

# IF THEY CAN'T COME UP TO YOU THEY'LL NEVER GET BEHIND YOU

**January 5:** *Appeal to the heard mentality.*

**February 16:** *Choose being real over being right.*

**March 12:** *Decide how you want to leave people.*

**April 17:** *Expect less from technology and more from each other.*

**May 25:** *I told you so leads to I resent you so.*

**June 10:** *Install an emotional disturbance.*

**July 22:** *Maintain a posture of grace.*

**August 6:** *Make your mission more than a statement.*

**September 24:** *Punch a few stamps on their sandwich card.*

**October 15:** *Reprogram people's experience banks.*

**November 24:** *Stop asking people to edit themselves.*

**December 17:** *Values aren't taught, they're caught.*



**Scott Ginsberg** is the author of thirteen books, a professional speaker, award-winning blogger, producer of **NametagTV.com** and one smoking hot piece of brain candy. He's made an entire career out of wearing a nametag every day. He blames this on his parents.



NametagTV.com | HelloMyNamelsScott.com

**366**

Daily  
Practices  
to Make  
Your Brand  
More  
Engaging,  
More  
Joinable,  
More  
Human  
and More  
Approachable

Scott  
Ginsberg's

## THE NAMETAG PRINCIPLE



**If they  
can't  
come up  
to you,  
how will  
they ever  
get behind  
you?**

**you?  
get behind  
they ever  
how will  
to you,  
come up  
can't  
if they**

*HELLO, my name is Scott's...*

# **The Nametag Principle**

*366 Daily Practices to  
Make Your Brand More Engaged,  
More Joinable, More Human  
and More Approachable*



# **This book is about your people.**

## **Your people.**

Your audience.	Your followers.	Your staff.
Your clients.	Your guests.	Your students.
Your congregants.	Your kids.	Your subscribers.
Your constituency.	Your listeners.	Your team.
Your coworkers.	Your members.	Your viewers.
Your crew.	Your patients.	Your visitors.
Your customers.	Your peeps.	Your volunteers.
Your employees.	Your readers.	Your workforce.

And if you want them to win, your brand needs to make daily strides to become more engaging, more joinable, more human and more approachable.

My name is Scott. And for the next year, I challenge you to ask one question:

**IF THEY CAN'T COME UP TO YOU,  
HOW WILL THEY EVER  
GET BEHIND YOU?**

## **Welcome to The Nametag Principle.**



## JANUARY

# Authenticity is not a strategy.

1	Anchor yourself in the concrete foundation of your humanity. ....	22
2	Ante up the emotional temperature. ....	23
3	Allow people the dignity of self-definition. ....	24
4	Anonymity is bankruptcy. ....	25
5	Appeal to the heard mentality. ....	26
6	Appeal to the human appetite for playful experiences. ....	27
7	Approach ideas with deep democracy. ....	28
8	Asking activates control. ....	29
9	Assess and disclose your vulnerabilities. ....	30
10	Back off and let people figure it out on their own. ....	31
11	Be a flow enabler. ....	32
12	Be a force of calm. ....	33
13	Be a stand for other people's greatness. ....	34
14	Be a value-adding machine. ....	35
15	Be friends, not just amicable strangers. ....	36
16	Be gloriously explicit. ....	37
17	Be just as much of a rockstar when you're off. ....	38
18	Be more knowable. ....	39
19	Be user-friendlier. ....	40
20	Be not humiliated by having others see you truly. ....	41
21	Believe that heartshare trumps mindshare. ....	42
22	Be the example you want followed. ....	43
23	Be their permission slip. ....	44
24	Bear the burden of the human need to belong. ....	45
25	Become an enabler of expression. ....	46
26	Become a wealth of inform. ....	47
27	Become an essentialist. ....	48
28	Befriend simplicity. ....	49
29	Befriend the current. ....	50
30	Bigger isn't better – better is better. ....	51
31	Boldly flaunt your imperfection. ....	52

## FEBRUARY

# Boring is bankruptcy.

1	Bolster belonging. ....	56
2	Bother to do things. ....	57
3	Breathe out the love people need. ....	58
4	Bring flowers, show up naked. ....	59
5	Character isn't enough. ....	60
6	Bring the funny. ....	61
7	Build virtuosic moments. ....	62
8	Build emotional resonance. ....	63
9	Calm comes from experience. ....	64
10	Capitalize on the momentum. ....	65
11	Care about people's experience when they're around you. ....	66
12	Care for the right reasons. ....	67
13	Caring does work, though. ....	68
14	Bring your heart. ....	69
15	Check your motivation. ....	70
16	Choose being real over being right. ....	71
17	Choose the route of transparency. ....	72
18	Clarify what support people can count on. ....	73
19	Clarify your definition. ....	74
20	Come out swinging and you'll be perceived as a threat. ....	75
21	Communicate the need. ....	76
22	Communicate yourself to the world. ....	77
23	Confidently understand why you are. ....	78
24	Compassionately take people's hiding places away from them. ....	79
25	Confront the engagement reality. ....	80
26	Consciously pursue the unexpected. ....	81
27	Consider people's unique definitions of engagement. ....	82
28	Consistency affects everyone you encounter. ....	83
29	Consistency is far better than rare moments of greatness. ....	84

## MARCH

# Constantly reeducate your market.

1	Contribution can't be a mere blip on people's radar. ....	88
2	Convince people that you're doing something important. ....	89
3	Courageously break stupid rules. ....	90
4	Create a setting in which everyone's gifts can flourish. ....	91
5	Create a spirit of openness. ....	92
6	Create an atmosphere of approachability. ....	93
7	Create the right atmosphere. ....	94
8	Cultivate a gratitude practice. ....	95
9	Curators aren't just for museums. ....	96
10	Customers will tell you how to serve them. ....	97
11	Dare to be dumm. ....	98
12	Decide how you want to leave people. ....	99
13	Decide where you draw the line. ....	100
14	Deeper mindfulness plus deliberate effort. ....	101
15	Delete the de-motivators. ....	102
16	Demonstrate interest in the person, not the potential. ....	103
17	Design is your friend. ....	104
18	Dig for documentation. ....	105
19	Disarm the immediate preoccupation. ....	106
20	Discover someone's desired way to contribute. ....	107
21	Ditch the pomp. ....	108
22	Do some quick math. ....	109
23	Don't dismiss your organizational heritage. ....	110
24	Don't impose your own direction. ....	111
25	Don't inform – form. ....	112
26	Don't force your brand into a box. ....	113
27	Don't get over yourself – stay over yourself. ....	114
28	Don't let emotions take a backseat. ....	115
29	Education means fascination. ....	116
30	Embed their passion into the pavement that leads the way. ....	117
31	Embed your personality into your premises. ....	118

