



## Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work

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**Author's Bio:** David Rock is a leadership coach, consultant and public speaker who advises corporations around the world. He is the founder and CEO of Results Coaching Systems (RCS), a global coaching consultancy that has helped over 4,000 professionals become more effective at facilitating change in others, across 6 countries. RCS is working with many Fortune 100 clients to help them introduce a coaching culture.

**Author's big thought:** David Rock has proven the secret to leading people (and living and working with them) is found in the space between our ears. *If people are being paid to think, he writes, isn't it time the business world found out what the thing doing the work, the brain, is all about?* Supported by the latest groundbreaking research on the brain, Quiet Leadership provides, for the first time, a simple brain-based approach that will help busy leaders, executives, and managers improve their own and their colleagues' performance.

This book is for the CEO who wants to be more effective at inspiring high-quality thinking in his or her leadership team, but has just a few minutes each week to speak to them. It's for the executive who'd like to get a manager to plan more effectively, but can't seem to work out how. It's for the manager who wants to inspire their sales team, but isn't sure how to do it. It's for the human resources professional who is ready to take on changing the culture of a whole organization. It's also for the parent or caregiver who wants to reach new levels of communication and understanding with their family members.

### Introduction

- Quiet Leaders are masters at bringing out the best performance in others. They improve their employees' thinking – literally improving the way their brains process information – without telling anyone what to do. Given how many people in today's companies are being paid to think, improving thinking is one of the fastest ways to improve performance.
- Quiet Leadership is a practical, six-step guide to a new way of having conversations, based on recent discoveries about how the brain works. The central part of this book, the Six Steps to Transforming Performance, points to a new way of thinking, a new way of listening, a new way of speaking, a new approach to every conversation a leader has with their people.

- The Six Steps are useful at every organizational level. The Six Steps have helped leaders from many industry sectors, including financial services, information technology, manufacturing, airlines, health care, and government.

### **Why Should Leaders Care About Improving Things?**

- A lot of people in companies are now being paid to think. Yet the management models we're applying to our workforces are still those of the process era. We have not yet taught our leaders and managers how to improve thinking.
- Not only do leaders now need to improve thinking, they need to do so with extremely knowledgeable individuals.
- The increasing education and independence of employees is an important issue. Yet we have not significantly reinvented our management models.
- The new generations coming into management positions have different needs from their predecessors. They need leaders, who help them fulfill their potential at work. Leaders who improve their thinking.
- If you focus on just improving thinking, rather than trying to understand or unravel it, the conversations are surprisingly quick and simple.
- It's time leaders learned how to improve people's thinking. Thinking is what many employees are being paid to do, after all. Many employees are highly capable individuals who will thrive on this approach. They want to work smarter, they want to be smarter, and they are crying out for help.

## **Part 1: Recent Discoveries About the Brain That Change Everything**

### **The Brain is a Connection Machine**

- Scientists have discovered that our brain is a connection machine. Our thoughts, memories, skills, and attributes are vast sets of connections or "maps" joined together via complex chemical and physical pathways.
- When we process any new idea we create a map of that idea in our mind, and then compare it subconsciously in a fraction of a second to our existing maps. If we can find solid enough links between the new idea and our current maps, if we can find the connections, we create a new map that becomes a part of the layout of our brain; this new map literally becomes part of who we are.
- Maps help us predict the outcome of situations more easily.
- When we are processing complex ideas we tap into our visual center: we see ideas as flashes in our mind's eye.
- We've all had that feeling of that sudden "aha" moment. It's a moment when various ideas that were not linked before come together to form a new idea. It feels like we've seen something new. This is the moment of creation of a new map.
- When we create a new map we feel motivated to do something, and our face and voice change. This is the moment of breakthrough, a moment when we see an answer to a challenge or problem.

### *Summary:*

1. To take any kind of committed action, people need to think things through for themselves;
  2. People experience a degree of inertia around thinking for themselves due to the energy required;
  3. The act of having an aha moment gives off the kind of energy needed for people to become motivated and willing to take action.
- If we are trying to help other people think, we might develop a whole new set of skills.

### **Up Close, No two Brains are Alike**

- As scientists have begun to understand the mechanics of the brain they have discovered a world of almost unimaginable complexity. The brain has around 100 billion neurons.
- There are unlimited different ways that brains can store information, unlimited options for how experience, learning, and information might be encoded in the brain.
- So while your brain looks similar to mine at a distance, the way we store, organize, manage and retrieve information is as different between you and me as two laptops would be after forty years of use.
- It is a rare person indeed who doesn't try to help another human being on the assumption that their brains are basically the same.
- Our mental maps are so remarkably different, yet we live as if this is not the case.

### **The Brain Hardwires Everything it Can**

- Recent findings from neuroscience are showing that when we learn, the universe changes too. The connections between our neurons reconfigure, and the world is a tiny bit different as a result.
- The way we talk, walk, interact, read emails, and manage our staff is, for the most part, deeply hardwired and therefore habitual.
- Given how deeply hardwired we all are, if we want to help others change any type of habit, it's going to take more effort than we are currently applying, and possibly a whole new approach.

### **Our Hard Wiring Drives Automatic Perception**

- We see the world as we are, not as the world is. Any piece of information that comes along is compared to our existing mental maps, to see where the connections are. We then try to fit the data into our existing frameworks. If any data doesn't fit, we try harder to make the connections- we literally try to make the connections fit.
- While our brain likes to fit every piece of new information into an existing map, it's dealing with a massive volume of information.
- What does the phrase below, from a famous Disney movie, say to you?  
When you wish  
upon a star.....
- We expect the sentence to say "when you wish upon a star" because we've heard this phrase before, yet most people won't see that there are two a's in the sentence. We see the sentence according to our expectations, not based on what is in front of us. As a consequence, we get a lot of things wrong.

- Our brain tries to make whatever we are sensing or thinking fit into our existing mental models. It does so through guesswork that's based on past experience, which has been hardwired in our brain. If we think the world is a dangerous place, we look around for evidence of this and find it. Whatever filter we hold in mind, the brain will look for evidence to confirm this filter, and it does this extremely efficiently, second to second, without our conscious mind being aware of what we are doing.
- If our world is defined by the mental frames we hold in mind, it means it's possible to tangibly improve people's performance simply by helping them shift their thinking.
- As a leader who wants to improve other people's performance, it's going to be useful to be able to influence the way people perceive the world.
- *Downsides...*
  1. Changing the way people think is one of the tougher challenges of leadership, as people tend to fight hard to hold on to their view of the world.
  2. When external realities change, people's internal realities often don't change as quickly. When experiencing a big change at work, employees literally need time to rewire their minds. And they have to make their own connections, according to their own wiring. We can make the space for this to happen, and encourage it, but then we need to take a step back and allow the process to unfold.
  3. Given that our wiring is all so different, any group of people will see the same situation from substantially different perspectives. Rather than fighting this fact, the best leaders harness this reality by bringing together a balanced team of people who think in different ways. When two people think too much alike they get in each other's way.
  4. Some people's maps could be out of date. Someone may perceive others at work as a threat, as a result of difficulties in a previous job. Helping people identify and then let go of mental frames that are holding them back from performing at their peak is another important skill for leaders to develop.

