is like saying that legs are the key to successful walking. I cannot conceive of a life of growth, progress, and accomplishment without the constant learning that makes these things happen.

Learning is composed of many elements . . .



The Amazing Human Learning Machine

We are all born with an insatiable desire to learn, and a remarkable ability to do so. Unfortunately, most of us lose our enthusiasm sometime during our school years. Once we leave school, we consider our learning days to be over. Then, when we're required to purposely learn something new, we resist and become angry or frustrated. In the rapidly changing world of business, this attitude will almost certainly sabotage professional success.

To prevent this from happening, you need to return to that time in your life when learning was an unquenchable thirst. You need to make learning fun again. If you can do that, plus pick up some important skills that help you in other areas of your life, you'll be well along the path to achieving your personal and professional goals.

Quantum Business is based on the premise that learning can, and should, be fun. It's a follow-up to a book I wrote several years ago called *Quantum Learning*. The first book was written for anyone who needs to learn anything. This one is more specific: it applies the principles and techniques of Quantum Learning to the unique challenges you face in the world of work.

But it takes more than a set of learning skills to achieve the balanced success that makes life enjoyable. It also takes the right attitude and a healthy environment. Woven throughout this book are the "8 Keys to Excellence," guidelines for developing a successful attitude and creating a positive environment. This synthesis of environment, attitude, and skills unleashes your power to create a more effective, confident, and successful business and personal life.

The story of Quantum Learning is closely linked to my own story and the path I followed from housewife to

**With the right attitude and
healthy environment, the
human learning machine
can accomplish great feats.**



millionaire to entrepreneur. Along the way, Quantum Learning grew into a comprehensive approach promoting both personal development and business success. It has been used by adults in the workplace and students at every level from elementary school to doctorate with phenomenal results. The results have been phenomenal for the thousands who have used it.

The “Miracle” of Hawthorne/Stone

In 1974, I was a housewife in San Francisco, staying at home and raising my two children. Though I loved my kids and enjoyed my role, I found myself starting to feel anxious and depressed. I yearned to do something for myself, to feel a sense of personal and professional achievement. I was pretty sure I wanted to get involved in business, but wasn't at all sure what form that involvement might take. Each day I would scan the want ads, hoping something would pop out at me. Sure enough, one morning I was drawn to an intriguing ad for a salesperson in a real estate firm, promising lots of money and personal growth. I called and set up an interview.

The firm was Hawthorne/Stone, one of the most successful real estate ventures in San Francisco. I took the job, and was soon introduced to a set of principles that are so valuable, and work so well, they've stayed with me for more than 20 years. These principles have literally been the foundation for everything I've done in my career, including the incredibly successful approach to learning that's the subject of this book.

Hawthorne/Stone's unique way of doing business enabled many people to achieve a level of success they had previously only dreamed about. The key to this success was an office environment like none of us had ever

experienced before. The firm's founders, Marshall Thurber, Rob Cassil, and Bill Raymond, cultivated an open, supportive workplace in which the focus was on relationships, not on procedures or office politics. At our regular staff meetings, we were encouraged to share our experiences—both business and personal—with everyone in the firm. This gave each of us a feeling of belonging and of being supported. The meetings stressed goals and achievements, and we began each session by sharing positive things that had happened to us. The environment was safe and accepting, never negative or critical. This encouraged all of us to be creative in our thinking and courageous in our actions.

Hawthorne/Stone actively promoted a win/win philosophy long before “win/win” became a popular buzzword. If the firm and the people we were dealing with couldn't all win, we'd abandon the project. The founding partners also realized that while the salespeople in the office had the opportunity to make large sums of money (six of them earned over \$200,000 apiece in their second year), the administrative staff's salary was fixed. This inequity was a divisive factor, undermining the harmony so critical to the firm's success. As an incentive to get everyone pulling in the same direction, the partners developed a bonus system. Salaried employees received a 10 percent increase in their pay for every \$100,000 the agency earned above its annual goal. One year, the lowest paid employee earned over \$40,000.

Generally, the firm's goal was economic independence for everyone. But it was clear that we'd never let that come about at the expense of the company's values. The partners repeatedly told us they wanted the business to “come from the point of view of total responsibility, of serving, of being

totally honest, and of doing the job in a way that is fun and supportive.” This wasn’t just talk; it was the way we did business every day.

Reduced to a series of one-sentence statements, the corporate philosophy was:

- Be honest in communicating.
- Speak with Good Purpose.
- Keep agreements.
- Be willing to share and support so everyone succeeds.
- Take responsibility for creating an abundant environment.
- Drop what isn’t working.
- Acknowledge the achievements of others.

These statements became the basis of our 8 Keys of Excellence (see Chapter 2), which are the guiding principles of my company, Learning Forum. I’ve woven the 8 Keys into the fabric of this book because I believe you cannot learn, grow, and develop in business just by learning techniques. Your thoughts and actions must be grounded in a solid philosophy that seeks to benefit you and everyone you deal with in business.

At Hawthorne/Stone, clear, honest communication helped ease the stress while it enabled us to feel closer and more trusting of one another. To “Speak with Good Purpose” meant eliminating gossip, profanity, and negative or defeating statements. This in turn helped create a positive atmosphere. Keeping agreements showed integrity and respect for others. In a hectic and highly specialized business, we all needed to know we could count on one another to follow through on our commitments.

We were also willing to share the wealth as well as the work, and to support one another’s journey to success. Unlike many real estate offices, ours was a noncompetitive

workplace. Though every agent wanted to be the one to make the sale, we openly discussed our work, took calls for one another, and shared information. We celebrated one another's achievements; when one person won, the whole organization won. We believed we were responsible for what we created, so we worked hard to create an abundant environment. We were rich both financially and emotionally.

We also agreed to let go of whatever didn't work. There was no hanging on, feeling sorry, or hoping a negative would magically change into a positive. When something didn't work, we refused to take it personally. We dropped it and moved on to more productive efforts. Most important, we acted out of the belief that the more we gave, the more we would receive. Supporting and caring for one another and our clients proved to be a much more successful approach than the stereotypical "dog-eat-dog" business philosophy. We were excited and motivated about what we were doing and we were creating a working model of what we considered the ideal business environment.

Yes, this philosophy was unorthodox, but it got results. Many of the salespeople were generating high six-figure incomes (close to a million dollars a year). By some estimates we had higher per capita earnings than any other company in America at the time.

But our success was more than just financial. People were being given the opportunity to develop personally as well. A member of our sales staff once said, "I've gone from self-consciousness to self-confidence. I used to think everybody was guarding who they were and what they had and wouldn't give me anything; consequently, I had to guard 'me' in business dealings . . . I used to feel that in order to get, I had to take from people. Now I can give—and the

more I give, the more I get. It's a lot more pleasant this way."

When I started, the partners made it clear to me that in order to keep working there, I would have to make at least \$30,000 a year. At the time, with my limited business experience, that seemed an unreachable goal. I'd never made anywhere near that amount of money before. To my surprise, my first day on the job I made a deal worth a little over \$30,000 to me! Within a few years I had acquired a net worth of over a million dollars and been named a junior partner in the firm.

As you might expect, our success and business practices attracted a lot of attention. Everyone we talked to wanted to know more about what we were doing and why we were so successful. They wanted to learn how to replicate the results we were achieving. Marshall Thurber and I were eager to share this information. It seemed that a natural next step would be to open our own business school. So that's exactly what we did.

A New Breed of Business School

Full of optimism and convinced of the value of what we had to teach, Marshall and I opened the Burklyn Business School in 1978 in rural Vermont. The campus was an historic landmark named Burklyn Hall. It included a country estate and mansion, an inn, a restaurant, stables, and an indoor riding arena. All of this was nestled on 600 acres of green rolling hills. The relaxed, serene setting felt more like a resort than a school.

The curriculum combined traditional business subjects with learning skills, underpinned by the Hawthorne/Stone philosophy. Courses were taught holistically, based on our conviction that students needed to understand all aspects

Q U A N T U M B U S I N E S S

of business, not just one area. We decided to produce generalists armed with the knowledge to develop their own businesses rather than specialists able to manage only one part of a company. We also treated the students holistically—that is, viewing them as a whole person rather than just a learner. We offered a steady diet of exercise classes, meditation, and personal development workshops.

Terry Allen, a university professor who taught at Burklyn, said, “Using these innovative methods, we were able to teach two years’ worth of material in six weeks.” In case studies Terry developed for the Harvard Business School, he had never seen anything like it.

Many of our students already held a business degree and were managers or business owners. Others wanted to build their own businesses, but didn’t know where to begin. The instructors were entrepreneurs, psychologists, and business philosophers—all at the top of their fields. Our staff included accountants, marketing experts, and guest lecturers such as Pete Wanger, founder of Granny Goose potato chips; Porter Briggs, publisher and former White House Fellow; and the late Buckminster Fuller, architect, inventor, and one of the greatest minds of the twentieth century.

Our teaching methods were experimental and constantly evolving. We never assumed that we knew the best way to teach something, or that we couldn’t learn from the students as much as they learned from us. In fact, the students participated actively in the development of our methods. Eager to learn faster and more efficiently, they willingly tried new learning techniques.

One time the students were grumbling that their instructor was relying too heavily on traditional teaching methods. In most academic circles this was equivalent to

mutiny. Marshall brought the class to a halt, confronted the teacher, and demanded that he try something else. The result was a series of support groups, a system that eventually was adopted throughout the school. Six to 10 students would meet with their instructors before class, review the curriculum, and offer suggestions on how to make the course more meaningful and participatory. Students were also encouraged to critique the instructors in writing. Soon it became commonplace for students to work with the instructors in redesigning the courses.