## A P R I L

# Embrace the equalizers of life.

1	Emotion is technology of the soul. ....	122
2	Empathy is valuable, but execution is priceless. ....	123
3	Expression is essential to engagement. ....	124
4	Emphasize your expanded role. ....	125
5	Enable a regular attention stream. ....	126
6	Enable contribution ripples. ....	127
7	Enable others to build their success around yours. ....	128
8	Encourage and celebrate their mistakes. ....	129
9	Engagement is the new marketing. ....	130
10	Engagement must be realistic. ....	131
11	Envision a more ambitious platform. ....	132
12	Err on the side of embodiment. ....	133
13	Establish an air of freshness. ....	134
14	Everybody recruits somebody. ....	135
15	Evidence of humanity is everywhere – study it. ....	136
16	Excavate the universal human experience. ....	137
17	Expect less from technology and more from each other. ....	138
18	Exponentially increase your activity level. ....	139
19	Expose your nakedness as a person. ....	140
20	Express yourself three-dimensionally. ....	141
21	Face time never fails. ....	142
22	Fear is the great distracting force. ....	143
23	Figure out why people are. ....	144
24	Find out what joining looks like to them. ....	145
25	Fixing is for plumbers. ....	146
26	Flush out the fear. ....	147
27	Force-feeding truth doesn't work. ....	148
28	Fulfill the need of materialization. ....	149
29	Get over your product and get behind your personhood. ....	150
30	Give people a front row seat to their brilliance. ....	151



# M A Y

## Give compliments that matter.

1	Give people permission to be remarkable. ....	154
2	Give people permission to pursue their dreams. ....	155
3	Give people what they want, not what you assume they need. ....	156
4	Give people what they want, not what you assume they desire. ....	157
5	Give their truth a megaphone. ....	158
6	Give yourself away. ....	159
7	Give your brand three dimensions. ....	160
8	Go above solving the immediate problem. ....	161
9	Go out of your way to gush. ....	162
10	Gratitude is the great gravitator. ....	163
11	Greeting is the engine of seen. ....	164
12	Hang on their home turf. ....	165
13	Have a message that's worthy of being heard. ....	166
14	Help people become impressed with themselves. ....	167
15	Help people feel a sense of self-achievement. ....	168
16	Highlight individual essentialness. ....	169
17	Hit them in the wallet quicker. ....	170
18	Hold up a mirror to yourself. ....	171
19	Honesty is the new marketing. ....	172
20	Honor people's capacity to express. ....	173
21	Honor the audience of one. ....	174
22	Hovering is for helicopters. ....	175
23	Humanize the workplace. ....	176
24	Humanize your doctrine. ....	177
25	"I told you so" leads to "I resent you so." ....	178
26	Identify the real currency. ....	179
27	Identity has universal appeal. ....	180
28	Idolatry is insufficient. ....	181
29	If you see people bleeding, don't pretend they aren't really hurting. ....	182
30	Imperfection is not a liability. ....	183
31	Improv trumps scripting. ....	184

## JUNE

# Inbreak is the new outreach.

1	Increase your mental flexibility. ....	188
2	Indulge in your humanity. ....	189
3	Influence is a function of infection. ....	190
4	Infect through being. ....	191
5	Inject soul. ....	192
6	Inspire commitment. ....	193
7	Inspire in others of a vision of what they can contribute. ....	194
8	Inspire people to motivate themselves. ....	195
9	Inspire people to see the world as you do. ....	196
10	Install an emotional disturbance. ....	197
11	Instead of answering questions, answer unspoken needs. ....	198
12	Intrinsic pride creates emotional commitment. ....	199
13	Invent things in your own image. ....	200
14	Involvement isn't something you can force upon people. ....	201
15	It's just easier to say hi to everybody. ....	202
16	It's never too late for the truth. ....	203
17	Jolt your audience awake. ....	204
18	Keep people in control. ....	205
19	Keep people from walking out the door. ....	206
20	Kill them with consistency. ....	207
21	Know the emotion you're selling. ....	208
22	Know that people aren't bound to you. ....	209
23	Know what emotion you're selling. ....	210
24	Know when the cost of disclosure is too high. ....	211
25	Lay a foundation of affirmation. ....	212
26	Lay bare your belief. ....	213
27	Lead with practices; follow with principles. ....	214
28	Lead with your constitution. ....	215
29	Lead with your person and follow with your profession. ....	216
30	Learn from the best. ....	217

## JULY

# Learn to look good naked.

1	Learn how to disappear. ....	220
2	Learn people's learning styles. ....	221
3	Learn to be an imperfectionist. ....	222
4	Leave a tender moment alone. ....	223
5	Leave people better, day one. ....	224
6	Leave people better, day two. ....	225
7	Leave people better, day three. ....	226
8	Leave people better, day four. ....	227
9	Leave people better, day five. ....	228
10	Leave people better, day six. ....	229
11	Leave people better, day seven. ....	230
12	Leave people better, day eight. ....	231
13	Leave people better, day nine. ....	232
14	Leave people better, day ten. ....	233
15	Let customers take the steering wheel. ....	234
16	Less outreach, More inbreak. ....	235
17	Let people reach you first. ....	236
18	Let people stay loyal to themselves. ....	237
19	Let people into the moment. ....	238
20	Love makes everything easier. ....	239
21	Love your limits. ....	240
22	Maintain a posture of grace. ....	241
23	Maintain a steady stream of minor enhancements. ....	242
24	Make a conscious, consistent effort. ....	243
25	Make communication a relaxing experience. ....	244
26	Make each appearance a complete spectacle. ....	245
27	Make it easy to contribute. ....	246
28	Make it tangible. ....	247
29	Make loving you easy. ....	248
30	Make no restrictions on people's testimony. ....	249
31	Make others look like heroes. ....	250

## AUGUST

# Make passion palpable.

1	Making people feel important isn't that important. ....	254
2	Make the mundane memorable. ....	255
3	Make transparency your natural tendency. ....	256
4	Make transplanting easy. ....	257
5	Make your customers smarter. ....	258
6	Make your mission more than a statement. ....	259
7	Make yourself clearly knowable. ....	260
8	Make yourself more bounceable. ....	261
9	Make complimenting memorable. ....	262
10	Market your humanity. ....	263
11	Meet people where they are. ....	264
12	Meet the now need. ....	265
13	Memorialize the impact. ....	266
14	Mind the ratio. ....	267
15	Miracles capture attention. ....	268
16	Mood matters. ....	269
17	Move from nice to necessary. ....	270
18	Mum is overrated. ....	271
19	Never get lazy with your audience. ....	272
20	Never let them catch you acting. ....	273
21	Never overlook the profitability of accessibility. ....	274
22	Never underestimate the profitability of findability. ....	275
23	Never underestimate the value of volume. ....	276
24	Nobody wants to dread going into work. ....	277
25	Nourish their interests. ....	278
26	Offer unprecedented access to information. ....	279
27	Offer yourself as a source of accessibility and candor. ....	280
28	Orthopraxy, not orthodoxy. ....	281
29	Oxygenate the conversation. ....	282
30	Pamper people's memories. ....	283
31	Panic requires instructions. ....	284