### **It's Practically Impossible to Deconstruct our Wiring**

- It's almost impossible to change any hard wiring that's been embedded in the brain. Our default mode for trying to change our habits is to try to "unwire" what is already there, to deconstruct it somehow.
- So when we want to change something about ourselves, we first look down into our memory and search for the roots of our habits. We look for the links.
- What usually happens is we fail to stop the habit, and then become upset with ourselves for failing. This provides further links and energy to the original wiring we wanted to get rid of, further embedding the habit.
- Science is showing that we can change the way we think, and that's not as hard as we've been assuming. Changing a habit, now that's hard, but leaving it where it is and creating a whole new habit – that turns out to be far more achievable.
- In a workplace context this insight means that if you're trying to improve people's performance, then working out what's wrong with their thinking is not going to be very productive. Again, we need a whole new approach.

### **It's Easy to Create New Wiring**

- An exciting new domain within neuroscience called neuroplasticity found that the brain had a remarkable ability to repair itself when things went wrong.
- Scientists noticed that the brain was capable of creating new connections on a massive scale, at any stage of life, and did this in response to anything new that was learned, such as learning to play an instrument.
- Every day we create enormous sets of new maps that change the chemical and physical connections in our brain.
- If we want to hardwire a new behavior we just need to give our new mental map enough attention, over enough time, to ensure it becomes embedded in our brain. We do this by making links to different parts of the brain so that the web of links thickens and spreads out.
- If we want to improve people's performance, our job is to help them find new ways to approach situations that leaves their existing wiring where it is, and allows for the development and ultimately the hard wiring of new habits. A less technical way of saying this is we need to help people focus on solutions instead of problems. We need to give up our desire to find behaviors to fix, and become fascinated with identifying and growing people's strengths, an entirely other discipline.

### **Summarizing the Recent Discoveries about the Brain**

- To maximize our effectiveness as leaders, it's time to give up second guessing what people's brains need, and become masters of helping others think for themselves. The best way to do that is by defining solutions rather than problems and helping people identify for themselves new habits they could develop to bring those solutions closer. Pivotal to all this is the art of enabling other people to have their own insights.
- Once people have had new insights for themselves, our job as quiet leaders is to provide the encouragement, ongoing support and belief in people, over time, to ensure they develop the new habits that are possible. Then we will be truly bringing out the best in others. As it turns out, this new approach saves a tremendous amount of time and energy for everyone involved.

## **Part 2: The Six Steps to Transforming Performance**

### **About the Six Steps**

- We need more explicit, practical, and visible signposts to help us follow this new path. That's what the Six Steps to Transforming Performance provide.
- The Six Steps describe a new way for leaders to have conversations when they truly want to make a difference in another person's performance. These steps describe a new way to interact, a new way to give feedback, a new way to influence, a new way to stretch and grow people, a new way to bring out the best in others.
- The great news is that this new way saves time and creates energy. The Six Steps describe the path of least resistance when you want to help someone learn or change.
- When a person is struggling to perform at their best at anything, it means they have not yet been able to "think their way out of a situation." There is something they want to achieve, yet there is a "but" in the way; they have a dilemma or mental impasse.

- The Six Steps are signposts that point to a new path to follow whenever we enter a conversation with the intent of helping another person change in any way. Whether we want others to sell more, manage better, or be more thorough, motivated, organized, focused, or self-aware, the Six Steps show us a new way to improve performance without telling anyone what to do. This new way- the way of the Quiet Leader – saves time, creates energy and transforms performance.

### **Step 1: Thinking about Thinking**

- The first step to being a Quiet Leader is to think about people’s thinking. In other words, to become passionate about improving not what people are thinking about, but the way they think.
- There are five elements to this step. The first element is to let the other person think through their own issue, rather than telling them what to do. This is the underlying and most important principle in the whole book; without this approach, nothing that comes after it will help. Once you’ve got people doing the thinking, you need to keep them focused on solutions, so that conversations are as useful as possible. Next, if you want to bring out people’s best you need to stretch and challenge them, to open up their thinking, not just be supportive. At the same time as stretching, you also need to focus on the positive, on what people are doing well, so that you grow people’s strengths. And finally, you need to do everything you can to make it easy for people to think, by having a clear process behind every conversation.

### ***Let Them Do All The Thinking***

- If we want to improve the quality of their thinking, our best option is to help them process ideas better: things like helping people make their ideas more clear, or find relationships between concepts, or prioritize their thoughts.
- When people make deep, new connections in their mind, there is a tangible release of energy, a discernable “aha” moment that fills us with a desire to take action. On a physical level, this aha moment releases chemicals in the body to prime it for movement. The energy created by insight is an important energy source to be harnessed.
- Here’s a marker that points to situations when a self-directed approach is going to be useful: any time you feel yourself about to give advice, or about to tell a person what you would do, or wanting to share your experience or opinion. If it seems appropriate to do this, it’s generally going to be appropriate to use a self-directed approach.
- There are instances when a pure self-directed approach is not going to work. There is a ladder of approaches here, from 100 percent self-directed, through to partially self-directed. Always start at the pure self-directed level first before resorting to telling anyone what to do in any form.
  - *Approach 1: Help Someone Make New Connections on the Spot*
    - The first priority is always to help people come up with their own answer by making new connections themselves.
  - *Approach 2: Help Someone Make New Connections Later*

- Sometimes people can't find an answer to their dilemma on the spot. In this instance, help them work out how to find the answer themselves later on, rather than just give them your answer.
- *Approach 3: If Neither of These Approaches Is Possible, Provide an Answer in a Way That's Most Useful to the Person's Thinking*
  - If you're not 100 percent sure you have the right answer, you might pose your idea as just a possibility. If you are clear you have specific information someone needs, you can still use a self-directed approach, by seeing how someone wants the information presented.

- ***Focus on Solutions***

- Focusing on problems leads us to the past. This doesn't mean we don't address problems – far from it; it means we address them by analyzing the way forward, instead of their causes.
- Being conscious of removing the word “why” from our conversations can be a great way to remember to focus on solutions.
- When you take a solutions focus, you end up having very different conversations than when you focus on the problem.
- We have the ability to consciously choose the mental filter we see through in any moment, and this choice of filters significantly affects how the world appears to us.
- Focusing on solutions is a choice we make in the moment.
- We need to decide on the new habits we'd like to develop, and build a realistic plan to make these habits a part of our lives.
- Quiet Leaders know that problems are interesting to discuss, but that focusing on solutions is more useful. And they have developed the discipline of catching themselves when they get problem-focused and refocusing their energy on the way ahead.

- ***Remember to Stretch***

- Quiet Leaders know that transforming performance means stretching people. They recognize that their job involves taking people to the edge of their comfort zone, so they've had to learn to be comfortable with making people uncomfortable. Change is a stretch, in both senses of the word. Bringing about change isn't easy, and it requires stretching people.
- Improving performance requires getting people to change, and that change can bring with it strong emotions. There are two things we can do here to help. The first is to be aware that people often give up easily when they try something new, so it helps to let them know that their frustration is normal. The technical term for this is “normalizing” someone's experience.
- Second, given all the fear and uncertainty involved in creating any kind of new wiring, providing lots of positive feedback and encouragement can be a big help.
- It's no wonder it's hard for leaders to improve performance, given this requires making people feel uncomfortable.
- One of the difficulties of stretching ourselves is that we tend to see ourselves as our limitations, not as our potential.
- It's hard to stretch ourselves, and most people spend their lives operating well within the bounds of what they are capable of achieving.