The learning methods we used were based on the work of the legendary Bulgarian educator, Dr. Georgi Lozanov. His methods are collectively referred to as “accelerative learning,” and include techniques such as creating a supportive, positive, and stress-free environment; putting students in a relaxed state so they’ll be more receptive to learning; using baroque music to create mood and state; and varying tone and intonation while speaking. At Burklyn, we also used hands-on participatory methods, plus visuals and music. This type of teaching engages both sides of the brain, and has been scientifically proven to greatly increase learning speed and comprehension.

One of the most revolutionary examples of this method is “The Accounting Game™,” a process that teaches the basics of accounting conceptually. Unlike traditional accounting courses, the emphasis is not on numbers, but on accountability. In the initial exercises, students use pieces of colored paper and very simple numbers to learn how to keep the books for a child’s sidewalk lemonade stand. Mercedes Merrill-Wilson, a professional accountant who took our course, said it gave her a “better understanding of what accounting is all about than four years of college ever did.”

**The Burklyn Business School
was based on a
unique approach to
understanding business.**

Traditional
Business School

- ❑ Training managers
- ❑ Developing specialists
- ❑ Use established teaching methods
- ❑ Only teach students
- ❑ Instructors are full-time teachers

Burklyn
Business School

- ❑ Training entrepreneurs
- ❑ Developing generalists
- ❑ Use experimental teaching methods
- ❑ Teach and learn from students
- ❑ Instructors were business professionals

The Accounting Game continues to be taught today by Educational Discoveries, Inc., to corporations, including Kodak, Kellogg Company, and Caterpillar; and in public seminars. Because of its unique application of the teaching of accounting and finances, the Accounting Game was granted a U.S. patent.

I believe the key to Burklyn's success was the high level of safety and trust. Students were able to spend hours one-on-one with instructors, receiving valuable advice on their future business projects. The instructors also felt it was a learning experience for them. "One day I found myself critiquing this unsound business project," said instructor Dick Gunter, "but I was doing it in a tender, reinforcing way. I couldn't believe my ears. This just wasn't my style. I'm sure that what opened me up to this sort of approach—it certainly wasn't a conscious effort—was the incredibly supportive atmosphere at Burklyn."

Burklyn surpassed even our most optimistic expectations. While traditional business schools were turning out managers, our graduates became entrepreneurs with not only the know-how, but also the self-confidence to succeed. Terry Allen told us, "On an experiential level, the students learn a set of principles that you won't find in textbooks distributed in most graduate schools of business. I'm talking about the 'win/win' philosophy that hallmarks Hawthorne/Stone, the highest possible ethical standards, the support of everyone in the organization, and the insistence that management be aligned in terms of the organization's goals."

Students also discovered that school could be fun. At Burklyn, learning was an exciting, meaningful, joyful process, and even those who had disliked school their whole lives wound up enjoying it in spite of themselves.

Disaster Strikes

A few years after establishing Burklyn, Marshall and I saw our dream school come to what we thought was an untimely end. One of our professors showed us a system that he had developed for making money in stock options. We monitored it for weeks and were excited to see it actually got the results he promised. We eagerly began investing money—not just our own, but that of others as well. So sure were we that the system was foolproof, we personally guaranteed the investors that they would not lose. For a while, the system turned in good profits. Eventually, however, we had so many investors and controlled so many contracts that we ourselves began affecting the market's trends. The system did not provide for this possibility and one day the market turned against us, causing all our positions to collapse completely. We lost millions of dollars in a matter of days.

Because we had guaranteed our investors that they would not lose, we had to personally cover the losses. I lost everything. All my money, my house, everything. All I had left in the world was my car, which somehow the lawyers had overlooked. But even by liquidating virtually all of my assets, I could not cover a hundred percent of the losses. So I had to personally call the investors and tell them their money was gone. This was so painful, I remember curling up in the fetal position on the floor between phone calls, trying to muster the courage to make the next call. It was a horrible experience. It seemed to me that everyone was against me, everyone hated me. But, ultimately, I realized that this too had been a learning experience, and in the end, it made me stronger. Some of the worst things I could have possibly imagined actually happened to me, and I survived.

Today, thanks to all my experiences, I understand both sides of business. I know that business involves taking risks as well as reaping rewards. Marshall and I were naive players in a field that was out of our area of expertise. We had no business speculating in the market, but we justified it by telling ourselves it was okay since all the money we were making was going to support the good work we were doing at Burklyn.

That whole experience, terrible as it was at the time, actually reinforced for me the principles we taught at Burklyn. I still believed in those concepts and so did the students. In spite of our losses, a new partnership was formed and the school continued on.

Sharing the Lessons of Burklyn with Our Children

At Burklyn, many of our students were parents. When they experienced the tremendous shift in their feelings about themselves as learners and what they could accomplish, they wanted a similar experience for their own children. My two children were teenagers at the time and it seemed to me that they could benefit from a program that focused on accelerative learning. I teamed up with Eric Jensen and Greg Simmons and we started a ten-day summer learning experience for teenagers, called SuperCamp. It has been quite successful, and is still the hallmark program of Learning Forum, which I now run with my husband, Joe Chapon.

SuperCamp is patterned after Burklyn, and has a similar philosophy: We create a supportive, nurturing, win/win environment where teens experience success and build confidence in their abilities. The business curriculum has been replaced by learning-to-learn skills that can be applied to any material. We also teach communication and

**Business is a two-way street
requiring taking risks
in order to reap rewards.**



relationship-building techniques to help teens get along better with parents, teachers, and peers during what can be a very confusing and turbulent time of life.

Although at the beginning it was just the three of us and we had very little capital, my partners and I were driven by our excitement and our commitment to the program. We saw what Burklyn had done for adults, and we believed our children deserved a similar opportunity to learn and grow.

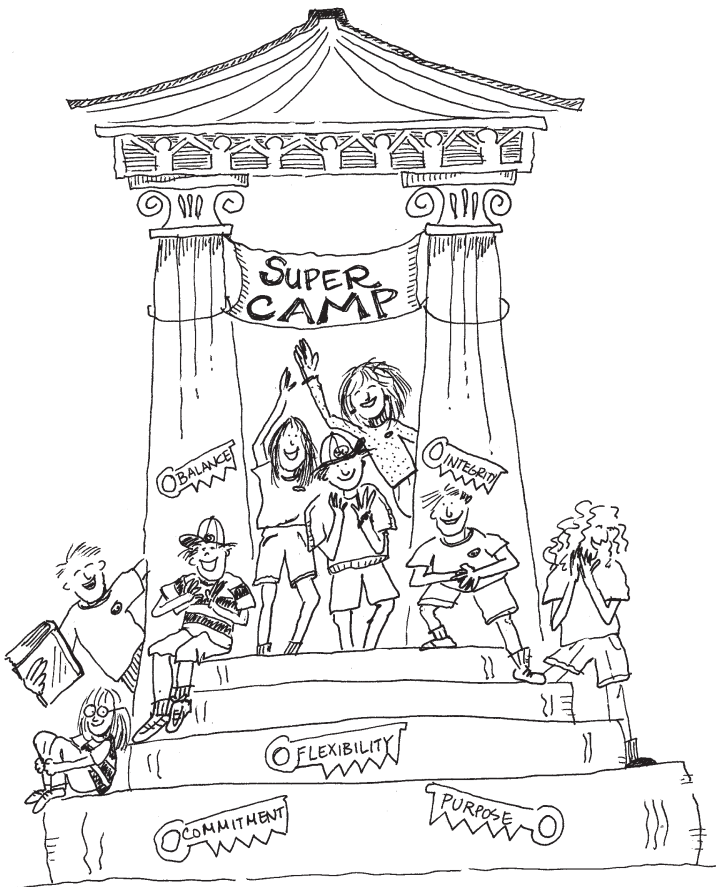
In designing the program, we surveyed parents to find out what their kids needed most. While the parents were concerned about academic achievement and an ability to “make it” in life, they admitted that many of their kids suffered from low self-esteem and were uninterested in school. To raise their grades, the teens needed a boost in self-esteem as much as or more than they needed learning skills. We decided unanimously that SuperCamp would be designed to boost both self-esteem and skills.

We debuted our first program in the summer of 1982. Sixty-four dubious, mostly reluctant students showed up. Through a letter-writing campaign, we rounded up students that included children of friends, relatives, and Burklyn graduates, as well as my own two teens. Employing the same values and learning strategies used at Burklyn, we achieved fantastic results. Students significantly raised grades, became more active in schools and communities, and felt measurably better about themselves.

A Quantum Leap

Over the years, we’ve come to call our approach “Quantum Learning,” and expanded the curriculum. Quantum Learning now encompasses a variety of methods and philosophies, but much still harks back to the days of

**SuperCamp is a supportive
and nurturing environment
where teens experience
success and build confidence.**



Hawthorne/Stone. And we still emphasize three areas that were central to the Burklyn program: learning environment, mental attitude, and skills.

Learning Environment

We create a safe, open, loving atmosphere where students feel free to express themselves and explore opportunities without pressure from parents or peers. Our staff is expert at creating rapport with teens, offering friendship, and modeling confidence and caring. During classes, baroque music often plays softly in the background, since Dr. Lozanov found that baroque music, with its 60 to 80 beats per minute, melodic chord structures, and instrumentation, most closely matches the body's own rhythms. Lozanov's studies showed that the music helps students to be alert yet relaxed, making them more receptive to learning. During breaks, we use upbeat popular music to stimulate play and movement. The room is decorated with affirmative, motivational signs saying things like "I am an excellent learner!" "For things to change, I must change," and "Everything I want is a belief away." We keep the room neat, cheerful, well lit, and well ventilated to preserve a "high-consciousness" atmosphere.