## SEPTEMBER

# Pass the torch.

1	Participation isn't the same as engagement. ....	288
2	Passion is the great prioritizer. ....	289
3	Payment isn't the panacea. ....	290
4	Peel away superficiality. ....	291
5	People crave transcendence. ....	292
6	People want to be treated – not handled. ....	293
7	Personal expression trumps professional polish. ....	294
8	Photography is priceless. ....	295
9	Pick a lane. ....	296
10	Pinpoint the influences. ....	297
11	Pinpoint the influences, part two. ....	298
12	Plan is a four-letter word. ....	299
13	Position yourself as a peer. ....	300
14	Position yourself as a problem solver. ....	301
15	Practice selective neglect. ....	302
16	Preserve customer control. ....	303
17	Preserve freedom of mind. ....	304
18	Preserve people's fingerprints. ....	305
19	Proficiency and passion aren't enough. ....	306
20	Profitability comes from revisitability. ....	307
21	Provide a safe haven for self-definition. ....	308
22	Provide a virtual steering wheel. ....	309
23	Provide clear, consistent contact points. ....	310
24	Punch a few stamps on their sandwich card. ....	311
25	Puncture people's delusions of inadequacy. ....	312
26	Put a little blood into it. ....	313
27	Put away the red pen. ....	314
28	Put something into people. ....	315
29	Reach the world. ....	316
30	Recall your roots of gratitude. ....	317

## OCTOBER

# Recognize the humor & absurdity of being human.

1	Recognition is the mainspring of motivation. ....	320
2	Recognize the paradise of imperfection. ....	321
3	Recognize when inspiration isn't sufficient. ....	322
4	Rededicate your company's commitment to being human. ....	323
5	Reframe exit questions. ....	324
6	Refuse to leave people where they are. ....	325
7	Refuse to sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate. ....	326
8	Refuse to take ownership of their emotions. ....	327
9	Reinforce people's sense of thee. ....	328
10	Reinforce social belongingness. ....	329
11	Release the need to constantly add value. ....	330
12	Remember the customer of the customer. ....	331
13	Remove the posture of pretense. ....	332
14	Renew your relevance to adapt to your customer's lifestyle. ....	333
15	Reprogram people's experience banks.....	334
16	Resist compartmentalizing people. ....	335
17	Respect people's right to be. ....	336
18	Respect the human need first. ....	337
19	Respond to people's emotions first. ....	338
20	Respond to the idiosyncratic needs of each user. ....	339
21	Retain a strong emotional connection. ....	340
22	Retire your low profile. ....	341
23	Reverse the approach. ....	342
24	Reward people for making mistakes. ....	343
25	Risk being real. ....	344
26	Roll playback on unintentional music. ....	345
27	Root out any sense of entitlement. ....	346
28	Run a joinability audit. ....	347
29	Satisfaction is useless and loyalty is overrated. ....	348
30	Scalability is overrated. ....	349
31	Secrecy is an endangered species. ....	350



## NOVEMBER

# See people beyond their emotional baggage and into their hearts.

1	Self-questioning keeps you accountable to your audience. ....	354
2	Serve people as if they were already paying clients. ....	355
3	Set the stage for commitment. ....	356
4	Set your own stage first. ....	357
5	Shed your armor. ....	358
6	Show people they've already achieved victory. ....	359
7	Show-up is the new sign-on. ....	360
8	Shoes make the man – and the brand. ....	361
9	Show them you can bend. ....	362
10	Show up when you're scared. ....	363
11	Sit people down. ....	364
12	Small drops make big splashes. ....	365
13	Small is approachable. ....	366
14	Smarter means surrendering. ....	367
15	Smoke what you're selling. ....	368
16	Solicit commitment actively but carefully. ....	369
17	Speed is your friend. ....	370
18	Stamp out anonymity. ....	371
19	Squash complacency. ....	372
20	Start at the top. ....	373
21	Start with a firmer step. ....	374
22	Start with yourself. ....	375
23	Step back from center stage. ....	376
24	Stop asking people to edit themselves. ....	377
25	Stop falling in love with your own marketing. ....	378
26	Story isn't enough. ....	379
27	Strengthen your gentleness. ....	380
28	Surprise people with your impeccable word. ....	381
29	Surrender your role. ....	382
30	Suspend your need to dominate the conversation. ....	383

## DECEMBER

# Sweat the small stuff.

1	Take it one step further. ....	386
2	Take people back in time. ....	387
3	Take people to the depths they desperately need to explore. ....	388
4	Take the soul need seriously. ....	389
5	Take your own hiding places away. ....	390
6	The convenience of connectedness comes at a high price. ....	391
7	The enemy of being heard. ....	392
8	The heart has its own measuring scale. ....	393
9	The Internet rewards transparency. ....	394
10	The onus to initiate is on you. ....	395
11	The place where gratitude grows. ....	396
12	The speed of the response is the response. ....	397
13	Touchy feely trumps avoidy ignory. ....	398
14	Treat people like people. ....	399
15	Triple your transparency. ....	400
16	Turn customers into working partners. ....	401
17	Turn your brand into a badge. ....	402
18	Uncover preexisting engagement tendencies. ....	403
19	Understand the evolving business landscape. ....	404
20	Undress for success. ....	405
21	Unexpected honesty is worth talking about. ....	406
22	Update your theory of motivation. ....	407
23	Use every available tool to nurture your relationships. ....	408
24	Values aren't taught – they're caught. ....	409
25	Visibility buys belief. ....	410
26	Wear your humanity on your sleeve. ....	411
27	What can't be measured, matters. ....	412
28	What do you see when you see people? ....	413
29	Worthwhile trumps importance. ....	414
30	You can't choreograph giving. ....	415
31	Your organization isn't a catchall. ....	416

# The Nametag Principle

*366 Daily Practices to Make Your Brand  
More Engaged, More Joinable, More Human  
and More Approachable*

---

**by Scott Ginsberg**

Copyright © 2011 HELLO, my name is Scott!

**All rights reserved.**

No part of this book may be used or reproduced  
in any manner whatsoever without  
written permission of the author and the publisher.