- Having others stretch us is a way to grow faster than we would on our own.
- Stretch is about giving people a chance to use the knowledge they have in different ways, to develop their thinking along new lines, both figuratively and literally.
- From what we learned about how different our brains all are, the right amount of stretch will be different for everyone. The best way to find out? Just ask.
- Quiet Leaders don't just quietly putter around in the background trying not to upset anyone. They are comfortable making people uncomfortable – in fact, they're keen to do so. They know that stretch can be challenging; however, they have learned to support people through the journey. Above all they know that the right kind of stretch brings growth, and in growth there is aliveness, engagement, and passion, qualities that are necessary for achieving great performance in any role.

### ***Accentuate the Positive***

- Quiet Leaders have a deep understanding of the absolute necessity of positive feedback to every human being.
- Research shows that employees reacted positively to criticism just once out of thirteen times. *People get on average, a couple of minutes of positive feedback each year versus thousands of hours of negative feedback.*
- Acknowledging that this is a reality for just about every human being you'll ever meet is a key step in learning to transform other people's performance. It's certainly something that all Quiet Leaders know, deep in their bones.
- So our thinking is at the core of our performance. Yet we all have a lot of thoughts going on that are not supporting the performance we want. We are constantly criticizing, worrying, and imagining the worst. If we can help other people quiet this inner little voice, we should be able to make a big difference to their thinking and therefore the results they produce.
- Given that we have a strong tendency to criticize ourselves, it's highly likely that these thoughts will be getting in the way of our performance much of the time. Therefore acknowledgement and encouragement from others will help calm our mind, and allow us to focus on what we are trying to achieve. Or in the language of the brain, positive feedback leaves our neurons free to focus where they're needed most.
- If we want to transform people's performance we need to master the skill of acknowledgement. This means building new mental wiring around seeing what people are doing well. It means watching out for how people are challenging themselves, growing, learning, and developing. And it means noticing the new wiring others are developing, and being able to feed back what we see in ways that make a difference.
- Another implication of the whole principle of Accentuate the Positive is that we need to learn a new model for giving feedback in the workplace. If people are their own worst critics – giving themselves too much criticism as it is – maybe they don't need anyone else jumping on the bandwagon. Currently the main way of giving feedback is to explore “what you did well, and what you could do better.” To people who are tough on themselves, which is basically everyone, all they hear is what they did wrong.
- If we want to transform people's performance, we need a new model for feedback that's not just new packaging of the same thing. A new approach would follow these types of questions:

- What did you do well, and what did you discover about yourself as a result?
- What were the highlights of this project and what did you learn?
- What went well and would you like to talk about how to do more of this?
- What did you do well and what impact do you think this had on everyone else?
- The author is proposing that because people are so tough on themselves, and because it works better to focus on creating new wiring than solving problems, that overall we will be better at improving performance if we accentuate the positive and let people handle the negative on their own.
- Quiet Leaders know that transforming performance requires providing continuous positive feedback, in many forms, over time. To validate, confirm, encourage, support, and believe in people's potential. As people begin to see themselves in a new light, reality starts to change as well.

### ***Put Process Before Content***

- At the macro level, having “good process” means having clear objectives each year to focus on. At the micro level, good process means that every time you have a conversation to improve a person's performance, you plan for the success of the dialogue itself. This includes establishing clear expectations so that at every moment you both know exactly what you are talking about, and why, and where you are trying to get to.
- By establishing good process for dialogues, before getting lost in the details of a conversation, you are more likely to have discussions that are useful rather than just interesting.
- It's important to make people feel safe.

### ***Choose Your Focus***

- The simplicity of this model allows us to remember it more easily, which makes it even more useful. The Choose Your Focus model helps people orient their thought processes. It helps us identify the type of thinking we are doing at any moment, and provides an opportunity to then choose where to put our focus. This tool can be useful before any type of difficult conversation, for team meetings, or any time you are tackling a difficult thinking task.
- The Choose Your Focus model says there are five different ways we can think about, or communicate about, any project, whether the project is a merger, a cultural change process, a sales target at work, or just a one-on-one meeting. The model helps us recognize which gear we are thinking from, and then allows us to actively choose another way to think. The five levels are:
  1. *Vision*: *Vision thinking* is about “why” or “what.” Why do you want to do this project? What are you trying to achieve? What's your goal here? Having a clear vision is about knowing what your goal or objective is in any given conversation or project.
  2. *Planning*: Once you know where you are heading, *planning thinking* is about how you're going to get there. Putting in place good planning, without worrying about the details yet, is an excellent way of ensuring the success of any idea.
  3. *Detail*: Once we know where we're going, and how we're going to get there, we need to take action. *Detail thinking* is simply that – the detail of doing. Detail is where people tend to

naturally put most of their energy unless they step back and think about how they are approaching what they are doing.

4. *Problem: Problem thinking* is the territory of events going wrong. Focusing on problems is unfortunately a common experience in business, as there are lots of them. However, it's possible to focus on problems without coming from a problem-focus. For example, you could tackle a problem from a vision perspective, or from a planning perspective.
  5. *Drama: Drama thinking* is the place where the vision, planning, detail, and problems have fallen apart and all that is left is emotional charge. Sometimes it's unavoidable that you spend time in this mental state – for example, in a grieving process you might be unable to do much as your emotions have taken over. Unfortunately, drama is a place where many people in organizations are stuck and find it hard to get out of on their own.
- This model is so simple you can easily reproduce the concepts in any conversation. The author does this by writing it down on paper or putting it up on a whiteboard, for people to see the concept for themselves. The most common impact of this model is that people notice themselves lost in details, not clear on what they are trying to achieve, or how.

## **Step 2: Listen for Potential**

- Scientific research supports the idea that we literally only hear what we are listening for. We pay special attention to what we are expecting to see, hear, feel, or taste.
- The first thing people tend to notice is that they really only listen a small percentage of the time, with the rest of their attention being put to judging, assessing, trying to sound smart, listening to distractions, trying to size other people up, or being self-conscious to the point that they are only in fact listening to themselves.
- Quiet Leaders do far more than just see the bright side to every dark cloud. A Quiet Leader does a critical thing – they listen for people's potential. When a Quiet Leader listens, they listen to people and believe others completely. They encourage and support others in being the best they can be, just in how they listen, without saying a word. They listen to people as though they have all the tools they need to be successful, and could simply benefit from exploring their thoughts and ideas out loud.
- If you were listening for potential you might say something like the following:
  - How can I best help you think this through?
  - Do you want to use me as a sounding board?
  - Do you have a sense of what you want to do, and want to explore that with me?
- The assumption we make behind these questions is that people have the answers and we're just here to help them think.
- There's no one cookie-cutter approach for exactly what to say when you're listening this way. When you listen for potential, you're assuming that others have the capacity to answer the question for themselves; you then respectfully see how you can best make yourself useful.
- Quiet Leaders listen for potential. They understand that if we're not measuring and monitoring how people are growing, we can easily fall into the trap of focusing on their problems. They know that the first step to seeing positive change in others is to expect it.