Mental Attitude

To achieve success, you must build a positive attitude, increase your belief in yourself, and be open to trying new things. Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), the study of how the brain organizes information, plays a key part here. NLP explores the relationship between language and behavior. We use it to create rapport between students and teachers. Using their knowledge of NLP, our teachers avoid negative phrases, give feedback carefully and positively, and focus on solutions rather than problems.

Q U A N T U M B U S I N E S S

One of the key ingredients of Quantum Learning is getting students to transform negative pictures of themselves into positive ones, first by becoming aware of negative thoughts and language, and then by adopting more positive thinking patterns. At SuperCamp we use a ropes course—physical challenges to help students build confidence by helping them break through perceived limitations.

Skills

The academic skills we teach are note-taking, reading, creativity/problem-solving, memory, and writing. Students also discover their own personal learning style and strategies for learning. Our life skills include communication and relationship-building methods. As at Burklyn, we take a whole-brain approach to teaching these skills, with the result that students absorb information more quickly and efficiently. We use games, activities, music, and action to make learning fun, as well as to increase motivation and competence. As you read this book, you'll learn more about these skills and how to apply them to your work every day.

SuperCamp has improved the lives of thousands of students. Dr. Jeannette Vos-Groenendal analyzed seven years of research using quantitative and qualitative data on over 6,000 SuperCamp graduates. She found 73% raised their grades, 84% increased self-esteem, and 98% continued to use their new skills years later.

Today, more than 45,000 students have attended SuperCamp. Programs are held across the U.S. and throughout the world on prominent academic campuses. We have 36 full-time employees and over 350 summer staff. We continue to expand our programs into the schools through Quantum Learning teacher training, and school in-service programs to bring our techniques to the mainstream school systems.

Quantum Learning and You

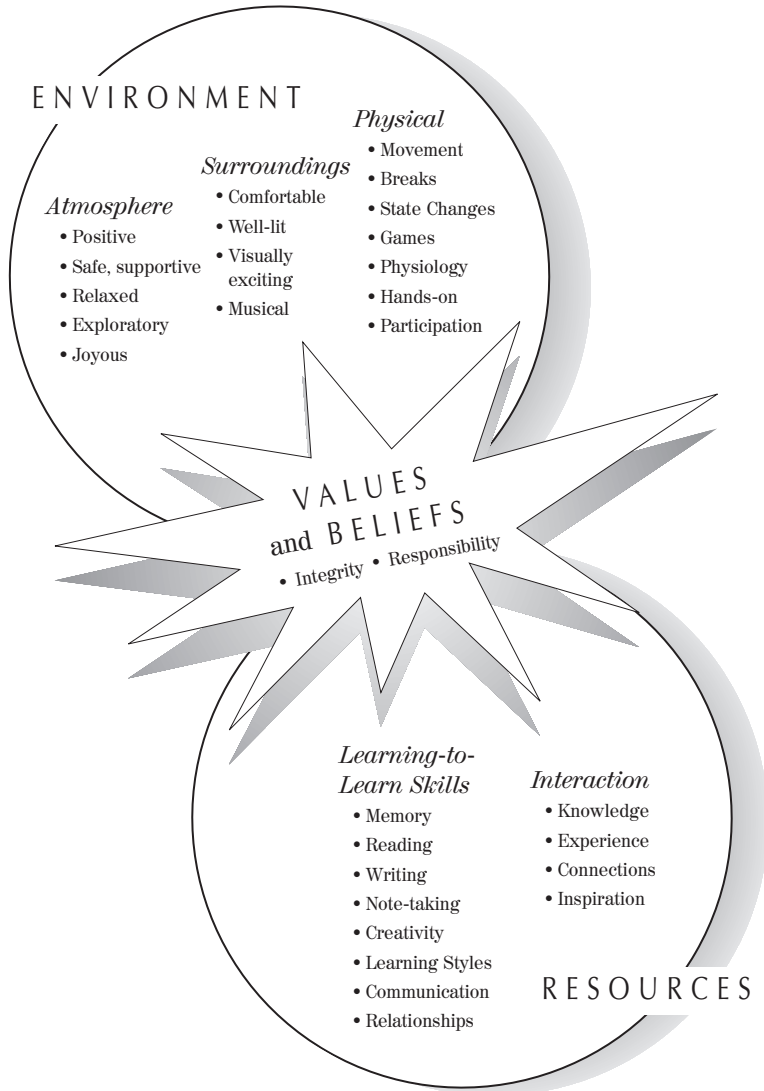
Quantum Learning is a combination of philosophy and strategies. It works for people of all ages. It applies in many environments: the classroom, the home, and the business world. Our company is a reflection of the Quantum Learning training programs and is run on the same foundation that was so important to the remarkable results at Hawthorne/Stone.

Good relationships and supportive environment are keys to our success. We continue to hold daily meetings to communicate, share new ideas and support one another, and to generally stay aligned. When we reach milestones in program enrollments, we celebrate with office parties and other rewarding activities. Each year, we hold a “Vision Meeting,” a day dedicated to aligning our goals for the coming year, getting to know each other better and playing together. We stress responsibility and teamwork. We share the responsibility of daily tasks such as answering the phones, opening mail, and running meetings. The whole office pitches in to complete a pressing project, regardless of what department we each belong to or what position we hold. We share a willingness to trust and support one another.

Just as Burklyn graduates, who profited from the principles developed at Hawthorne/Stone, once requested a program for their children, I now receive requests from the parents of SuperCamp graduates for a program for adults. They’ve seen what Quantum Learning has done for their children, and they want to learn to apply those same techniques and principles in their own lives and careers—their computer companies, law offices, and yes, their real estate agencies. Thus the saga has come full circle.

This book is for those parents, and for anyone who

Quantum Learning is a body of learning methods and philosophies proven effective for all ages.



Q U A N T U M B U S I N E S S

wants to reach new levels of success. It builds on lessons from Hawthorne/Stone and Burklyn, as well as from SuperCamp, and it brings these lessons back where you spend most of your waking hours: the real world of business.

Celebrate Your Learning!



! *What business philosophies are most likely to lead you to personal/professional success?*

- Be honest in communicating.
- Speak with Good Purpose.
- Keep agreements.
- Be willing to share and support so everyone succeeds.
- Take responsibility for creating an abundant environment.
- Drop what isn't working.
- Acknowledge the achievements of others.

! *How do attitude and environment affect results?*

A positive attitude and a supportive environment unleash your innate power to build a more effective, confident, creative, and successful business and personal life.

! *What are some benefits of creating a “win/win” situation?*

- Stronger team unity.
- Abundant environment.
- Customers who feel satisfied and enriched.

Everything Speaks: The Impact of Your Environment



How does your physical space affect how you learn?



How can careful planning help produce a more productive work environment?



What can you do to transform meetings from boring to exciting, from wasteful to productive?



What is the role of “vision” in your organization’s future?

When Dr. Lozanov spoke about the influence our environment has over us, he proclaimed, “Everything speaks!” During his years of research on the power of suggestion, Lozanov found that our physical and emotional environments can greatly impact the quality of our work and lives. Based on that, he developed a teaching method known as “suggestology.” (This is his term. The term “accelerative learning” was coined by his followers and includes work done by others as well as Lozanov.)

Suggestology means everything makes a suggestion. Lozanov found that a carefully controlled environment, including comfortable seating, soft lights, classical or baroque music, appropriate use of color, uplifting artwork, and inspirational messages, actually helps students learn faster and retain more information. The environment makes students feel relaxed and at ease—and as he discovered and eventually proved, the relaxed student is more receptive to learning.

This relaxed condition is called an “alpha state,” wherein brain waves and heart rate slow down. When students are brought into this state they are able to physically relax, yet keep an alert mind. Lozanov also reinforced his students’ attitudes with positive affirmations about themselves as learners, thereby building an atmosphere of safety and trust. Carefully measuring his results, he found that students in the alpha state learned at a much faster rate than other students and were able to remember the information for longer periods of time. Based on this, he concluded that an orchestrated environment can inspire success by telling the student’s subconscious, “You can do it!”

At Learning Forum (now known as Quantum Learning Network), we've adapted many of Lozanov's teaching methods to the working world. We practice them in our SuperCamp program and in our own organization as well. We've repeatedly found that the seemingly insignificant details of the work environment and our interactions with others really do make a difference. Minutiae like color, background music, and seating arrangements can influence the tone, and thus the outcome, of a meeting. They may also "speak" of our successes.

Details Make the Difference

To apply Quantum Learning to the business setting requires a carefully orchestrated synthesis of the physical and emotional environments. By physical environment, I mean furnishings, lighting, color, music—and the atmosphere these create. "Emotional environment" includes the choice of words used in communications, the personal relationships among the employees, the employees' internal emotional states, and the prevailing emotions in the workplace. By carefully planning and creating our environments, we build an atmosphere of safety and trust that Lozanov found not only helps people to learn better, but also encourages them to participate.