**Printed in the United States of America.**

**Cover design by**

Sue Sylvia of Staircase Press Design

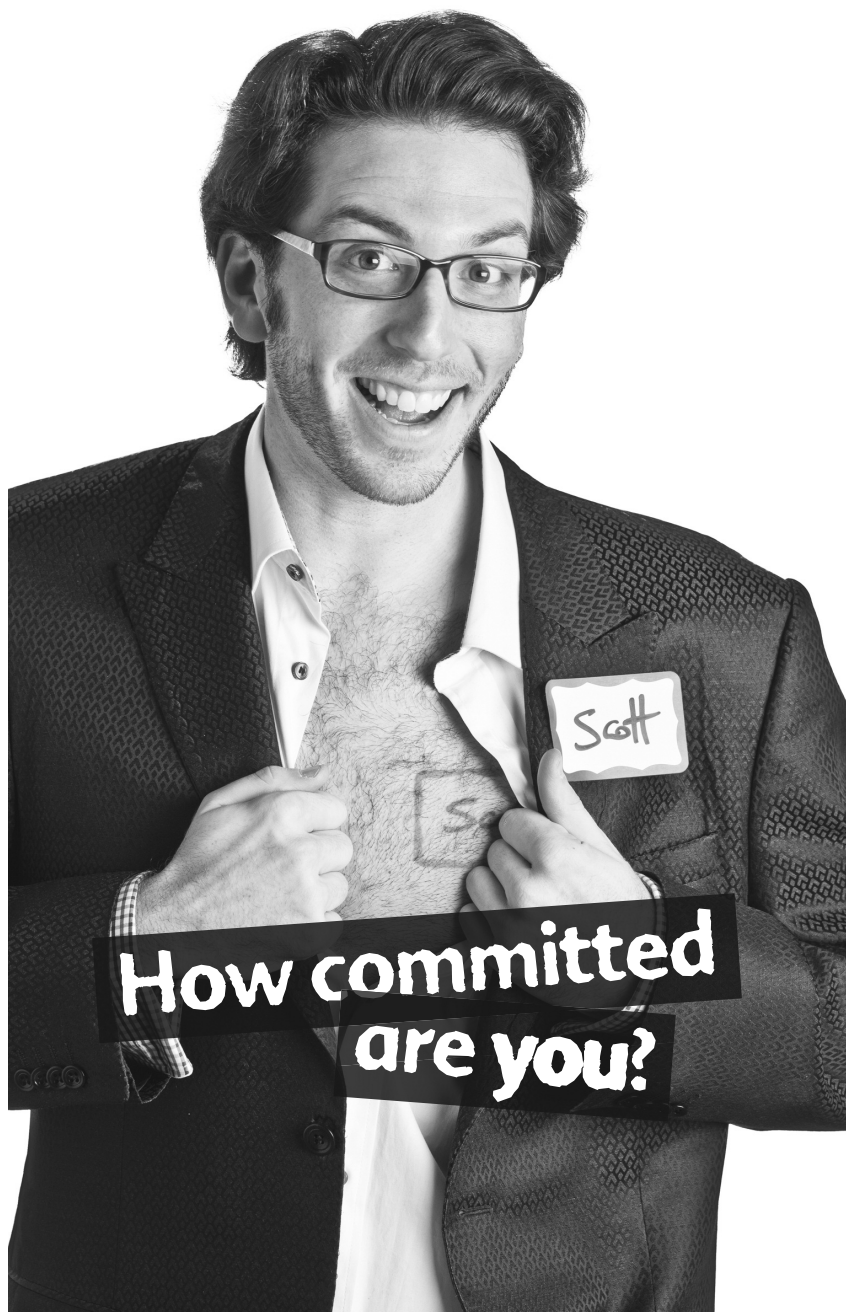
**Text layout by**

Jeff Braun of TriFecta Creative  
[www.trifectacreative.com](http://www.trifectacreative.com)

**Edited by**

Jessica “That Bagel Girl” Adams

ISBN: 98-0-9831405-5-9



**How committed  
are you?**

**Authenticity  
is simply what  
happens when  
you speak human.**



**Are you following  
that voice without  
hesitation?**

JANUARY

# Authenticity is not a strategy.

It's not a parlor trick. It's not a corporate initiative.  
And it's not a tactic you learn at a conference.

Authenticity is what happens when you speak human.

Sadly, the humanity has been boiled out of us. Companies have become international experts at depersonalizing every encounter.

**THE GOOD NEWS IS:** When you follow that voice without hesitation, everybody hears you. And when people taste a trace of your humanity, they'll come back for seconds, every time.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Speaking human is the music people have been waiting their whole lives to hear.

Let your authenticity wash over them like a spring rain.

*Do you have to remind people how authentic you are?*





JANUARY 1

## **Anchor yourself in the concrete foundation of your humanity.**

If your humanity doesn't have a palpable presence in your labors,  
the fruit of your labors will taste like chalk.

Make the conscious choice to blend it into every message you send.  
Create an instant filter to execute against before leaving voicemails,  
sending emails, publishing blogs and updating digital platforms.

You might ask questions like, "Would a human being say this?" or  
"On a scale of one to ten, how much humanity does this message  
contain?"

Try it for a week. See what happens.

The point is not to spend extra time debating your message, rather,  
to create a point of pause that heightens your awareness of the  
humanity in your message.

*What structure would you have to put in place today to deliver a human  
voice?*

JANUARY 2

## Ante up the emotional temperature.

The only thing people can make a judgment about is how interacting with you, your brand, your website, your store, your company and your people – makes them feel.

As such, branding is about two things: How people experience you, and how people experience themselves in relation to you.

Everything else is an accessory.

The differentiator is language. That's the distinction between human companies and emotionally anemic corporate monoliths: They speak with soul instead of dehydrated jargon.

**TRY THIS:** Make a list of the twenty most annoying, tired, vague, empty, overused eye-rolling words and phrases customers hate to hear. Convert the document into a poster and hang it all around the walls of your organization.

Then, any time you hear one of those words being used, charge that employee a dollar.

Not only will you raise enough money to throw a monthly party, but simply by process of elimination people will begin to speak with a more human, more emotional voice.

It's not enough to compete for people's attention – you have to campaign for their emotions.

*Is your service vulcanized?*

JANUARY 3

## Allow people the dignity of self-definition.

When Random House decided to publish their best selling title of all time, *Atlas Shrugged*, the president of the company wrote a letter to Ayn Rand reading:

*"If we publish you, Miss Rand, nobody is going to try to censor you. You write anything you darn well please and we'll publish it."*

No wonder she stayed with the publisher her entire career. That's what happens when you provide a safe haven for self-definition.

On the other hand, people disengage when they're asked to edit themselves – in business and in life.

Take hospitals, for example. In *Social Interaction and Patient Care*, I learned that the loss of self-identity is one of the most difficult aspects of being a patient. "Role deprivation means loss of identity," says the book, "especially when people are reduced to the anonymity of a horizontal figure between the white sheets. They become deprived of their most significant symbols that reinforce that identity."

*Whose identity are you editing?*

*Which of your policies and rules are suppressing the passion of your people?*

Find small ways to rise above standard operating procedure.

Otherwise, every time your people say, "Terrific. More items to submit for approval," they disengage a little more.

*Is your organization a safe haven or an editing booth?*

J A N U A R Y 4

# Anonymity is bankruptcy.

Absence doesn't make the heart grow fonder – it makes the mind start to wonder.

That's what happens when you leave people in the dark: They engage in worst-case thinking.

Take my parents. If they haven't heard from me in a few days, they freak out. And a barrage of texts, emails and instant messages come pouring in, asking me if I'm okay.

*Which I am.* But you've got to think about it from a parent's perspective: The way they see it, no news is bad news. And as a son, that's something I've had to work on.

*Are you prolific in your communication?*

If not, try this: Instead of hoping people will read your mind and then recommend the decision you've already decided on, stop restricting the flow of information. Just talk to people. You'll turn awkward moments of silence into opportunities for honest conversation.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The speed of the response is the response. It's not only what you say, and it's not only how you say it – it's how quickly you get back to people, and how they feel when they hear it.

That's the holistic way to look at communication: Content, context, delivery and reception. Attend to all four.

*Is your anonymity alienating the people who matter most?*

JANUARY 5

## Appeal to the heard mentality.

All human beings want to feel the same:

*Valued. Needed. Wanted. Affirmed. Appreciated. Accepted. Respected.  
Recognized. Remembered. Taken seriously. Given a chance. Part of  
something that matters.*

**IN SHORT:** They want to be heard.

Not only listened to – but also heard. One comes through the ears; the other comes through the heart. And if you want to strike a chord with that mentality, here's my suggestion: Give your people the freedom to express themselves.