## ***The Clarity of Distance***

- Four mental frames that seem to get in the way of natural clarity, the author summarized as a) details, b) filters, c) agendas, and d) hot spots.
- The Clarity of Distance model helps us to identify what's getting in the way of our natural intelligence, so that we can then go back to listening for potential. It's a model with broad application that can make a big difference to our self-awareness and therefore our ability to impact others.

### *a) Lost in the Details*

- Many people spend a lot of time during the day lost in the details, unclear about which direction they should be going at any moment.
- Listening to people as their potential requires that we stay above the details; otherwise we get lost in the tangled forest of information and can't see what's going on.
- Wouldn't it better to say something such as "I'd like to be useful sounding board for you. How can I best help you learn from last week, without getting into the details?"
- Usually just realizing we are lost in the details is enough to help us to get back on track.

### *b) Misled by our Filters*

- Filters are the unconscious mental frames through which we see, the sum of our assumptions, expectations, predictions, and decisions about anything.
- Filters help us predict situations without having to process enormous amounts of data. The challenge with filters is we tend to be unconscious of them, and as we learned early on, we then do our best to make the world fit into the way we think it is.
- Being misled by our filters is the second most common trap when we listen to others. When we listen through filters, we are fitting people into our predetermined boxes, rather than helping them be all they could be. Like with the other elements of the Clarity of Distance model, the fastest way to step back into a more effective way to listen is to identify the filter you have, and actively choose to listen in a new way.

### *c) Having an agenda*

- When you manage someone you naturally have lots of agendas going on. You might want them to succeed so that you look good as the manager.
- Identifying an agenda is the key to being able to put it to one side.

### *D) Hot Spots*

- A hot spot is a charged issue for us, an issue that we're lost in the emotions of. Going back to the Choose Your Focus model, when we have a hot spot we tend to be lost in the *drama* of a situation – we're engaged emotionally. It's beyond just a problem.
- When you're trying to listen to someone as their potential and the conversation results in either of you tripping over a hot spot, there's not much you can do the best course of action could be to head home for the day. Once our emotions are engaged it takes several hours to settle down and be able to think straight again. Broaching a charged issue another time may be of better use of resources.
- In summary, we all have the ability to listen to other people as their potential. However, it's also easy to get lost in the details, misled by our filters and agendas or sidetracked by our hot

spot. It's a matter of understanding these frames and being aware of where you're coming from when you are listening to others. Once we become aware of what is clouding our natural clarity, we are on the way to listening to people in a whole new way.

- Having the clarity of distance mean having a state of mind where nothing is in the way of improving people's performance. Quiet leaders know that listening for people's potential takes effort at times, and are conscious of what take them off this course.

### **Step 3: Speak with Intent**

- Our ideas are being received by the other person in the way they are intended about 2/3 of the time. The impact of our conversation is in some way different from our intent.
- Having poor conversational skills will get you by day to day, but a whole other level of skills is required if you want to transform people's performance.
- In this delicate and very human conversation called transforming performance, with strong emotions working just beneath the surface, if what we're trying to say is even slightly misunderstood, our conversations can go off the rails fast. To the author it's clear why many managers don't give a lot of feedback-they're afraid of causing accidents.
- There were three core patterns that get in the way. The first was that people took much longer than necessary to describe their ideas. As a result, the listener often "checked out" of the conversation. They'd be waiting so long to speak that the result was a series of monologues rather than a dialog. The second was the listener not understanding exactly what the speaker was saying. So conversations would go off on sidetracks, resulting in the intent of a conversation not being achieved. The third pattern was that the speaker didn't speak in language and concepts the listener could immediately grasp. As a result, the conversation became a debate about the meaning of words and ideas, instead of focusing on the real issues.

### **Be Succinct**

- To create real change in others we first must capture and keep people's attention. We need to be in a focused dialogue, not speaking while the other person mentally wanders off.
- Being succinct engages people in the conversation, you'd like to have. There are two reasons for this. First, focusing on being succinct makes the speaker get clearer about their core message, before they speak. This in itself means their conversations will be more focused. They might complete a message in a couple of sentences instead of a few minutes.
- Second, being succinct provides the listener with a chance to process bite sized pieces of information, rather than having to digest several minutes of ideas. We want people to feel confidence inside any difficult dialogs, but our working memory isn't very big.
- Being succinct saves significant time and mental energy. When we're succinct we use less time to get across our ideas and the other person understands our ideas more quickly, and there is less debate about any points that were not clear. This leaves us the time and mental energy to go deeper into topics, or to move into a new issue. While it might take a bit of additional energy up front, the benefits of being succinct are immediate and tangible.

### ***The power of visuals***

- An easy way to be more succinct is to picture in your own mind what you were trying to say, and then use visual words and metaphor to get across what you see.
- Being succinct requires you to think, to decide quickly on the essence of what you want to say, and to say it in as few words as possible, focusing on using visuals works. By cutting to the heart of the issue, and keep people's attention and interest. This allows people to make their own mental models that correlate to the ideas you are trying to share. When we're trying to transform performance, given that we know all this will only happen if people have insights for themselves, giving people the space to create their own mental maps of our ideas is an essential first step to change.

### ***Be Specific***

- We need to provide just enough information to illustrate the point we are making.
- When someone is succinct and specific, a definite, observable event occurs.
- If you're paying attention when you communicate, it's easy to tell when you've been specific- just watch people's head movements.
- Being specific requires that we pay close attention to what other people say, to make an extra effort to mentally note the key points so we can be accurate and detailed in our responses.
- Being succinct builds trust between you and the person you are trying to develop. Being succinct and specific together means including everything that's relevant in a dialog, and nothing irrelevant.

### ***Being Generous***

- The final component of speaking with intent is to use words that will have the biggest positive impact on the other person. We want to be "generous" within our conversations.
- Put succinctly and specifically, being generous is about speaking so that the other person relates to what you're saying, by using words they will connect with, and doing everything you can to ensure they fully understand where you're coming from.
- Being generous is about being committed to the other person getting your message. Here are some things to be aware of when being generous:
- *Choosing your words* -Being generous is about using the best language possible in each conversation. It means slowing down a little so that you have a chance to choose your words carefully, so that people understand exactly what you're trying to say.
- *Being sensitive* -Being generous means caring enough to be sensitive on how you come across.
- *Paying attention* -Being generous means giving people all of your focus, rather than speaking to them while emailing or thinking about other issues-the set such as what you are going to say next.
- *Acknowledging people* - Being generous is also about giving people lots of encouragement, validation, and acknowledgement. It's an attitude. If you want people to think big thoughts, you need them to feel safe.
- *Being human* -Being generous is all about being personal, being real. It means sharing your humanity, being open about what's important to you. Being generous as a way of showing you care about the other person. It helps build the level of trust required for doing the work of

improving thinking. Being generous invites the other person to take the conversation to a deeper level, away from the surface facts and details, into vision and planning, into higher thoughts. Being generous opens up the possibility of learning and changing.

