

# Sharpen Your Tools

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## Finding Your Leadership

Become a better leader by understanding what makes you tick

Have you ever noticed that great leaders give off a certain vibe? It's not their look and style as much as their energy and authenticity. All of us have a V.I.B.E.—an internal quality that is made up of four hidden elements: values, interests, beliefs and energy.

To become better leaders, we must first understand what makes us tick. We must be willing to explore our own V.I.B.E. to uncover who we are and how we influence others. Let's take a look at each element:

### VALUES

Can you name your top five values? As important as it is to understand the values of a company, we must also understand our core values. They are the foundation of your life. They help you make decisions.

However, a value can also be your Achilles' heel. Think of a something you cannot tolerate—something really upsetting to you. What core value is in conflict in those moments? When something is in conflict with our core values, we react emotionally and passionately. We want to protect them. Recognition of our triggers makes us more emotionally intelligent, professionally mature and relationally competent.

When you know your values, decisionmaking becomes easier. At the crossroad situations of life, your values will help guide you to the right choice. Discover and live your values for congruence with what matters most.

### INTERESTS

Discovering your interests can be harder than you think. As more time is invested in career growth and personal demands, such as family, the time invested in our own interests diminishes. Most of

us have put our hobbies on the back burner while we focus on the seemingly more important tasks of the moment. We lose the energy that we typically gain from our interests and run the risk of being less interesting.

Think about some of the fun activities you enjoy, such as cooking, entertaining, sports, fitness, music, art or travel. An interest may be something you once deeply enjoyed or an activity you aspire to experience. What are activities you find interesting? What's an example of something someone else did that inspired you? How can you try that experience? Choose one activity. Block out time to invest in this interest. Share your plan with others for accountability. Enjoy being interesting by investing time and energy in your interests. Walt Disney was right when he said, "If you can dream it, you can do it."

## BELIEFS

Our beliefs are powerful. Whatever we believe to be true either is true (proven fact) or our beliefs make it true. We may want to achieve certain goals or behave in certain ways, but if they conflict with our beliefs, we will subconsciously sabotage our success. The greatest influence of human behavior is to be congruent with the way we see ourselves. Since that's true, it is wise to take responsibility for how we see ourselves. We can focus on various aspects of beliefs. In an effort to clarify our V.I.B.E., let's focus on the beliefs we have about ourselves.

Here's a challenge: Write 10 to 20 statements beginning with "I am" to accurately define who you are and what you represent. The truth is, we say "I am" statements all day anyway. Instead of negative and disempowering statements like, "I am always rushing" or "I am just a director," edit them for a more accurate self-description.

The rules for this exercise: Each "I am" statement must be positive, present tense, inclusive of strengths and the inverse of perceived weaknesses. For example, instead of "I am impatient," write "I am patient." After you've fought the demons judging your list (please win the fight!), choose three statements you're committed to manifesting. Read those three statements aloud daily. Pay attention to the affect this exercise has on your ability to influence and experience confidence and fulfillment.

## ENERGY

Energy is the fundamental currency of life. Unlike time, energy is something we can create more of through our mindset and through healthy rituals. There are four levels of energy management: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

Physical energy is our vibrancy resulting from rest, nutrition, exercise and wellness. It's the foundation of our lives. Emotional energy is our ability to engage, influence, and express passion and creativity. Mental energy is leveraged when we focus, prioritize, problem solve and innovate. Spiritual energy is how we connect with our purpose and mission. How aligned are we to the greater good and what really matters?

The process for maximizing energy is to intentionally engage in each energy source every day. The engagement must be coupled with strategic recovery. Down time. A breather. To manage energy effectively, we must give and take. Stretch and recover.

Find Your V.I.B.E.

As leaders, we influence not only our coworkers and employees, but the cultures we create. When we are deliberate about living our values, prioritizing our interests, refining our beliefs and managing our energy, we are more authentic, influential and effective. As St. Francis de Sales once said, "Be who you are and be that well."

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