You'll find that by providing opportunities for constant individual expression; the overall culture of your organization becomes more human and more approachable.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Creativity is the ultimate expression of freedom.

*How do you ensure that your people know their voice matters?*

JANUARY 6

## **Appeal to the human appetite for playful experiences.**

The best part about wearing a nametag every day is how much fun I get to have with people. From jokes about memory problems to pokes about identity crisis, the gags haven't stopped in eleven years. And what I've learned from this trend is simple:

*Play draws people into your brand's orbit.*

First, by spicing up people's daily journey. If you bring your humanity to the moment, you make the moment a more pleasant passing of time. Second, play helps customers create their own game experience. That's what allows them feel adventurous and exploratory. And third, play creates an encounter in which anxiety is temporarily bracketed. In that safe space, people believe there is no reason *not* to take risks.

Who wouldn't want to join a brand like that?

No wonder the Apple store is always crowded. It's not a computer shop – it's a jungle gym. I wonder how you could turn more of your brand moments into playful moments.

*How are you letting your customers out for recess?*

JANUARY 7

## Approach ideas with deep democracy.

In the bestselling book on employee engagement, *The Carrot Principle*, authors Elton and Gostick explain:

*"Most employees don't feel they have the right to share ideas, that their ideas are valued, and that sharing their ideas is even allowed."*

There mere thought of this intellectual tragedy makes my stomach hurt. If I were running an organization, I'd make sure that good ideas had the chance to prosper, regardless of their origination. That way, people wouldn't have to assume that if they brought their idea to the top, it would die.

*This story is sick of being told.*

Instead of command and control, try participate and surrender. Challenge your leaders to set up mechanisms for soliciting input from your people. This will help them see their own fingerprint on the plan and let them know their words have weight. Then, they'll take ownership of the idea.

*When people bring you their crazy ideas, what's the first word out of your mouth?*

JANUARY 8

## Asking activates control.

**FIRST:** Ask people how they will be affected by the decision. Listen closely as they tell you how to serve them better.

**SECOND:** Ask people what they would like to see happen next. Odds are, their request will be reasonable.

**THIRD:** Ask permission for everything. It can't hurt. And it helps you avoid additional guesswork.

**FOURTH:** Ask people to do something to help facilitate the problem solving process. By putting them at the center of the decision, you not only preserve control but also enable new solutions to surface that you otherwise would have missed.

These examples of asking restore the balance. That's your goal: To give people enough control so they don't worry that their basic needs won't be met, but not so much control that they're wasting time and energy making unnecessary choices.

*Are you asking the same questions as your competitors?*



JANUARY 9

## **Assess and disclose your vulnerabilities.**

By being more open about your failures and sins, your critics will be more apt to listen to you.

Like Donald Miller. He set up “confessional booths” at college campuses across the country. According to his book, *Blue Like Jazz*, here’s how it worked: Curious students walked in, he apologized to them for being a crappy Christian, and then they were able to start an honest conversation.

Interestingly, his unexpected, reverse approach defused the situation and helped strangers open up about their own shortcomings too.

*How are you leveraging your vulnerability to earn people’s trust?*

J A N U A R Y 1 0

## Back off and let people figure it out on their own.

*Is it your place to fix this?*

That's the question you have to ask yourself. Especially when someone you love finds herself on the precipice of disaster.

Sometimes you have to back off.

Yes, it requires deep emotional restraint. Yes, it requires significant self-control.

But if you don't allow people to come to their own conclusions, make their own decisions and make their own mistakes, you fractionize their experiences and rob them of valuable learning opportunities.

What's more, prescribed solutions lack the fingerprint of the person implementing them. Which means they won't own those solutions.

**TRUTH IS:** You can't convince people to change – you can only give them more information.

May as well let them learn it on their own, otherwise your desire to fix becomes a barrier to being helpful.

Sometimes the best way to help is to get the hell out of the way.

*What happened to the last person you tried to fix?*

JANUARY 11

## Be a flow enabler.

Psychology researcher Mihály Csíkszentmihályi defines *flow* as:

*"An optimum state of intrinsic motivation where you're fully immersed, your whole being is involved and you're using your skills to the utmost."*

If you want your people to engage in that fashion, consider these suggestions:

**FIRST:** Help them identify their territory. That's the place, arena or activity where the sustenance comes from the act itself – not from the impression it makes on others.

**NEXT:** Help them recall their high performance patterns. By revisiting past victories, you allow them to see their gifts and unique capabilities more clearly.

**FINALLY:** Keep them focused on fulfilling their natural potential. This constantly inspires them with a vision of what they can contribute. Not just to an organization, but to their lives as well.

By enabling your people to enter into flow, you help them fall in love with themselves, fall in love with their process and fall in love with the outcome that results. And that's what allows them to feel enthusiastic about their work experience.

*What state of being do you inspire?*

JANUARY 12

## Be a force of calm.

Intensity is highly overrated.

In times of crisis, people turn to people who are calm. Not emotionless. Not uncommunicative. Not borderline comatose. *Calm.*

Calm is what builds trust, mitigates stress, remedies confusion and inspires followership.

**THE PROBLEM IS:** You can't really calm people down. All you can do is turn yourself into a force of calm, in the hopes that you'll infect people with the energy they need to do the same.

**THE COOL PART IS:** People who exhibit calm temperament in a troubled world are always in high demand. They get seen, get hired and get promoted. They get noticed, get remembered and get business. And they make the cut, make the day and make the room better.

**THE BEST PART IS:** You don't even have to *do* anything – you simply have to *be*.

Be a paragon of stillness. Be a balm to a troubled world. Be the calming force in times of turmoil.

People will turn to you.

*How are you making communication a relaxing experience?*

JANUARY 13

## Be a stand for other people's greatness.

If you want your people to fall in love with you, help them fall in love with themselves first.

That's what The Nametag Principle is all about:

Not being the life of the party, but bringing other people to life at the party.

Forgetting about who you know, but bragging about whose life is better because they know you.

The secret is to give people a front row seat to their own brilliance. Which is easy to do, considering most people don't realize how brilliant they are. They're simply too close to themselves to see it.

**HERE'S HOW:** Be people's permission slip to be smart.

Puncture their delusions of inadequacy. Show them their words have weight by emailing them with notes you took during your last conversation. It's reflective, respectful, revelatory and reinforcing.

Plus it's fun. And it proves that recognition isn't just an interactional gift, it's an emotional release.

*If you're so smart, how come you don't make other people feel smart?*

JANUARY 14

## Be a value-adding machine.

As much as I loathe reality television with all of my being, the sheer number of makeover shows on a typical evening of programming *does* indicate something reassuring.

*Most people want to get better.*

And I'm not talking about those meatballs on *Jersey Shores* who want calf implants. I'm talking about your people, who would relish the possibility to become more valuable. Not just in the organization – but in all areas of their lives.

*Why make it so hard for people to grow?*

*Afraid they'll get too successful and steal your job?*

They'll be gone in four years anyway. May as well show them you support their development.

**TRY THIS:** Rise above standard operating procedure and create room for people to become something different. Odds are, they're eager to reinvent their work experience anyway.