A good example of how environment affects us is a training seminar we do for summer staff called "Spirit of SuperCamp." Much thought and planning goes into creating an inspiring, exciting atmosphere that will pump up energy levels and inspire teamwork. At one such seminar, when the staff arrived for the three-day event, they were struck by the excitement generated by the bright colors and lively music. Hand-painted banners of our 8 Keys of Excellence hung from the ceiling, and

posters, balloons, plants, and flowers filled the meeting room. The theme for this particular event was “Integrity,” one of our 8 Keys. The front of the room was dominated by a stack of nine three-foot blocks, each with one letter of the word Integrity painted on it. We decorated the participants’ sleeping quarters with personalized welcome signs, and each of them received a tiny wooden block painted to signify a building block of success—a block they would take home to remind them what they experienced. Our staff put a lot of effort into making every detail “speak.”

One participant said, “After being immersed in this whole environment, I felt reenergized and ready to go!”

In discussions afterward, we agreed this was one of our most successful training sessions because it created a strong bond of understanding among the employees and generated enthusiasm for upcoming programs. Every detail of the seminar supported our desired outcome and made an impact.

At our corporate office we make a similar effort. We hold an annual Office Beautification Day to clean, rearrange, replenish, and renew our work space. Each person takes responsibility for his or her own area, and shared work spaces are a group effort. The air ripples with excitement as we discover better seating arrangements, more effective use of space, or more pleasing color schemes. We buy new plants, new artwork, and if needed, additional furnishings. It’s a fun-filled, lighthearted day that renews both our work space and our spirits. Everyone gets involved, which creates a sense of ownership and pride in each person that would not exist if he or she had not personally participated. In the end, this turns out to be a relationship-building event as well as a clean-up day.

**During Learning Forum’s
“Office Beautification Day,”
the office is rearranged,
replenished, and renewed
as a working space.**



Careful Planning Pays Off

To achieve optimum results, you must plan carefully which elements to use in your office environment. Keep in mind the ultimate purpose that each section of the office serves. For example, you'll want lightweight tables and chairs for rooms where furniture will be rearranged frequently to suit changing needs. Lozanov stresses using:

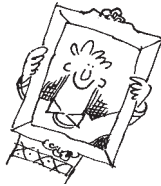
- Lots of plants to create a more soothing atmosphere;
- Natural lighting whenever possible; and
- Full-spectrum lighting that can be made softer or brighter depending upon the need.

Our office has both skylights and track lighting. The track lights allow us to control the direction as well as the intensity of the light. Employees who previously complained of headaches from our old fluorescent lights found great relief when we changed to natural lighting and full-spectrum lamps.

What you hang on the walls also says a great deal about who you are. We take advantage of this opportunity to send a strong message about our organization by hanging our vision statement at the office entrance. It's one of the first things customers see when they walk in. After reading the statement, many of them mention that they're moved by the vision. We want people to know up-front what we stand for and why we're in business. As a result, they're more relaxed and receptive when we meet face-to-face.

We also showcase our past, present, and future on the walls, displaying SuperCamp brochures, photos, and charts of current and future projects. The photos of past staff, students, and programs and the increasing sophistication of our brochures make our history visible and keep us aware of who we are and how we began. It also helps us keep the "big picture" of our overall business in mind.

**Carefully plan office elements
to optimize your work
and energy levels.**



Display your:

Vision statement



Photos



Awards



Brochures of past products
and services

The one room in which we don't have anything on the walls is our conference room. There the walls are covered with whiteboards for planning and note-taking. It's a fine example of a room designed with its end-use in mind. The room gracefully manages to serve many purposes. Large enough for group activities as well as formal meetings with the entire office, it's furnished with one large table, comfortable chairs that can be arranged throughout the room, track lighting that can be dimmed for different moods, and skylights for natural light. Flip-chart stands, a stereo system, a television, and a VCR complete the setup. When used in conjunction with our fully-equipped kitchen for providing meals and refreshments, this room is ideal for small seminars and training sessions.

The design and details of an office should reflect how you do business. At Learning Forum, we avoid meeting across a desk, as this puts one person in a position of implied dominance over the other. We prefer to meet seated in circles or at a round table. This arrangement puts everyone on the same level and encourages cooperation and participation. Meeting without a table also makes people more open and less likely to "hide" from the rest of the group.

The overall plan of our office is open, with a feeling of spaciousness. We feel this design encourages cooperation and open-mindedness. We avoid using walls and cubicles so as to facilitate teamwork among departments. By limiting the use of dividers, we make it easier for staff to see one another and communicate. Staff members find themselves much more likely to discuss problems, find new solutions, and work as a team when there's easy access between departments. Not only is the furniture in the conference room movable so as to create small, more intimate meeting areas, but each department also has areas set up with a small table and comfortable chairs.

By meeting in a circle and without a desk or table, individual participation, openness, and cooperation are encouraged.



Keeping Physically Fit

Quantum Business includes keeping your body in shape as well as your mind. Today, some large companies are including gyms, pools, or running tracks in their floor plans. This may not be feasible for a smaller organization, but we found that we were able to encourage exercise simply by installing a shower. Some of our employees bike or jog to work or exercise at a nearby gym—something they wouldn't do if they didn't have a place to clean up afterward.

If you have the space, you can also hold exercise classes during lunch or after-hours. We once had an employee who taught aerobics courses in his spare time, and was kind enough to offer step-training classes in our conference room. By the way, these activities are initiated by our staff. No one is told to exercise; they simply take advantage of the resources that are provided. The desire for self-improvement must come from within, and that starts with a supportive environment. I believe all people have a desire to fulfill their potential, and only need the opportunities and support to do so.

Reinventing the Business Meeting

First-time visitors to our office are often surprised by what they find. A few years ago, a large corporation was looking for a nonprofit organization to sponsor. One of their candidates was our Learning Forum Foundation, which provides, among other things, scholarships for students who can't afford SuperCamp. Several of the corporation's executives flew in from Chicago for an early-morning meeting with us.

The men arrived dressed in their dark suits and ties, briefcases in hand, and serious expressions on their faces. I remember how shocked they looked when they got to the

**First-time visitors to Learning
Forum are sometimes
surprised by what they find.**



front door and saw the large “WELCOME” sign hanging over it. We greeted them in our SuperCamp T-shirts, smiling, and playing upbeat music. This was obviously not at all what they had expected.

Entering the office, they found a table laden with fruit, muffins, coffee, and juice. Signs with statements like “Whatever I Dream, I Can Become” decorated the walls. Whiteboards and flip charts with sets of brightly colored pens were ready for presentations. Instead of meeting formally at the conference table, we had arranged the chairs in an intimate circle.

We also had someone at a computer taking notes throughout the meeting and creating charts and other materials. When the sessions ended five hours later, our visitors took with them notes of all that was said, as well as a complete project plan. They left with smiles on their faces and a bounce in their step.

The executives experienced who we are and what we value. They saw by our actions and environment that we believe in positive, joyful, meaningful relationships and an uplifting work environment. Though because of a funding cutback the corporation eventually decided not to sponsor any organization, one of the men who visited that day was so moved that he made a personal gift to the Foundation and has donated faithfully every year since.

What those managers experienced that day was a shift in their thinking about how a business could be run. Our conduct of the meeting was just one example of taking a standard business practice and reinventing it. The meeting elements—environment, atmosphere, relationships—are a part of every office, but are often ignored or left to chance. But at Learning Forum, the elements are carefully thought out and created.

Visitors who are unfamiliar with SuperCamp aren't the only ones surprised by our approach to meetings. Even our summer staff is sometimes caught off guard. Not long ago, a staff member from the East Coast visited San Diego and we invited her to stop by the office. She showed up in professional attire, ready to meet the "corporate bigwigs." Instead, she was greeted by people dressed comfortably in slacks and shirts. As she toured the office, brightened by skylights in the beamed ceiling and decorated with camp photos and plants, her ideas of what an office had to be started to break down.

Later she described her experience like this: "Music started blasting over the intercom and someone grabbed me by the arm and pulled me into a meeting with the whole company. Everyone stood in a circle and the structure was similar to meetings we had at our summer programs. So was the atmosphere. They talked as much about personal issues and the new experiences they enjoyed over the weekend as they did about business. But there was an agenda and there was direction. It's just that these things were part of the agenda. Fifteen minutes later, the meeting was over and the music started again. The mood was upbeat and happy even though there was a lot of work to be done. It wasn't what I'd pictured, but it makes sense. If this is where SuperCamp is created, then what we feel is important for creating a positive, productive atmosphere at our summer programs should be done here as well."

The similarities between SuperCamp and Learning Forum are no accident. We operate on a strong foundation that permeates all aspects of our business. If there's one action that has more impact than any other on both business success and personal satisfaction, it's the laying of a strong foundation. By that I mean clarifying the principles

and values by which you live and holding a powerful vision of where you're headed.