- Speak with Intent is not a model you can integrate logically by trying to keep each piece in mind at once. As everyone is different, you may need to find your own way to integrate these ideas.
- Quiet Leaders speak with intent. They are succinct, specific, and generous a lot of the time, especially when they are trying to transform performance. Speaking this way provides a foundation for real change to occur.

### ***A word on digital communications***

- The ideas within Speak with Intent are extremely relevant when it comes to using our most common form of business communication: e-mail. The amount of anxiety the e-mail is generating in organizations is something we need to take more seriously. Many workers claim this is the most stressful part of their job.
- Anything that reduces the quantity of emails is a positive thing. Anything that makes an e-mail as clear as humanly possible is great too. Try using as few words as you can so that when people skim through your e-mail, which is one out of a hundred, they can comprehend what you're saying at a glance.
- A rule the author tries to keep is if an e-mail takes up no more than one screen then he doesn't send it. Instead he emails an agenda and schedules a time to have a phone call. This can save an immense amount of time and energy, firstly because people simply don't read long emails, and secondly if they do, a response to a long e-mail is often just as long and tends to be not very productive. With the cost of telecommunications plummeting, in some cases to 1¢ a minute or less, there's no excuse not to pick up the phone now.
- The author has developed a set of guidelines for email that he finds he can stick to almost the whole time. Here is the author's full list of guidelines for how to apply the principles of this chapter to e-mail communication
  - Email should contain as few words as possible.
  - Make it easy to see your central point at a glance, in one screen.
  - Never send an e-mail that could emotionally effect he other person unless it's pure positive feedback.
  - Emotional issues must be discussed by phone; Email should be used only to book a time for a call.
  - If you accidentally break rule number four, phone the person immediately, apologize, and discuss the issue by phone.

### **Step Four: Dance toward Insight**

- Step four, the Dance toward insight, is the central step in this book. Much of this step is about creating an environment in which people have insight for themselves.
- When we have not been able to think our way through a situation we're missing key insights that will help us move toward our goal. Quiet Leaders are catalysts for insight. They know there's tremendous power and motivation in other people coming to their own insights.
- Four faces of insight:

- a) Awareness of the dilemma
- b) Reflection
- c) Illumination
- d) Motivation

*a) Awareness of Dilemma*

- What's exciting about this model is we now have visual and audible clues to watch for when we're trying to help other people have their own insights, which makes the whole process more tangible.
- The first part of having an insight is the identification of some kind of problem to be solved. When we first become aware of a dilemma, our face looks a little unhappy, perplexed. Our eyes might be squinting slightly, we recognize we have a problem, we feel stuck.
- The conversations leaders have with their employees that will make the most substantial difference to their performance, involve resolving a dilemma. The most effective way to resolve their dilemma is to help the other person have an insight for themselves. The first step for this is to identify the dilemma itself.
- From a neuroscientific perspective, a dilemma means we have various mental maps in conflict. They have competing values, competing demands for resources, and the brain has not yet worked out how to resolve this conflict by creating a new map or by reconfiguring our existing maps.

*b) Reflection*

- You can clearly tell when someone is reflecting on an issue: his or her face changes. Most people look up, or slightly up and across, and get a dazed look on their face. Nearly everyone becomes very silent for a moment.
- There's a certain type of internal reflection that brings about insights. Studies have shown that during reflection we're not thinking logically or analyzing data; we're using a part of our brain used for making links across the whole brain. We're thinking in an unusual way, allowing our unconscious brain to work.
- It seems that to help people have insights, we need to encourage them to reflect more, and think less-or at least less logically.

*c) Illumination*

- Being in the illumination phase brings on a rush of energy. This rush is being driven by nothing more than a new set of connections in our brain. And we get the same rush when we solve the dilemma at work for ourselves, too.
- Right at the moment of insight neurotransmitters, such as adrenaline, are released, giving us that well known rush. Having an insight is one of life's most pleasant moments.
- Gamma band and brain waves signify various parts of the brain forming a new map. When we have an illumination experience we are creating a super map that links many parts of the brain. The creation of this new map gives off substantial energy, energy that can be tapped as a valuable resource.

*c) Motivation*

- When people are in the motivation phase, their eyes are racing ahead, ready to take action. However, the intense motivation we feel passes quickly.
- If you can get people to take tangible actions while the illumination is close at hand, even just to commit to doing something later, this will be a big help in ensuring new ideas become reality.

### *The Dance of Insight*

- The Four Faces of Insight model describes what happens when someone has an aha. The Dance of Insight model tells you how to actually make these ahas happen.
- The Dance of Insight is a way of keeping people fully engaged with you in the delicate dance of making new connections. This model helps people develop a deeper awareness of their dilemma, puts them into a reflective phase, and then encourages those aha moments to come through.
- This model has proven to be very useful anytime we want another person to engage more deeply into a thinking process and come up with insights for themselves.
- When we use that the Dance of Insight model, we're helping the other person stay on track, but we're also staying out of the way-we're their invisible dance partner.
- The Dance of Insight is in four parts. It starts with the concept of establishing permission, and then there are three elements that go in a circular pattern: placement, questioning, and clarifying.

#### *a) The permission*

- When we want people to think more deeply than usual: we need their explicit permission to get personal; otherwise we could be fighting a losing battle.
- Permission comes in levels - The territories we're comfortable talking about vary with different people we talk to. It's interesting to note that we come back to the place where we leave off: if two best friends don't see each other for years, the levels of permissions are likely to remain intact.
- Different situations where you might use this concept of establishing permission before having a dialogue:
  - *Starting a new conversation* -Try establishing permission anytime you want someone to stop what he or she is doing and speak with you about an issue that will require them to think differently.
  - *Anytime you get more personal in a conversation* -Permission has different levels. There are quite obvious boundaries between each level. Any time you move up a level, ask permission, or people can become defensive. Then they stop listening to you and start listening to their internal dialogue. If you do ask permission to enough, people will feel safe, acknowledged, and respected.
- Here are some examples of words you might use to establish permission:
  - "I get a sense you have more to say about that, could I probe a little further?"
  - "I'd like to have a more open conversation than we've had before, would it be OK if I asked you some more specific questions right now?"
  - "Can we spend a few minutes brainstorming ideas around this?"

- “I’d like to understand more about your thinking in an area, would you be OK talking more about that?”
- “I’d like to discuss some more personal matters... Would that be OK with you?”
- When you have a position of power and establish permission anyway, it can give a big positive impact on work relationships. It builds trust, and because people feel safer around you they are likely to open up more.
- Asking permission significantly increases our chance of having a great dance with someone, a dance involving a high level conversation that improves people’s thinking.