And ask what it would take to build something they recognize themselves in. By treating them as the people they want to become, you help them know who they really are.

Maybe then they'll stop watching reality television and actually work a few nights a week.

*Does your organization move its people closer to, or farther away from, where they want to be?*

JANUARY 15

## Be friends, not just amicable strangers.

Friendships at work are determined by their utility.

We are friends primarily because we are useful to each other. It's a convenience of mutual accommodation.

Unfortunately, these relationships are merely transactional.

If you want to take intimacy to a higher level, try this: Instead of sitting back and making commentary, try participating in people's lives.

You don't need to wear a nametag twenty-four hours a day – but you do need to know that a person's name is the primary installment of self-disclosure. And there's a certain level of intimacy you'll never achieve if you keep calling people, "buddy" or "big guy."

Think of it this way:

How many people did you go  
out of your way to ignore last week?

How many people went  
out of their way to ignore you last week?

Too many.

Stop focusing on transactions and start investing in real relationships.

*Do you like people for what they are or what they give?*

JANUARY 16

## Be gloriously explicit.

People are tired of being lied to.

They're done wading through the ever-rising tide of corporate hogwash. And they're forever jaded from the countless times they've been burned, duped, fooled, conned, scammed and screwed over.

**TRY THIS:** Provide information that's truthful, substantial and reliable. If you can do that – online – at least a few times a week, people won't just pay attention, they'll pay dividends.

**THE BEST PART IS:** You don't need a budget for transparency. Humbly exposing your own heart is something paid with bravery, not bucks.

Make it your mission to provide more honesty per square inch than anybody. Focus on telling the truth, honoring your truth and respecting other people's truth.

*Are you willing to live with the consequences of being honest?*



J A N U A R Y 17

## Be just as much of a rockstar when you're off.

Off stage. Off court. Off duty. Off campus. Off air. Off camera.

That's the real stage. That's the true catwalk of being a role model.

*When your applause is a distant memory, when all the reporters have gone home and when there's nobody left but you and that poor guy who drove two hours through the hail just to see you.*

Will you blow him off so you can rush back to the tour bus for the groupie party?

Will you stick around for an extra ten minutes just to make that guy's trip worthwhile?

### **Here's the reality:**

Role models stick around.

Role models remember that one person is still an audience.

Role models know how unbelievably easy it is to make people happy.

That's consistency. And it's far better than rare moments of greatness.

Practice that, and you'll get a standing ovation every time.

*How many different versions of you do people see?*

J A N U A R Y 1 8

## Be more knowable.

*Know your customer. Know your customer. Know your customer.*

Vomit.

Since day one, you've been beaten over the head with those three words. And while they're important, there's actually something bigger at stake:

*How well do your customers know you?* Not enough.

And if you think you don't have customers, look harder. *Everyone has customers.* And they need to know who you are, where you are and why you are. Otherwise your message fades into the echo chamber with the rest of the noise.

It's a question of trust, which is a function of self-disclosure. That's a basic tenet of human communication, first researched and proved by psychologists like Sidney Jourard and John Powell.

But you don't need to read books to know how trust works. In fact, that was one of the first realizations I encountered in the early days of wearing a nametag twenty-four seven: *Strangers trusted me more once they knew my name.*

Not that much more. It's not like they gave me their passwords or anything. But there was enough additional trust to be noticeable. It was weird. I didn't really do anything. Just wore a nametag that said, "Scott."

**THAT'S THE SECRET:** When trust is the only currency that counts – and it is – if your customers don't know you, you lose.

It's not about nametags. It's about making yourself more knowable.

*How well do your customers know you?*

JANUARY 19

## **Be user-friendlier.**

*How do people feel about using your system?*

Whether you write software, own a retail store, run a non-profit, counsel married couples – even if you’re trying to land a job in a down economy – *everyone has users.*

Everyone. Even if you don’t call them users. And if you can’t deliver your value with an abundance of user friendliness, you lose.

We live in an experience economy, a commoditized marketplace and hyperspeed culture.

People are no longer satisfied with good, fast and cheap – they want it perfect, now and free.

*Are you a pain in the ass to work with?*

JANUARY 20

## Be not humiliated by having others see you truly.

Immediately after sweating off seven pounds during a typical hot yoga class, I usually grab an ice-cold bottle of water and plop down on the sidewalk to recover. The air is chilly, the breeze feels delightful and the concrete is cool on my bum.

I call it a reverse sauna.

What fascinates me is David, a fellow student, who always gives me a hard time about it:

*“Scott, aren’t you worried one of your clients will spot you out here?”*

“Not really. My clients hire me because I’m a person – not a personality. And when you’re sitting on the ground half-naked, sweating, steaming and exhausted, there’s no hiding. I have no problem with anyone seeing me like this.”

**LESSON LEARNED:** Don’t back down from unguarded moments. Invite people to catch a glimpse of your naked truth, laid bare.

After all, to truly live heroically is to commit to and act from the truest version of yourself, every day.

*How much loyalty do you sacrifice because you’re terrified of exposing a part of yourself you don’t like?*

JANUARY 21

## Believe that heartshare trumps mindshare.

First, you wanted to grow marketshare.  
Then, you wanted to expand mindshare.  
Now, you need to earn something bigger.

After all, humans are emotional creatures.

Not integers. Not categories. Not demographics. *People*. And if you want to reach the ones who matter most, you need to capture heartshare.

*It's the level of emotional responsiveness your work commands.*

**THE BEST PART IS:** When you capture it, engagement ensues, followership grows and loyalty skyrockets. The emotional responsiveness your work commands becomes the chief indicator of its relevance, longevity and profitability.

In the words of Bishop Tutu, "When it's your heart, you don't need to prove to anyone that you can't live without it."

*What organ are you focusing on?*

J A N U A R Y 2 2

## **Be the example you want followed.**

There are four ways to influence people:

*Beliefs, words, actions and being.*

All are effective, but only the fourth is heroic. Mainly because it's a form of embodiment, and embodiment is the highest, truest form of communication.

You can't just set the example – you have to *be* the example.

A walking translation. A living brochure.

That's why Martin Luther King, Jr. was such a hero to so many people.

He didn't have a dream – he was the dream.

*What do people think when they hear your life speak?*

JANUARY 23

## Be their permission slip.

Not everybody is comfortable being smart.

In fact, many people require permission to bring their brilliance to the table.

Without it, their capability may never come across.

**THE GOOD NEWS IS:** There's no formula. There's no seven-step system. Giving people a front row seat to their own brilliance is a matter of looking them in the eye and saying:

*"I believe in you. I believe in your abilities. And I know that you carry something amazing with you that's yours and yours alone, so, I invite you to bring it stage center and set the world on fire."*

That's what approachable leaders do – they make it okay for people.

Okay to be smart, okay to be awesome and okay to be the most rocking version of themselves, every day.

*How can you give people permission to share what they're afraid of revealing?*

J A N U A R Y 24

## Bear the burden of the human need to belong.

That's what I never understood about immigration law.

How can a person be illegal? Last time I checked, we're all humans – which means we all belong here. Period.