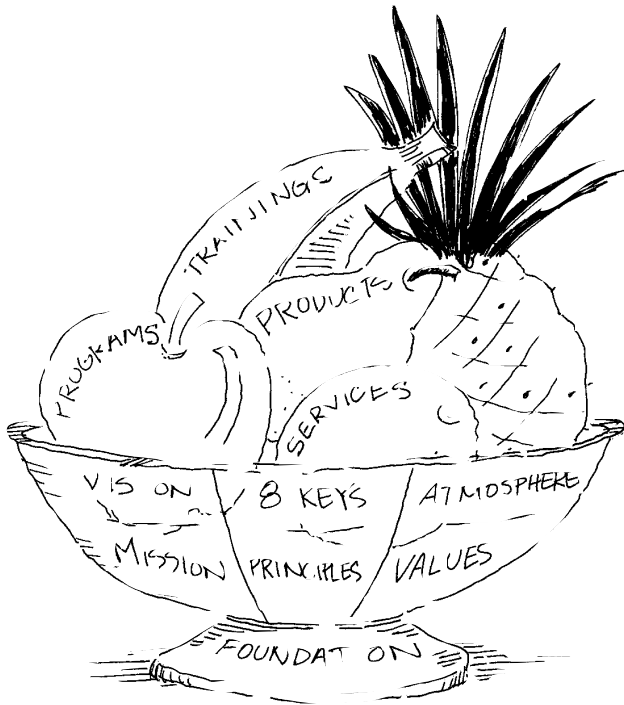
Putting What You Do into Context

At Burklyn, we considered it very important to distinguish between “context” and “content.” Marshall Thurber liked to explain the difference this way: Imagine a bowl filled with fruit. The bowl is the context, that which holds everything together. Our vision, principles, values, beliefs, and culture define our environment and our actions. They set the context of our lives. The fruit is the content. It's what we do and make. In the case of Learning Forum, the content includes SuperCamp, the videos we produce, the training seminars we offer, and all the other things we do.

An organization's context incorporates those things that form its philosophical foundation. The tighter and stronger the context (the bowl), the more the staff members are held in alignment. To that extent, their efficiency and effectiveness increase and the company experiences greater success. Buckminster Fuller even created a word to describe this phenomenon. “Synergy,” he said, “is created when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” When context is loose and company principles are not clearly defined, the foundation (the bowl) is weak, and everyone holds a different vision, or no vision, resulting in ineffective, frustrated staff, and an unproductive organization.

As someone who has worked for years developing our company vision, I continue to marvel at its power. Perhaps the most difficult part of the process is creating the vision statement itself. Crafting that statement forces us to carefully formulate and clarify our views. I've found the vision statement to be a valuable tool for inspiring us and keeping all of us motivated. It reminds us of our reason for being in

The fruit bowl analogy distinguishes context and content.



business. It keeps us from getting sidetracked and spending valuable resources on inappropriate projects.

Vision gives the staff a deeper reason for coming to work every day, a reason that goes beyond the paycheck. It adds meaning to daily activities and gives us all a sense of purpose and fulfillment. It gives us a psychological anchor that we can grab hold of, so that when something happens that's in line with the vision, we can say, "Yes! That's why I'm here."

A powerful vision of what could be gives us a direction in which to move and the motivation to change our present situation. When we clearly see where we want to be (our vision), and have carefully examined where we are now, we begin to be pulled toward the vision. Our actions take on meaning and purpose that naturally move us forward. Without vision, there's nothing to beckon us, to urge us on.

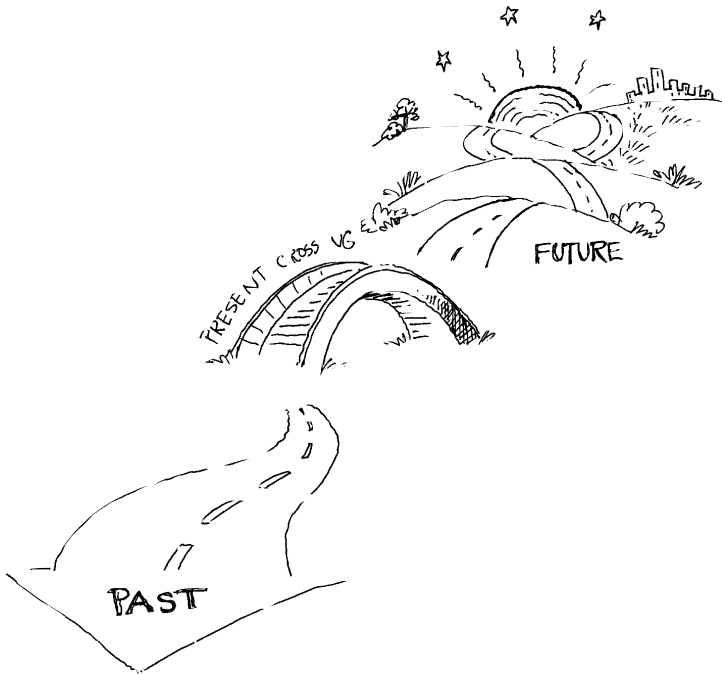
This does not mean that what has gone before is without value. In fact, to clarify our vision, we need an accurate picture of the past. At Learning Forum, part of formulating our company vision statement involved taking a hard look at our past and present, then projecting ourselves ten years into the future. We did this at an office meeting that involved the entire staff. It turned out to be a day that literally reshaped our future.

We'd been working on our vision statement for some time, but it seemed abstract and unreal. That day, we gave it substance.

The Future Comes Alive

First, we discussed our company history and our present situation. Sitting together in a circle, we shared memories of the past. We created charts depicting political and business trends. We relived our history through stories and old photographs until everyone clearly understood our past,

**To clarify a vision,
start with an accurate picture
of the present and
knowledge of the past.**



where we had “come from,” and our present, where we were that day.

Then we broke up into small groups of three or four and began mapping out our future, each group focusing on a different area of the company. Using long sheets of butcher paper with a grid along the top measuring out the years, we recorded future milestones.

Projecting into the future was difficult. At first we moved cautiously, but as we got further into the process the momentum picked up and we grew more excited and imaginative. Our motto became “Anything goes,” and we began shouting out seemingly crazy ideas like “teleporting to summer sites; a SuperCamp movie; a Learning Forum television show.” Since that day, some of these “crazy ideas” have become reality. Programs in Southeast Asia, a book on Quantum Learning, and an international Quantum Learning conference each grew out of the brainstorming we did that day. I’m convinced these things would not have happened without this effort, for if we had not taken the time to envision these projects, how could we have moved toward making them a reality?

After nearly two years of deep consideration of our purpose, and much rewriting, we arrived at a vision statement that truly describes our company and has stood the test of time.

It reads:

An international model of excellence,
 facilitating a shift in learning,
 resulting in creative, educated, responsible people,
 participating in the global community.

A Matter of Principle

Learning Forum is built on our vision. The process of

Q U A N T U M B U S I N E S S

formulating that vision brought to light other important elements of our context—our principles and values.

Webster’s dictionary defines a principle as “1. an accepted or professed rule of action or conduct; 2. a fundamental law, axiom, or doctrine.” Principles like honesty, charity, and justice are external, constant, and exist throughout society.

For Quantum Learning, we’ve adapted, refined, and added to these principles. We call them the 8 Keys of Excellence, and following these keys has created a positive and productive environment at Learning Forum. We believe in these principles, internalize them, and make them a part of our professional and personal lives.

The 8 Keys of Excellence are at the heart of the Quantum Learning foundation. They direct us to act in ways that support and respect others. By living these principles, we create an open, trusting, supportive environment. We’ll examine each key in depth in later chapters.

At SuperCamp we’ve learned the 8 Keys are most effective when woven throughout the course. On the first day of each program, we give a brief definition of the Keys. Then each day for the rest of the week we have a “Key for the Day,” and explain in detail why that key is important.

Because people learn in different ways, we use a wide variety of methods to teach the keys. Then we repeat the information to cement it into long-term memory. Students may be asked to write, create and perform skits, listen to stories, draw pictures, or participate in other activities that will help them remember the material. Dr. Lozanov developed this method of interweaving psychological concepts into the content of a course to make learning more effective. I’m going to use the same approach for this book, alternating “Key” chapters with chapters on learning tech-

niques. This will help cement the information in your memory and will balance content with context.

The 8 Keys of Excellence can make a dramatic difference in your personal and professional life. Organizations that follow these keys become more supportive, open, and friendly. They become places where people learn, grow, discover solutions, develop innovative products, and work together as a team.

Adopt the 8 Keys into your business and your life and they'll put you on the road to achieving Quantum success.

Values—It's What's Inside that Counts

Unlike principles, which are external and unchanging, values and beliefs are internal, personal, and different for everyone. You may value family ties, education, and good health, for example, while your boss values hard work, loyalty, and dedication to duty. According to Stephen Covey, author of *Principle-Centered Leadership* (Summit Books, New York, 1991), our values and beliefs develop throughout childhood and are shaped by culture and family. "These [values] become the 'glasses' through which we look at the world. We evaluate, assign priorities, judge, and behave based on how we see life through these glasses."

For any organization to be successful, the employees' personal values must be aligned with the company's values. If not, the employees soon become uncomfortable in the environment, and must either change their views or leave.

At Learning Forum, we dedicate meetings to clarifying our company and personal values and beliefs, and we've found it extremely valuable to put these convictions in writing. We also communicate our principles and values in

Learning Forum's 8 Keys of Excellence are at the heart of Quantum Learning.



Live in Integrity

Conduct yourself in the state of authenticity, sincerity, and wholeness that results when your values and behavior are aligned.

Acknowledge that Failure Leads to Success

Understand failures simply provide us with the information we need to learn so we can succeed.

Speak with Good Purpose

Develop the skill of speaking in a positive sense, being responsible for honest and direct communication.

Live in the Now—This Is It!

Develop the ability to focus your attention on the present moment. Each moment, each task counts.

Affirm Your Commitment

Follow your vision without wavering; stay true to the course. Do whatever it takes to get the job done.

Take Ownership

Be accountable and responsible. Be someone who can be counted upon, someone who responds.

Stay Flexible

Maintain the ability to change what you are doing to get the outcome you desire.

Keep Your Balance

Maintain your mind, body and spirit in alignment.

our company literature. It's a statement of who we are. We find that many of the things we believe in, such as positive relationships, are related to our principles (see *Speak with Good Purpose*, Chapter 3).