*b) Placement*

- Placement is about anchoring any conversation: defining exactly where you are and what’s about to happen next, so that the people are thinking about exactly the same issues from similar perspectives.
- The more subtle or emotionally charged a conversation is, the easier it is to get lost in the details or problems, and the more that placement helps the conversation stay on track and be useful.
- Many people naturally use placement before an unusually difficult conversation. The author finds it can make a big difference in the vast majority of dialogs we have it work, not just the tough ones.
- When you place people in a conversation, you take care of issues like:
  - Setting the scene
  - How long you like to speak for
  - Where you’re coming from
  - What your goal for the conversation is
  - What you would like them to do in the conversation
  - How you would like them to listen
  - What’s going to happen in the conversation
  - What you’re looking to achieve from the dialog
- When you place someone well, the conversation unfolds better than when you don’t.
- There are many instances you can use placement: at the start of the meeting, in a difficult conversation with someone, or when you’re short on time and have a lot to discuss. Placement is a helpful resource anytime you have a conversation you’d like to go well.
- Placement is something you can use every minute or so, sometimes even more, to guide a complex conversation and keep it on track. When we use placement we’re not displacing the other person, we are also placing ourselves in the purpose of the dialog, we are anchoring our own thoughts in the direction we want to go.
- Placement becomes a summary of the points you have covered so far in the dialog, to remind you both about where you are, and identify the best path to follow next. Placement is a discipline which once you learn it, can dramatically impact how quickly the conversation achieves its intent.
- Placement may be one of the best tools for staying on track with the goal of transforming performance and avoiding a lot of unnecessary conversations lost in details, problems, or worse, drama.

### C) Questioning

- If we want the other person to be doing all the thinking, asking questions is the only way forward. Learning to ask powerful questions is the most central skill in this book. When we ask the right questions, people move into phase two of the Faces of Insight: they reflect and their brains go into the alpha state. If we ask enough of the right questions, people often have their own aha.
- The most common response to a dilemma is to give some kind of advice, phrased as a question. Unfortunately our most common approach is also the one that's least likely to help, for several reasons. First the chances of having an idea that's truly useful to someone are slim. Our advice is drawn from our own experiences, which are very different to other people's.
- The second reason advice is rarely helpful is that people are far more likely to act on ideas that they've come up with themselves, whereas other people's ideas tend to be automatically ignored or argued against. This is especially the case with intelligent, independent thinkers, the people who make up our corporate ranks today. The author proposes that if you have the exact idea that someone needs to hear, definitely don't tell them. If you do, you could be doing them a disservice.
- The third reason advice is rarely useful is that the dilemma people first put forward is almost always not their main issue, once you drill down a little. This goes back to the very nature of dilemmas: if people were clear about the central challenge inside their dilemma, they probably would have solved the dilemma already.
- There are big upsides to not having to have the answers all the time: you can't be blamed for giving wrong advice; you don't have to think as hard; and most important, over time people will stop coming to you for answers and learn to think better for themselves.
- *Quiet leaders, while they respect that people have problems, aren't all that interested in discussing them.*
- A broad question will tend to be more useful than giving advice; however, for some reason we all seem to go straight to asking questions about the problem.
- Asking about the source of the problem in a dialogue will probably result in someone having a good vent at you.
- *Quiet leaders stay out of the details* -They let the other person do all the thinking about the dilemma, while they think about something else entirely.
- Quiet leaders don't rush people into action. They focus on allowing people's thinking to take its natural course.
- Quiet leaders don't tell people how to think differently-not even if it's a great idea, such as focusing on their goals, becoming more relaxed, or being more positive. They know there is an easier way.

### **What quiet leaders do**

- How better to help people make new connections, than to identify the patterns in their minds? To put this simply, it means asking questions with the word "thinking" in it. A great question to start might be "how long have you been thinking about this?" then you might ask something like "how often do you think this each day?" followed by "how important do you think this

thought is?” Then “how satisfied are you with the amount of thinking you have given this issue so far?”

- The author calls these types of questions “thinking questions.” These are one of the most useful tools he has found for improving performance.
- *Asking thinking questions means you are now focused on one thing: people’s thinking. If people are being paid to think, isn’t it about time we help them improve their thinking?*
- Thinking questions don’t focus on the details or problems, nor do they tell people how to think. They get people to notice their own thinking. Something exciting happens when we ask these types of questions: people start to really think-in different ways, more clearly, and at a higher level. They become aware of the background of their thinking, and start to make new connections. Their eyes glaze over as they focus internally. Often they look up. In other words, they moved to the reflection stage of the four faces of insight. As a result, they can quickly move into the illumination phase, after just a few questions.
- Once you get used to this concept, asking thinking questions is significantly easier than trying to work up the answers for people. This approach is not just easier, it’s more fun, inspires people into action, generates commitment, and transforms performance.
- There’s one thing that’s common to the ahas: the other person has improved their thinking. They’ve done this through one or more of the following mental processes:
  - Noticing patterns in their thinking
  - Lifting their thinking to a higher perspective
  - Noticing qualities of their thinking itself, such as its core quality, or it and need for more focus on an issue
  - Clarifying the importance of issues
  - Reordering priorities
  - Scheduling time more intelligently
  - Paying more attention to certain thoughts
  - Making firmer commitment
  - Opening up their thinking
- Learning to ask thinking questions is a powerful resource for transforming performance. If your measurement is whether people take action, compared to telling people what to do, this approach saves a lot of time. And it doesn’t just save energy, it creates energy.

#### d) *Clarifying*

- Clarifying is the final element in the Dance of Insight. Once we have permission for conversation, and place the other person, and ask a thinking question, we then clarify the answer to our question. When we clarify, we get to the bottom line in a conversation. We voice the essence of what’s being said.
- Clarifying provides a missing link, an idea that completes a set of connections, so that the brain is ready for the next idea.
- Given that our working memory is small, simplifying complex ideas allows us to make connections to other ideas more easily. So the best clarifying involves a short, clear sentence of fewer than 10 words.

- Clarifying requires listening to people intently-though at a high level-listening for patterns rather than to every detail. You're well above the forest, trying to see which country the forest is in and, and even which season. When you clarify, listen for:
  - What is the person trying to say?
  - What are they not saying?
  - What is the emotional context inside what they're saying?
  - What's behind their words-what do they really feel?
  - With the essence of what they're saying?
  - What are they saying that they can't hear for themselves?
- Great clarifying is more like poetry than PowerPoint. You're capturing the essence of an idea and feeding it back in a way that makes people nod in agreement.
- To clarify effectively, focus on the other person and what they might be learning. Thinking too much about what they're saying it gets in the way, as does worrying about getting it perfect. Take time to fully consider their words, let them sink in, and trust your gut. If this sounds a lot like listening for potential, you're right: that's exactly what's needed to clarify well.
- If you want to know when you've clarified well, just look at people's heads. They will nod when you get it right! Even if what you say is not wholly accurate, people will then clarify what you say. Either way, the conversation can then move forward.
- Clarifying requires being prepared to take a risk and trusting your intuition. It's a high level skill that requires some practice.
- Let's take a moment to recap on the Dance of Insight, to help crystallize what we've covered so far. The Dance of Insight is a framework for having conversations that help people think better, without telling them what to do. The elements within this model can improve the effectiveness of many types of conversations. We've seen that the Dance of Insight is cyclical in nature. A dilemma comes up. You get permission for a new conversation. You place the person so you're both thinking from the same perspective, then you ask a thinking question to get their mind noticing their own thinking patterns. Then you clarify their answers, and you're back to placement again (or permission if you're getting more personal). Then you're back to a thinking question, then clarifying, etc...
- Here are a couple of high level insights that came to the author through watching people learn the skills.
  - When people feel lost in a conversation, it's usually a result of a lack of placement. If placement feels annoying somehow, remember you're telling people about themselves, something which is rarely boring.
  - When people are lost in the details or problems, the author can pinpoint the exact question the leader asked that sent the conversation off the rails. People answer the question we ask.
  - When people are not clear what the central issue is, the leader has almost always failed to do in a clarifying.
- In summary, the Dance of Insight is central to being a Quiet Leader. It's about getting permission before getting personal, and then making sure you're both on the same page before asking a question, then asking questions that create new maps in people's minds. As you quietly facilitate this Dance, you'll see people's faces changing as they move from the