If you want to bolster a sense of belonging, here are a few ideas:

- *Invite* people before they have to ask.
- *Listen* to and actually incorporate people's ideas.
- *Give* people the freedom to do what they believe is right.
- *Prove* to people their daily effort isn't another silent symphony.
- *Reflect* people's thoughts back to them in a way that they feel understood, but not mindlessly repeated.
- *Look* people in the eye and then, with a fundamentally affirmative attitude, then tell them how great their ideas are, no matter how big or small.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Belonging is the price of admission to people's hearts.

It's the very oxygen they breathe. And if you don't make a conscious effort to reinforce it in your organization, people's loyalty will vanish like a fart in a fan factory.

*How are you oxygenating the workplace?*



JANUARY 25

## Become an enabler of expression.

I gave a presentation in Charlotte a few years back. After the program, a woman came up and hugged me, in tears, for twelve seconds.

If you can believe it, what she thanked me for wasn't the content of the speech, but the fact that I was wearing jeans during the speech. Susan told me that she'd been wrestling with the option of dressing in a more casual, relaxed and unique fashion to work, but didn't have the courage to make the switch.

After seeing my presentation, Susan felt as if I'd given her permission to do so.

That's what happens when you begin to live your authentic life: You give people subtle permission that it's okay for them to do the same.

But you don't need to wear jeans – you need to express yourself freely and fully.

*How are you validating people?*

JANUARY 26

## Become a wealth of inform.

Because my specialty is approachability, I've hosted a ton of workshops for retailers.

During a recent series of presentations with a jewelry chain, I made three suggestions to help the store owners turn rare into remarkable by introducing education:

- What if, in the corner of your store, you had an entire shelf filled with bestselling books on relationships, romance and interpersonal communication? That way, while stupid husbands buy jewelry to make up for forgetting their wedding anniversary – again! – they could learn a few tips on how to better communicate with their spouses and avoid the doghouse.
- What if, once a week, you invited a local fashion consultant to come into the store? She could advise customers on wardrobe, accessories and current style trends to help them present themselves smartly, and not get fired for dressing like a streetwalker.
- What if, on the last Friday of each month, you brought in a local relationship therapist to provide tune-ups for newly engaged couples? He could offer suggestions, exercises and advice to help people make their fourth marriages work.

These suggestions work not only because they're education-based, but also because they're rare. And rare becomes remarkable. And remarkable becomes repeatable. And repeatable becomes profitable.

*What are you willing to lose on the first sale in order to guarantee a relationship?*

JANUARY 27

## Become an essentialist.

I dated a girl who once complained:

*"Sometimes I get messages and texts from you, but later see the same thing on your Facebook page. That makes me feel like I'm just another place to update your status."*

Yeeks. No wonder we broke up.

To avoid making my mistake, try this: Go beyond making people feel important, valued and needed. Instead, use every opportunity to make them feel essential. Even at the most minor touchpoints. As John Maxwell suggested in *Leadership Gold*, "Carve the time to create the memory."

The word "essential" derives from the Latin *essentia*, which means, "essence."

That's what The Nametag Principle is all about: Honoring, loving and acknowledge the essence of another person. Making sure they don't walk away feeling devalued.

Otherwise they start asking themselves, "Why do I even bother talking to him anyway?"

*How do people experience themselves in relation to you?*

JANUARY 28

## Befriend simplicity.

During a recent workshop, one of my audience members expressed concern that her writing voice sounded like that of a fifth-grader. To which I replied:

*"Perfect. According to the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Tests, fifth grade is the level most adults read it. Don't back away from perceived negatives. Your voice is perfect."*

All of the sudden, her original concern turned into an eventual advantage. In fact, several people in the audience commented how they wished their writing was that simple.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Grow younger. Remove as much complexity as you can from the way people experience you and your message.

By acting professional and talking personal, you endear people to your humanity.

And the people who endear, endure.

*Are you using words that make you sound smart but stale?*

J A N U A R Y 29

## Befriend the current.

Your people already know everything about you. They're already stalking you. And they're already sharing private, internal information about you to their friends and family.

*Why not surf those waves?*

*Why not leverage the trend by turning customers into partners?*

Create an internal system to welcome complaints – and solicit solutions – from the people you serve. Burn your suggestion box. Replace it with a question box. By being willing to learn where you suck, you and your organization will only grow stronger.

Instead of swimming against the current and risking alienating the people who matter most, this way you respect the waters. You identify the unavoidable, unstoppable swell. And you allow the current to carry you where the market is going.

That way, you can spend less time swimming and more time listening.

Gnarly, dude.

*What are you pretending not to know?*

JANUARY 30

## **Bigger isn't better – better is better.**

More often than not, better is the fruit of smaller. Here's why:

Small means you can be honest.

Small means you can delete meetings.

Small means you can respond quicker.

Small means you can reinvent in real time.

Small means you can enable greater mobility.

Small means you can foster deeper commitment.

Small means you can have the freedom to innovate.

Small means you can make decisions that matter sooner.

Small means you can implement new ideas immediately.

Small means you can make mistakes quickly and quietly.

Small means you can actually execute your brilliant ideas.

Small means you can take action without asking for permission.

Small means you can interact with customers directly and personally.

Small means you can delete useless planning of things that don't matter.

Small means you can preserve the charm and intimacy of  
connecting personally with the people who matter most.

The choice is yours: Go for greatness or go for bigness.

*Are you turning small into approachable?*

JANUARY 31

## Boldly flaunt your imperfection.

People are drawn to people who are comfortable in their own skin.

As Alan Webber wrote in *Rules of Thumb*:

*"Their sense of themselves makes it easier for us to know and trust them. It cuts down on the wasted energy and head games that too often accompany people in power who are at war with themselves – and take it out on us."*

**TRY THIS:** Become the biggest imperfectionist at your company. Learn to thrive in shades of gray. Walk the halls with an attitude of confident uncertainty. And as often as possible, ask questions you don't know the answers to.

**TRY THIS:** Don't criticize the imperfections of others. Learn to tolerate a reasonable amount of error. Otherwise the misguided desire for perfection will prevent you from doing, having and becoming what you and your people need.

*Do you trust that your people want the real you?*

**You can't  
outsource  
reputation.**



**Do you want to  
become known  
for what you're  
about to do?**



**To make a mistake  
is human; to reward  
one, divine.**



**When your  
people mess up,  
will you love  
them anyway?**

F E B R U A R Y

# Boring is bankruptcy.

A friend of mine recently purchased an online sales training course for his employees. When I asked why his salespeople liked the program so much, his answer surprised me:

*"Because it's fun. We can get good content anywhere. But the personality of this program is what makes it so cool."*

**JUST AS I SUSPECTED:** Nobody buys boring, nobody notices normal and nobody pays for average.

As my friend Rohit so eloquently suggested in his must-read book, *Personality Not Included*, "People don't sue doctors they like."

Your challenge is to figure out which unique attribute of your personality, life experience and expertise you can leverage in a remarkable way. Put values before vocation, individuality before industry and personality before profession.

After all, people buy people first.

*How are you leading with your person and following with your profession?*



F E B R U A R Y 1

## **Bolster belonging.**

Every quarter, my mastermind group gathers for a full day strategy session.