Part of the context of Learning Forum is our belief that positive relationships are paramount. Good relationships move us forward; poor relationships hold us back. When people work joyfully together they accomplish far more than when they are at odds. They focus on making things happen, achieving goals, improving systems, or inventing new products. At Learning Forum, strong relationships mean co-workers feel safe and trusting. They bounce ideas off one another without fear of criticism, communicate their concerns clearly and effectively, and develop programs and products free of any fears of failure. Personally and professionally, they keep growing.

Of course, personality types also have something to do with how well people get along. You may think that working well with your co-workers means you're lucky. You may also believe that when you and your co-workers don't get along there's nothing you can do. Both are misconceptions. It may surprise you to learn how much environment and communication skills, also part of the context, can contribute to and greatly influence the outcome of relationships. When context is tight—when we value good relationships and principles like “*Speak with Good Purpose*”—we experience alignment with and positive feelings about each other, which leads to synergy.

Our behavior is directed by our context, and the more we model this behavior, the more it spreads throughout the company. It's an on-going process.

If you recall the fruit bowl analogy, the bowl is made up of our vision, principles, and values. That's our *context*.

For any organization to be successful, the employees' personal values must be aligned with the company's values.

“ *Values and beliefs develop throughout childhood and are shaped by culture and family.* ”

— Stephen R. Covey
Author, *Principle-Centered Leadership*

© 1990, 1991, Summit Books, *Principle-Centered Leadership*,
Stephen R. Covey. All rights reserved. Used with the permission of
Covey Leadership Center, Inc. 1-800-331-7716.

The *contents* of the bowl are the things we do, our programs and products. Our company mission is to create environments and resources for lifelong learning and personal success. A strong context allows our work, our content, to be completed more effectively. Staff members can focus on their jobs because they have a clear picture of the rules we play by and the direction we're headed. We can see this at Learning Forum in the strong sense of teamwork and cooperation. We rarely stay within the confines of our job descriptions. Reaching company goals or completing the task at hand comes first.

Vision Meetings: A Day to Focus

We do our best to make our context a part of each day, but the one day we focus completely on it is at our annual Vision Meeting. If you plan to create a shift in your company culture, a vision meeting may be just the place to start.

Our Vision Meeting is a day-long, all-staff affair that focuses on where we've been, where we are now, and where we want to go. We immerse ourselves in the ultimate Quantum Learning environment, so that we may hold that picture in our minds as a reminder of what we're all about.

We've held Vision Meetings both on-site and at outside locations, since it's sometimes good to get out of the office. One memorable meeting was held in a conference room on a bluff overlooking the ocean. The wall facing the sea was all window, and as the staff entered they were greeted by a stunning view of waves breaking on the shore below. We arranged our chairs around this large window, using the ocean as the backdrop for the meeting. We also decorated the room with inspirational posters, plants, and flowers,

and we played a variety of music to create different moods. Creating the atmosphere you want through such details is important. It helps you set the direction and tone of the meeting.

The activities vary each year depending on what we feel is needed. However, essential elements always include reviewing the vision statement, discussing our past, present, and future, and building relationships.

We often begin our meeting by reading the company vision statement. Sometimes we take turns discussing what it means to us or sharing our own personal visions. This is a time to check in and make sure we are all aligned and heading in the right direction—that we are truly pursuing our vision. The amount of time we spend on this exercise depends on how aligned we are as a group.

At one meeting, when we were discussing our roots, I shared stories about the Burklyn Business School. It was an intensely personal experience for me. Munching on cookies, we gathered around the television and watched my old video on the “Story of Burklyn.” The film was shot in the late 1970’s, during the height of our business school, and I had not sat down and watched it in many years.

I was moved by the faces of the past, the beautiful mansion and surrounding acres of countryside, and the joy and inspiration we had felt in that place. We were pioneers exploring new methods of teaching and learning. As we watched the film, I saw inspired students who have since moved on to become successful business owners. I saw the room where Buckminster Fuller used to teach. And I remembered the favorite places where my children liked to play.

I told our staff that the concepts for our 8 Keys had their origins in this place, as well as many of the activities that

are part of SuperCamp. I believe it gave them a better understanding of the roots of our company and of who I am as well. It also brought us closer together as a group. Our yearly vision meetings are casual, friendly, and relaxed. Relationships are deepened when you share something of yourself and your company history.

The staff looks forward to them with anticipation, since most of them don't know the agenda (we keep it a surprise to create momentum). But there's no fear of what might happen. It's a friendly, inspiring, focused gathering. We serve muffins, juice, and coffee in the morning and lunch in the afternoon. Many of our seasoned staff show up in sweats or jeans.

To help solidify the feeling of being a team, when we have a Vision Meeting, we have a group photo taken at the end of the day. Copies of the photo are framed, with the vision statement written beneath it, and put on each desk. We also give each person a gift to remember the day, such as the "Team Learning Forum" sweatshirts that were given at our last meeting as a special surprise for the staff. This is fun for everyone and gives us a feeling of unity and team spirit.

The power of a strong foundation, or context, can make an incredible difference in your company. It facilitates alignment, teamwork, direction, and action. If you're the key person in your company, take time now to examine your vision, principles, and values; you'll begin to lay the foundation for your success. If you don't have a vision statement, put it on your priority list. If you do have one, look at it and ask yourself if it still reflects what your company is about. If it doesn't, start rewriting it, or suggest a company Vision Meeting so everyone can participate in the task. If it's fine the way it is, ask yourself if everyone

Vision Meeting agendas are flexible enough to change from year to year.

A sample agenda:

All staff seated in a circle

- Welcome and opening thoughts
- Exploration and reading of vision statement
- Activity to make vision more personally meaningful
- Story of your business (past)
- Review of principles and beliefs
- Communication circle
(Each person tells a personal story relating to principles and beliefs)
- Relationships/Team-Building activity
- Review of the past year leading to current situation
- Activity reports, financial reports, etc.
- Paint a picture of where the company wants to be in five to ten years
- Activity to co-create this along with yearly milestones
- Discuss/plan year ahead, roles of employees, activities, and goals
- Group photo (Later framed with vision/mission statement for each employee)
- Give gift along with inspirational words
- Closing party

knows the statement and is aligned on it. If not, take it upon yourself to see that they are.

If you're not in a position to spearhead these kinds of moves, talk to the person in your company who is, and offer to help them get started. I cannot imagine a company officer who would not be delighted by your interest and high-mindedness. And when the executive sees the benefits your work produces, who knows how much that will raise the value of your personal stock?

Celebrate Your Learning!



! *How does your physical space affect how you learn?*

A carefully controlled environment can help you feel relaxed and at ease, making you more receptive to learning.

! *How can you plan your office environment so as to create a positive impact on your work?*

First, keep in mind the ultimate purpose of each section of your office. Use lots of plants to create a more soothing atmosphere and natural lighting whenever possible.

! *What can you do to transform meetings from boring to exciting, from wasteful to productive?*

Make the tone and format of your meetings match the purpose and values of your organization. Meet at a circular table, or sit in a circle, so all participants are equal. Keep the atmosphere safe, positive, and supportive.

! *What is the role of “vision” in your organization’s future?*

Vision helps you create a clear picture of where you want to be in the future. A powerful vision drives you and directs your actions.

Success Is Built on Relationships; Relationships Are Built on Communication



*What is the biggest problem
in the workplace?*



*What does “Speak with Good
Purpose” mean and why is it
important to your life and work?*



*What is “Active Listening” and how
can it help you?*



*What’s the best way to apologize
to a customer or co-worker?*

It takes more than just a healthy, well-planned physical environment to create success. A company's emotional environment is just as important. As we saw in Chapter 2, positive relationships among co-workers are critical. Employee fear and mistrust results in poor service for the customer and slow business for the owner.

Dr. W. Edwards Deming, best known for promoting quality in the workplace by continually improving systems, once said, "The biggest problem in the workplace is fear."

Fear causes a shutdown of initiative and creativity. Research in neuroscience has shown that sections of the brain called the midbrain or limbic system influence our emotions by releasing hormones that govern our physiological state. Stress and fear induce chemical changes in the brain that distort perception and hamper its ability to process information. In a workplace where fear is used to keep people in line and to get the most out of them, actually the opposite occurs. Employees become immobilized by fear and care little about the quality of their work. This results in poor performance and high turnover.

At Learning Forum, to combat fear, we do our best to build a positive emotional environment. When there's safety, trust, and joy in the workplace, people function at a higher level, leading them to be loyal, hardworking, creative, and willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

The success of our Spirit of SuperCamp events is the result of staff taking pride in the outcome. Some stay in the office until midnight or longer, working out the details of curriculum, painting posters, and collating papers. They're not required to do this, but they believe in their work, find joy in it, and care enough to make sure every detail is done right. This sort of dedication can't be found in a workplace

dominated by fear.

The key to building a joyful, safe, and meaningful workplace is to create inclusion and build relationships. “Inclusion” means making sure that everyone has a sense of the significance of what they’re doing and a feeling of belonging to the organization. In a very large company, this may have to be done department by department, but it’s important to have everyone pulling together as much as possible, from the CEO to the data entry person.

One way we create inclusion is through our daily check-in meetings (mentioned in Chapter 2) where we share important information and personal news. At these meetings, the entire company meets for about 15 minutes at the same time each day. Upbeat music signals the beginning and end of the meeting. To keep it from running on too long, we stand in a circle instead of sitting. This brief get-together lets us take a moment to realign, ask questions, bring up new ideas or air assumptions. It’s an open forum for anyone who wants to speak. We take turns running the meeting and taking notes for those not present. The agenda is:

1. “Burning Shares”
Personal or business items you’re excited about and want to share;
2. “FYI”
Business-related information; and
3. “Focus”
Areas demanding special attention and any needs for support people might have that day.