awareness of the dilemma, reflecting, to having an illumination, and then being ready to take action. Having these dance steps in your repertoire as a leader will make a tremendous difference in the quality of your people's thinking, and therefore their performance.

### Step 5: Create new Thinking

- The first element of the **CREATE** model is to explore the **Current Reality** for someone, the reality of their thinking itself. At this point, people become aware of their dilemma and they reflect, and then if you ask the right questions, have an insight of some kind.
- We then move to the second element, **Explore Alternatives**. By this point people have had an insight and want to do something with the insight but are not sure what. So we throw around different ideas. We might make gentle suggestions or give clues to other perspectives or approaches here. This stage helps ensure people don't take the easiest path when they have an insight, but rather that they find the best option for moving an insight into action.
- The third element of the CREATE model is **Tap their Energy**. People are now in the motivation state of the Four Faces of the Insight: they are energized about doing something, but we know this energy won't last. So we help people take tangible actions to move their insights from delicate new connections to something more likely to become up part of their thinking. Or in plain English, we're helping people turn their insights into habits.

#### a) *Current Reality*

- When you want to improve someone's thinking, the best place to start is at the current reality. Starting at this point enables people to reflect on their own thinking, which as we've seen is a fast way to generate insights.
- When we ask about the current reality we ask people to step back from their own thinking and notice its nature: to become scientists of their own thinking. This is also similar to the Buddhist notion of mindfulness, the concept of the observer noticing what's going on without being attached to any of it.
- Helping someone identify the currently reality of their thinking, without any value judgments, allows them to make new maps to self correct this thinking. As a result, people make their own decisions about what to do next. They're thinking has literally been improved, and they quite possibly developed useful new wiring to call on again.
- Sample questions for exploring the Current Reality: The author finds we need to ask at least five questions in this phase before people have any insights, though the range is usually 6 to 10. The author has created a list of the common questions to ask.
  - How long you been thinking about this, in days, weeks, months, or years?
  - How often do you think about this, how many times each hour, day, or week?
  - How long do you think about it, when do you think about it, in 10 minutes or hours?
  - How important is this issue to you, on a scale of 1 to 10?
  - Is this in your top three, five, or 10 priorities right now?
  - How committed to changing this issue are you, on a scale of 1 to 10?
  - How do you feel about the thinking time you've given this so far?
  - What are your main insights about this issue up to now?

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you that you have all the information you need to act?
- What are the insights brewing at the back of your mind?
- If you can recall these types of questions, you might find it easier to focus on the person you're speaking too, so some people like to cut out or copy this list and put it on the wall or memorize it. With these questions in mind, here are few nuances to be aware of around this process: the importance of metrics; not to give up too quickly; to watch people's faces; and above all, to trust your gut.
- Numbers count -When we want people to have an aha, simplifying their ideas is a big help. A great way to do this is by defining the strength of any concept in number form. There are two main reasons for this.
  - First, defining our thoughts and feelings in numbers makes us think more deeply.
  - Second, because numbers are simple, our working memory can hold them more easily in our conscious mind, and therefore we more easily see connections to other concepts.
- Don't be afraid to dig around a bit-ask at least five questions.
- You can watch and listen for clues as to why they're getting warmer or colder with your questions. When people get close to an insight they go quiet, which they need to do to come up with new connections. Give them space to do this. When they have an aha you can see it written all over their face, or you'll hear their voice shift to a higher pitch.
- The CREATE model is a guide. It will only work if you listen to your natural curiosity and ask questions about where you sense the person's energy is going. If you trust your gut you might find yourself coming up with great questions such as "Do you have the answer already and just want to check it with me?" Sometimes this is exactly what's going on for people, and just by speaking an idea out loud they're able to move forward quickly.

#### *b) Explore alternatives*

- It's clear when it's time to explore alternatives. It's when someone's had an illumination and is full of energy
- When people have an aha they are energized, they feel inspired to take action. However, the first actions that they come up with are often what they are most comfortable with, not necessarily the best ideas. When we explore alternatives we open people up to possibilities. We stretch them a little.
- Moving to the explore alternatives phase means asking people to think more deeply, so we need to make sure we establish permission to do this.
- Once we've got permission, again we use a bit of placement.
- Questions to ask in this phase include:
  - What are some possible paths we could take from here?
  - Do you want to explore a few different ideas for how to move this forward?
  - How can I best help you from here?
  - How do you think we might move this insight forward
  - What are some different ways we could tackle this?
  - Can you see some different angles we could look at this from?

- When we start to help people think through alternatives, we need to be aware of our own filters and agendas. There's nothing wrong with this; our agendas at times are important. Just disclose them, and then discuss what's best.
  - If you put ideas forward as possibilities and allow people to make the decision about what works for them, you can throw in lots of great tools, approaches, resources, and suggestions. Then you can help people decide which would be the most useful approach, not just the easiest. Exploring alternative ways to take action after having an insight, instead of just going with first ideas, can be a big help in transforming performance. Just remember not to be too attached to any ideas, as all our brains are different.
- c) *Tap their energy*
- The "tap their energy" phase has a life of its own. The energy released by making big sets of new connections spurs people into action and all the leader has to do is gently nudge people to keep them on the right track.
  - We're busy; without a structure to ensure an action is done, our important but not so urgent insights may get parked behind other priorities.
  - There are four main issues to be aware of here: helping people be more specific; setting deadlines; reporting back; and doing something tangible.
  - Get specific while their energy is still flowing.
  - Get people to flesh out their ideas while they are fresh. It will increase the chances of real change.
  - Create deadlines while people are more likely to commit - Asking people that "by when" question while they're still energized by their idea means you're more likely to get a firm commitment. And once people have made a promise to themselves or others, they are far more likely to carry out the action.
  - Reporting back raises the odds substantially -The act of having to report to someone increases the amount of energy we give an idea in our mind; and makes us take an idea more seriously.
  - Doing any kind of tangible activity linked to the insight -Writing an action down makes that action more likely to happen. Applying any kind of physical activity to an insight strengthens the circuits holding the insight in place. Physical activities include talking, writing, reading, drawing, and filing; anything that focuses our attention on an insight for an amount of time.
  - Attention creates new circuits.
  - Example questions for Tapping their Energy
    - Shall we focus on X and get more detailed on that?
    - How can I best help you think through how to make this work?
    - Do you want to think through how to make this happen?
    - What specifically would you do in this situation?
    - When do you think you might do this by?
    - How can I best support you to turn this insight into a habit?
    - Do you want to take some kind of specific action around this?

*Putting the CREATE model together*

- While the CREATE model describes three distinct phases in a dialogue, in real conversations it's not as linear as that. We usually start with the current reality, but may then move up and down

between other phases. Once we've tapped the energy for one insight, we might go back to the current reality on another aspect of an issue. Although it's not perfectly linear, the author's experience is that when people understand these three phases they can more easily sense which phase to move to next.

- The conversation gets slightly less structured as you move through the phases. While permission and placement are still being used, it's not quite as cyclical as we move up into the latter parts of the dialogue. Second, we do get a bit detailed as we go on, but it's detailed about alternative solutions, about actions to take.
- Quiet Leaders create new thinking in the people they manage. They do this by following all the five steps we've covered so far: By thinking about thinking, by listening for potential, by speaking with intent, and by dancing toward insight. They do this by starting conversations with identifying the landscape of a person's thinking, then widely exploring alternatives for action, and tapping into people's energy and motivation.

### Step 6: Follow-up

- Using the CREATE model with someone whose thinking is unclear helps them have useful insights, and then commit to undertaking specific actions to bring these insights into reality. However, if we don't follow up, these actions may not have the long-term impact on performance that's possible.
- Making sure an action is done is only a small part of the value of the following up. The big reason to follow-up after creating new thinking is to support the creation of new long-term habits that will improve people's performance.
- As leaders our job is to give people's new maps attention and positive feedback, whatever has happened since they had their initial insight.
- The way we do this is described in the final big idea in the book: the **FEELING** model. Feeling stands for **F**acts, **E**motions, **E**ncouragement, **L**earning, **I**mplications, and **N**ew **G**oals.
- *Facts*
- Try to remain emotionally neutral in this phase and just get the information about what was done compared to what has been planned. Get people to be specific here. One upside to getting the facts is that people see what they've done, which is often more than they give themselves credit for.
- So the first part of the feeling model is to get the facts, focusing on the facts of what can be observed: what was done, not what wasn't. Doing this takes a little awareness and practice; for many people it's a completely new habit.
- *Emotions*
- Once you got the facts about how far someone went with an action, the next step is to see how they *feel* about what they've achieved.
- Another reason for taking on people's emotions early in the conversation is to address any strong emotions that might get in the way of useful conversations.
- The second part of the feeling model is to check in on people's emotions. If they had a good experience completing the action, you deepen their wiring by focusing attention on these positive feelings. If they had a difficult time, you can help them put their emotions aside to allow more useful conversation to follow.

- *Encourage*
- When you use the CREATE model, you're helping people think differently, and then getting them to do things they hadn't thought of immediately by themselves. Therefore you're stretching people, getting them to use different parts of their brain.
- Given that people are being stretched, it's important to encourage them generously, to help make the experience a positive one. You might acknowledge their efforts, appreciate what they had to do differently, or identify the challenges they faced and surmount and validate these.
- Yet it's even more important to encourage all others when they don't complete something.
- To encourage people who didn't achieve an action in full-or at all-focus on what they did do, not what they didn't. Find out about their thinking time, the energy they put into the action in other ways, and encourage them for this.
- When you follow up, find ways to encourage people and you will be helping them turn their delicate new circuits into long-term habits.
- *Learning*
- Finding out what people are learning is the central element of follow-up. We want to help identify any new wiring people are developing and new habits in the early stages of formation. And not just identify new wiring, but name it, understand it, hold it in our hands, see it from many angles. We want to give it lots of attention.
- By focusing your attention on new habits rather than details, you're focusing other people's attention more sharply on these new circuits.
- Questions you could ask to deepen people's learning include:
  - What was your big insight this week?
  - What did you find out about yourself?
  - What other insight did that then open up?
  - What did you discover about your thinking or habits?
  - What new habit did you notice starting to emerge?
- Focus on the learning when you follow up. It's the best way to improve people's thinking.
- *Implications*
- Once you have the facts, checked in on emotions, encouraged them, and identified what the big learning was, next you want to explore the implications of what someone has learned.
- Asking about the implications of what someone has learned means you are giving their new wiring even more attention, more focus, and making links to other parts of their brain. It's further embedding these new circuits.
- *New goal*
- The final part of the FEELING model is to identify the next goal to focus on.
- The final step to transforming performance is following up with people to help them recognize and therefore further embed the habits they're developing. By doing this in a positive and supportive way, we give people the encouragement they need to turn their delicate new circuits into full blown hard wiring. It's not a difficult process, it takes just a few minutes-but it can make a world of difference.

## A Summary of the Six Steps

- The six steps to transforming performance are a new set of tools for improving people's thinking and dramatically improving their performance. These six steps are the core of being a Quiet Leader, and define a whole new way of communicating in the workplace.
- The first step is to think about thinking; to let people do all the thinking, keep them focused on solutions, stretch their thinking, accentuate the positive, and follow good process. The second step is to listen for potential, and to not get too close. The third step is to speak with intent, and be succinct, specific, and generous. Step four is about conversation: we danced toward insight by getting permission for harder conversations, placing people so they know where we're coming from, using thinking questions so that others do the thinking, and then clarifying their responses.
- Once we know how to dance this way, in step five we create new thinking. We get people to become aware of the mental dilemmas and reflect more deeply on them by asking questions about their current reality. Once they have had an insight, we explore alternatives for how to move their insight into action, and then we tap into the energy given off by the new connections being made.
- Finally we know that following up can make a big difference to the emergence of new wiring, so we focus on the facts and people's feelings. We encourage, listen for learning, look for implications, and then look for the next goal to focus on.
- There have been two main themes running through the six steps. The first theme is how to have a conversation to resolve any type of dilemma. This covers the majority of interactions leaders have day to day with the people. The second theme is how you might use the various models inside the six steps more widely. For example, permission, placement, and clarifying can be very useful tools in many situations.

### Part three: Putting the six steps to use

- The Six Steps to Transforming Performance can be applied to many types of activities in many different ways. In the third section of the book, the author focuses on three of the more challenging ones: how to help others solve problems; how to support people to make better decisions; how to give feedback in various situations. Read these chapters to better understand how to apply the learning in the book. The author has also included a chapter on using the six steps with teens as well as an additional chapter on using these ideas with children.

**Recommendation:** *Quiet Leadership is an inspiring, clear, step-by-step approach to changing people, rather than processes. By reading this book you will gain a comprehensive set of conversational tools that support leaders in having powerful, results-oriented conversations with their employees around change, performance, and career development. It's a must read and well worth buying the book.*

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**About the reviewer: Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD**

Many CEO's find themselves asking "What now?" to sensitive situations that only an experienced former CEO can understand. Frumi is brought in to solve problems and often remains to work with you, as your confidante and secret weapon. She has an uncanny knack of getting to the heart of your corporate climate and maximizing your team's performance, profitability and sustainability.

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