We also start and close our meetings with traditions. Most associations and clubs, like Girl Scouts, Elks, and

Rotary, have specific traditions that help create a sense of belonging and security. At Learning Forum we also have a number of traditions that we carefully preserve. For our meetings, we have a tradition called “bringing it in” and “letting it go.” Our brains like clean beginnings and clean endings. Quantum Learning uses movement to help the brain remember and store information, and traditions help anchor that information in our minds. At the start of each new meeting, we play upbeat music and “bring it in” by swinging one arm down in an arc, as if pounding a gavel. At the end of the swing, we snap our fingers and the music is abruptly turned off. When a meeting or topic is complete, we “bring it out” by swinging the imaginary gavel in the opposite direction (up), and as we snap again, the music goes on. When we swing our arms down to bring it in, our minds connect this movement with the start of the meeting and put us in an alert, focused state. When we “bring it out,” we take our focus off the new information and are ready to move on to the rest of the day.

Short check-in meetings like these are especially useful at our busiest times. They allow everyone to join together and to further relationships by sharing things that are exciting. They also provide a way for employees to get support when they need it. Everyone also has an opportunity to brainstorm, present new ideas, and offer solutions to problems others need help with.

About once a month, we have an hour-long meeting to update the entire staff on the company’s progress. Plus, we regularly plan company lunches, parties, and activities that encourage communication and strengthen relationships. We even have an employee whose job description includes “Social Director.” By having someone responsible for these events, we make sure they take place. In many organiza-

Traditions create a sense of belonging and security.



*One tradition is “bringing in” and “letting go”
a meeting with a finger snap.*

tions, this task is done haphazardly, if at all. But we consider them part of our tradition and give them the importance they deserve. Traditions such as these activities and playing music to signal the beginning and end of meetings help unify us.

Building strong relationships is an ongoing process. I used to think that simply working on relationship problems when they came up would be enough. I soon learned that it isn't. You can't have a smooth-running car if all you do is fix it when it breaks down. You have to do preventive maintenance—change the oil, etc. In business, you must make it part of the emotional environment to constantly develop and maintain strong relationships.

We recently hired several new employees. To get to know them better, we held a luncheon. Because we have a full kitchen, luncheons are something we can do quite often at low cost and without having to leave the building. We always involve everyone in deciding the menu and contributing to the meal by preparing items at home and bringing them to the office. Our meals run the gamut from salad bars, tacos, burritos, and sandwiches to complete spaghetti dinners. At one holiday party we even cooked a turkey! However, the meal needn't be extravagant to be enjoyable. Something about sitting down together and sharing food we've all prepared generates feelings of community and belonging.

At our luncheon for the new employees, we passed around a hat filled with slips of paper. Each slip had a different question printed on it. Things like "What's your favorite animal at the zoo, and why?" "What's your dream vacation?" As we took turns answering the questions, we all got more comfortable.

Luncheons are great ice-breakers for both new and

established people. It's a perfect starting place to begin building positive relationships, and it sends the message that strong relationships are part of the "context" at Learning Forum. We celebrate birthdays, holidays, and important company achievements like record-breaking enrollments for our programs. Sometimes, we just have spontaneous lunchtime pizza parties or buy submarine sandwiches. The cost is small and makes for a more joyful workplace.

Speak with Good Purpose

While activities like parties and luncheons bring people together, they're not enough to ensure that the people will build strong relationships. Gossip, complaints, insults, and other forms of negative communication, if prevalent, will eventually destroy a healthy environment. Negative communication is extremely damaging. Staff members must learn to avoid gossip, address grievances and concerns in a mature manner, and express themselves clearly and directly. That's why we consider the Key of Excellence, Speak with Good Purpose, to be the cornerstone of healthy relationships.

Speak with Good Purpose means communicate with positive intent; make it honest and direct. Avoid repeating or encouraging negative comments and gossip. Instead, focus on positive conversation and solutions. To do this, you must tell the truth, air assumptions, and maintain integrity by apologizing when necessary.

Marshall Thurber used to introduce this Key at Burklyn by reading the following passage from a book called *Rolling Thunder*, by Doug Boyd (Random House, New York, 1974). In it, Rolling Thunder, a Native American, describes the values and principles of his culture.

"People have to be responsible for their thoughts, so they

have to learn to control them. It may not be easy, but it can be done. First of all, if we don't want to think certain things we don't say them. We don't have to eat everything we see, and we don't have to say everything we think. So we begin by watching our words and speaking with good purpose only. There are times when we must have clear and pure minds with no unwanted thoughts and we have to train and prepare steadily for those times until we are ready. We don't have to say or think what we don't wish to. We have a choice in those things, and we have to realize that and practice using that choice. There is no use condemning yourself for the thoughts and ideas and dreams that come into your mind; so there's no use arguing with yourself or fighting your thoughts. Just realize that you can think what you choose. You don't have to pay any attention to those unwanted thoughts. If they keep coming into your head, just leave them alone and say, 'I don't choose to have such thoughts,' and they will soon go away. If you keep a steady determination and stick with that purpose you will know how to use that choice and control your consciousness so unwanted thoughts don't come to you anymore."

You have the power to choose positive, powerful thoughts or negative, damaging thoughts. The first step is becoming aware of the negative thoughts that pop into your mind. Think about that little voice in your head, the one that says, "You can't because . . .," the one that comes up with reasons why you will fail before you even try. What you say to yourself greatly affects your confidence. You may be blocking yourself from starting your own business, asking for a raise, changing careers, or leading your company effectively because of the confidence being sapped from you by the negative things you tell yourself. Even words as seemingly innocent as "I'll never be able to

finish this on time” affect your confidence in yourself.

At SuperCamp we ask students, “What would you do if you knew you couldn’t fail?” Ask yourself that question now. What is it that’s holding you back? Is it that voice in your head, insisting it’s impossible, impractical, and dangerous to take a risk? Exert control over that voice, and begin telling yourself how you will succeed. As Rolling Thunder tells us, “We have a choice in those things, and we have to realize and practice using that choice.” Make the choice to speak to yourself with good purpose.

You also need to listen carefully to how you speak to other people. Ask yourself, “Are my words encouraging and useful, or damaging?” Notice the tone of voice you use. Do you sound as if you’re whining, defeated, or complaining, no matter what you’re talking about? We sometimes unconsciously adopt patterns of speech that hamper our ability to communicate clearly. Once you’re aware of a communication problem, you can begin to focus on change. You can choose to Speak with Good Purpose only, rather than saying whatever comes to mind. We don’t need to say everything that comes to mind.

At Learning Forum we use several communication tools to help us solve conflicts and “Speak with Good Purpose.” They include the following:

Active Listening

Visible Communication (“Open The Front Door”)

Four-Part Apology

You may be thinking that Speak with Good Purpose works great as long as everyone is getting along, but when things go awry, the old habits come back. Well, it’s true, when you have a disagreement with someone, it can be

difficult to clearly communicate your feelings without slipping into negative patterns like laying blame or attacking with a barrage of angry insults and accusations.

But that approach only leads to confusion, disappointment, hurt feelings, and even fights. You can, however, use good communication skills to discuss disagreements clearly and without upset. This will bring understanding and will help you work together to devise solutions on which you both agree.

Active Listening

You may have overheard two people talking about something and noticed that neither one was listening to the other. Each one is busy lecturing, advising, or defending his or her position, but the conversation never moves toward resolution. Both talkers are mired deep in their own opinions, spinning their wheels, and going nowhere. At SuperCamp we call this “getting stuck in muck.”

On a farm, muck is a mixture of dirt, water, and manure. It’s thick, sticky, sinks underfoot, and keeps you from moving forward. When you muck a conversation, you impede productive communication by denying the feelings the other person is trying to express. Some examples of mucking include the following:

Reassurance

“Oh, you don’t need to lose weight, you look great the way you are.”

Giving Advice

“If you’re having so much trouble juggling work and family obligations, what you need to do is take a time management course.”

**“Mucking” a conversation
impedes productive
communication by denying
other people’s feelings.**



“Mucking” includes:

Reassurance



Advice



Identification

Identification

“The same thing happened to me when I was . . .”

Or interrupting and saying, “I know exactly what you mean; I also . . .” Meanwhile, the speaker never gets a chance to finish what he wanted to say.

Other common ways to muck a conversation are being defensive, asking leading questions that divert the conversation from what the person is trying to communicate or playing “top this”: “When I did it, it was much harder . . .”

Usually we respond this way in a well-meaning attempt to relate to the other person or help solve his problems. Instead we end up closing the door on the conversation. The purpose of listening is to understand, not to solve problems, convince, lecture, or advise.

Active Listening is the art of listening attentively to someone and letting him know he has been heard. It is the practice of seeing the situation through the other person’s eyes. Stephen Covey, in his book, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1989. All rights reserved.), says, “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” Look your co-worker in the eye while he’s speaking. Let him complete his thoughts or his version of an incident without interruption. Absorb what he’s saying and try to truly understand him. Don’t use this time to formulate your own thoughts or arguments. When your co-worker is finished speaking, paraphrase what was just said to make sure you understand it. For example, “What I think you’re saying is, you believe it’s important that we work on this project before the one I proposed because you believe it will cost less, be more timely, and make our customer happier.” Only after your co-worker says, “Yes, that’s what I’m saying,” or something similar, do you give your point of view. We call this “earning the right to speak.” You earn the

“right” only after you’ve truly understood the other person’s point of view. Only then will your co-worker feel heard and be more likely to listen attentively to your thoughts. This helps when your goal is to reach an agreement.

Visible Communication

This is the practice of stating everything clearly, with no hidden agenda. When you use this technique, your partner doesn’t have to fill in the blanks and possibly misinterpret what you’re saying.

How many times have you been asked, “Are you free tonight?” or “What are you doing tomorrow?” You have no idea if the person is asking you to do something fun or is gearing up to ask you for a favor. Depending upon which it is, your answer might be completely different. But since the intent of the question is “invisible,” you feel manipulated and possibly even trapped.

How much better for the questioner to say, “I have two tickets to a play tonight. Are you free to go with me?” Or, “I need help on my project and wanted to know if you were free tonight and willing to help me with it.”

Then you can answer the question knowing what you are committing to and it doesn’t make you feel uncomfortable and awkward. Even a simple question like, “How did you like the movie?” has problem potential. If you say you loved it, will the questioner respond that he thought it was the worst movie he’s ever seen? That’s why it’s always best to say what you mean, and let others know your intentions.

OTFD: Open The Front Door

At SuperCamp, we use the acronym OTFD (Open The Front Door) to teach clear, visible communication to students. OTFD is especially powerful in communicating

an upset. It includes the following steps:

The Letter “O” Stands for Observation

Begin by describing something you observed with your senses that anyone else could observe. For example: “You didn’t show up for our meeting this morning.”

The “T” Is for Thought

State your thoughts or opinion on what you observed. “I thought you forgot it or didn’t feel it was important.”

The “F” Stands for Feeling

Give your feelings about what you observed. “When you didn’t show, I felt angry and frustrated.”

The “D” Is for Desire

Describe what you desire about the situation. “If you find you can’t make it to a meeting, I want you to notify me a day before or as soon as you know.”

This approach may seem simplistic, but breaking down your communication into these four segments enables you to separate what actually happened from your feelings about the incident, and then come to an understanding. Many problems can be easily resolved without leaving the other person hanging, not knowing what to say, or feeling the need to justify and defend a position. Usually, you’ll find that when you finish the conversation with what you desire, the person you’re speaking to will simply agree. In the above example, he might say, “Yes, I know that must have been upsetting and my intention in the future is to let you know if I can’t make a meeting.” OTFD is not only useful when you’re upset, it also helps you to simply be clear in any communication.

Specific strategies are useful for clear communication.



Open The Front Door

Observation

Describe something you observed

Thought

State your thoughts or opinions
on what you observed

Feeling

Give your feelings on
what you observed

Desire

Describe what you desire
about the situation

Four-Part Apology

Apologizing when you've made a mistake isn't easy. When you're in that situation, however, the Four-Part Apology can help. It allows you to acknowledge what you did, take responsibility for it, and look beyond the actual incident to the consequences of your behavior. By stating those consequences and choosing a different behavior, you can help the person you have affected move from feeling angry or resentful to being thoughtful and supportive.

First, Acknowledge What You've Done

Take responsibility for your actions by admitting them. Use "I" statements when speaking. "I acknowledge that I disrupted your plans and hurt your feelings when I missed the meeting."

Second, Apologize

During this step, state the cost or damage your actions caused. "I apologize for hurting you and wasting your time by making you wait for me."

Third, Make It Right

Deal with the consequences of the behavior and offer a solution. "I know you spent half an hour waiting for me. Is there a project I can help you with to make up the lost time?"

Fourth, Recommit

Make a commitment to appropriate behavior. "I agree to be on time or call in advance if I can't make it."

Following these steps makes it easier for both parties to focus on the behavior rather than the person. By taking responsibility for the action, you sidestep opportunities to lay blame on some outside force or circumstance using

When apologizing for your mistakes, take responsibility for your actions

Four-Part Apology

1. Acknowledge



Take responsibility for your actions and behaviors; use “I” statements

2. Apologize



Apologize and acknowledge the “cost” to others; if unaware, ask

3. Make It Right



Deal with the consequences of behavior; ask the person, “Is there anything I can do?”

4. Recommit



Make a commitment to appropriate behavior

excuses such as, “I’m really sorry. You know it wasn’t my fault I was late. Traffic is always heavy early in the morning. That’s why I was late.”

All of the communication skills discussed here can help you and your co-workers work out differences more effectively and come to workable solutions. It’s going to take some training and practice, and may feel awkward at first. In fact, you may want to hold an office communication training session and practice OTFD and the Four-Part Apology in mock disagreements and arguments. In a training or role-playing situation, I recommend you have a third party listen in, since much can be gained from getting an outside perspective. These techniques will become more natural and easy to use as you practice them over time. You will definitely see a difference in your relationships at home and in the office. Everyone will feel more open and relaxed when you and your colleagues realize you have the power to clarify miscommunications and reduce upsets.

Yes, these skills and techniques are simple; some would even call them hokey. But they work, and the effect is so powerful, they produce results that often seem like magic. Sometimes people will be at odds for years over a small miscommunication which, when cleared up, releases positive energy, creates synergy, and gets an organization moving fast-forward. Don’t take my word for it. Try it in your department, or your company, and see.

Getting Outside Help

When there are deeper, ongoing differences between employees, you might consider counseling sessions to work things out. Once we hired two staff members to work closely, but they couldn’t seem to get along. Both had applied for the same position, and this created tension

between them. Sharon—the one who didn’t get it—felt resentful, and the other, Louise, seemed insensitive to Sharon’s feelings. Since they hadn’t spent much time getting to know each other more personally, their feelings were based solely on a working relationship. Since they were unable to communicate clearly, differences built up and the tension increased until Sharon was ready to quit. We didn’t want to lose either person, so we decided to get some outside help. We contacted a professional counselor, and they both agreed to see him.

It was time and money well spent. I don’t know if it was what the counselor said to them or their realization that good relationships were obviously so important to us that we would pay \$150 an hour to have someone meet with them, but Sharon and Louise left the first session together laughing and smiling. The transformation was phenomenal. They discovered they each had different ways of approaching and handling conflicts and they were misinterpreting these differences as personal attacks.

“I wanted to talk a problem out immediately,” Sharon said, “but Louise wanted to think about it first, then discuss it. This drove me crazy. I was frustrated at how long it took and I thought she was avoiding me. I wasn’t considering her feelings; I just wanted to get things done.”

Recognizing their differences helped Sharon and Louise understand each other better and gave them a starting point from which to begin building a new relationship. “We realized we respected each other and wanted to make things work,” Louise told me. It didn’t take them long to become good friends, and they’ve been working together successfully now for many years.

This is not to say that all differences can be cleared away neatly by a single counseling session. Another situation we

had with an employee didn't go so smoothly. It was especially awkward since this person had been a long-time friend of ours outside of the business and held a top management position in our company at the time.

Bill adopted a new management philosophy and strongly believed in it, so he attempted to implement it throughout the company. We tried for several years to adopt this new approach, but found that parts of it, plus the way it was presented, did not work well for us. These elements were at odds with our own beliefs. This created a management split that was soon reflected in the office as Bill continued to operate his department under his system and the rest of the company operated under ours.

After many counseling sessions, it became clear that our styles were different and a workable compromise was not possible. Bill left the company and now has his own business as a management consultant. I believe if we'd continued to work together, we'd no longer be friends. Our differences would have killed our relationship, and the failed relationship might well have killed the company.

Processes and Games That Give Strength to Relationships

To help people get to know one another better we also often do something called the "Affinity Process." Everyone chooses a partner, preferably someone they know the least, and answers certain questions. The questions we use are:

The Affinity Exercise

1. *Tell me something I don't know about you;*
2. *Tell me something you like about me; and*
3. *Tell me something we have in common.*

One partner asks the other the questions and responds

**The “Affinity Process” helps
people know each other
better and builds support.**



**Ask your partner these questions,
then switch.**

Tell me something I don't know about you . . .



Tell me something you like about me . . .



Tell me something we have in common . . .

only with “Thank you.” Then they switch. They repeat the series of questions three times—yes, the same questions three times. People always come up with something new every time and often it’s the third round that has the most impact. Then they change partners. This gives everyone a chance to talk to others on a more personal level and plants the seeds of stronger relationships. During this activity, people find they share common interests and often form new friendships. We discovered through this process that we had several singers and musicians in our office, and never knew it. Even staff who have known each other for years usually discover new things about one another.

A Final Word on Relationships

Strong relationships are the basis of strength in a company. For our company, relationships have made all the difference. Building such relationships takes time and effort, but I firmly believe that if you invest in them, you’ll receive ten times your investment in return.

Celebrate Your Learning!



! *What is the biggest problem in the workplace?*

According to Dr. W. Edwards Deming, it is fear.

! *What does “Speak with Good Purpose” mean and why is it important to your life and work?*

It means communicate with positive intent; make it honest and direct. It’s important because your words help to determine your thoughts, and the results you achieve in life are directly related to your thoughts.

! *What is “Active Listening” and how can it help you?*

Active Listening is the art of listening attentively to someone and letting him know he has been heard. It helps relationships by moving the conversation along and by helping people to understand one another.

! *What’s the best way to apologize to a customer or co-worker?*

Use the Four-Part Apology:

1. Acknowledge (take responsibility)
2. Apologize (state damage you caused)
3. Make It Right (offer a solution)
4. Recommit (to appropriate behavior)