We give feedback to each other, laugh at each other, share with each other and confide in each other. *It's a beautiful thing.* And any time new members join us, we always make sure they feel like they're part of the group immediately.

In fact, I recently received an email from a new member who said, "This was the first group meeting I attended where nobody squeezed my shoulder."

That's a great reminder for anyone organization who has a membership base: *People don't want to have their head patted and told they're going to make it someday.* They just want to belong. They just want to have a home. They just want to feel like they're part of the club.

Instead of waiting to warm up to people, skip the small talk. Stop inquiring about the goddamn traffic and jump right in. And instead of asking people what their job title says, ask them what their emotional labor is dedicated to. They'll forget all about the fact that they're a first-timer.

*What do you see when you see people?*

F E B R U A R Y 2

## Bother to do things.

*To come. To call. To stay. To ask. To reply. To say hi. To clean up. To give it  
some thought. To include people. To learn their names.*

Bother to do these things. You'll discover that the beauty of caring is  
found in the basics.

Don't overlook these moments just because you think nobody  
notices. *They do.*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Keep a running list of any time you  
hear somebody start a sentence with the phrase, "You didn't even  
bother to..."

Then go out of your way to do those things.

*Do you bother to bother?*

F E B R U A R Y 3

## Breathe out the love people need.

I just finished studying a fifty-year old nursing textbook about social interaction and patient care. Fascinating read. Picked up a few key ideas on heartshare.

A good nurse treats the whole person and not just the disease entity.  
*Are you wholehearted in your support of your people?*

At small hospitals, it's easy to preserve friendliness and informality; whereas larger medical institutions make patients feel like a piece of furniture. *What do you see when you see people?*

When you first satisfy a request for a concrete item of physical assistance (bedpans, water bottles) the expression of deeper emotional need usually emerges. *Are you big enough to care about the small?*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** You don't need to be a medical professional to provide people with the oxygen their heart needs.

But you do need to confront the human condition. And you do need to thread that reality through every experience. Otherwise your interactions with the people who matter most will be as sterile and bland as the surgery suite.

*Is your organization's service environment forgettable or stealable?*

F E B R U A R Y 4

## Bring flowers, show up naked.

My favorite piece of writing advice comes from Kurt Vonnegut:

*"If you want to be a great writer, be a great date for your reader."*

It makes total sense. Think about the characteristics of an ideal date:  
*Fun. Funny. Engaging. Emotional. Interesting. Stimulating. Memorable.*  
*Doesn't involve the cops.*

Does that describe the written messages you send to people each day?

From emails to texts to tweets to memos, your goal is to be a better date. The question you have to ask yourself is: *Are you writing to sound like a writer, or to sound like you?*

Hopefully the latter. Otherwise you'll never be a great date for your reader.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Writers that sound like writers are annoying; writers that sound like human beings are applauded.

*Are your readers hoping for a good night kiss or hailing a goodbye taxi?*

## FEBRUARY 5

# Character isn't enough.

My mentor always taught me that character was the degree to which your actions mirrored your values.

Which makes character like tofu: It absorbs the flavor of whatever sauce it's cooked in.

**THE PROBLEM IS:** If you're a man of great character – but the values mirrored by your actions are dangerous or disrespectful – you lose. And the people around you lose.

Take Saddam Hussein. He was a man of great character because he walked his talk and did what he said he was going to do.

Sadly, the values he stood for were responsible for the deaths of innocent people.

The challenge as a role model is to assess the consistency *and* the content of your character.

Your people demand both.

*Will your commitment to your value lead to development or detriment?*

F E B R U A R Y 6

# Bring the funny.

Humor is more than universal language – it’s the universal catchall.

Funny arrests attention, anchors emotion and guarantees engagement.

Funny indicates listening, enables relaxing and facilitates approval.

Funny builds trust, earns credibility and fosters influence.

And when you bring the funny – not jokes, but the personal, inherent and inescapable funniness of your humanity – an entire symphony of reverberations echoes through people’s hearts.

But contrary to what all those superficial, marginally helpful books on communication, leadership, persuasion and storytelling say, you can’t “use humor” like you use hair gel.

Funny isn’t something you add. *It’s something you embody.*

**THE COOL PART IS:** Everybody is funny. Everybody has endless humor in his life. And everybody can excavate the constant and inherent hilariousness of his daily experiences.

If you aren’t funny, you aren’t listening to your life. If you want to capture people’s hearts, there’s no need ventriloquize other people’s humor and pawn it off as your own original material. The fact that you’re a human being is funny enough.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The quickest path to someone’s heart is through her funny bone.

*How quickly do people start laughing when they’re around you?*



F E B R U A R Y 7

## **Build virtuosic moments.**

Kid Rock has sold twenty three million records.

This is not an accident. In the revealing book *Music*, he shared his philosophy of life and business:

*"If it looks good, you'll see it. If it sounds good, you'll hear it. If it's marketed right, you'll buy it. But if it's real, you'll feel it."*

That's what happens when you inject soul: *People feel it*. Down to their bones. And if you want to compete in today's marketplace, that's the price of admission.

Long gone are the days of interrupting people until they die or hire you. Long gone are the days of tricking people into buying something.

Unless you're willing to loosen the tightness of your heart, you'll never cut through the clutter.

Benefits, schmenefits. Your soul is what people buy.

*How are you leading with that in the sales process?*

F E B R U A R Y 8

## **Build emotional resonance.**

We all build brands for the same reason: To close the gap between how the world is, and how we wish it was.

That's the key to The Nametag Principle: It's not enough to contend for people's attention – you also have to compete for their emotions. And if you fail to dig deep down into the human psyche to retrieve them, your brand will be ignored.

Take a tip from Tom Himp, founder of Naked Communications. In his book, *Next*, he revealed the commonalities of the world's most successful marketing movements. Here's my personal favorite:

*"Pull the heartstrings of the lowest common emotional denominator. Speak to something innate in people and broaden their awareness of a situation they assumed they were immune from."*

I immediately think of Al Gore. After losing the presidential election, he traveled the world for three years showing people that climate change was real and relevant. Not only did he win a Nobel Prize, but his presentation also launched a global movement that combined charity, multimedia and advocacy via his online social community.

All because the emotional resonance of his brand reverberated through people's hearts.

*How would your brand change if you stopped making commercials and started fighting a crusade?*

F E B R U A R Y 9

## Calm comes from experience.

Getting audited sucks.

Happened to me last year. And because it was my company's first run-in with the Internal Revenue Service, my initial reaction was anything but calm.

Fortunately, I had two mentors in my corner to keep me relaxed.

First, my accountant: Her exact words were, "This is the best thing the IRS could ever ask you to do." *Thank God.* Her silver-lining philosophy lowered my heart rate immediately.

Second, my father: His exact words were, "It's no big deal. We get audited all the time." *Whew.* As a fellow entrepreneur, his nonchalant reassurance lowered my blood pressure immediately.

If you want to calm people, use whatever relevant experience you have. Don't over-identify. Don't bring it back to you. And don't pretend to be something you're not.

Just make sure people undergoing times of turmoil can turn to you – someone who's been there before – and think to themselves, "I am not alone."

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** There's nothing more calming than communicating your mutual humanity.

*Are you positioned as someone who remains unreasonably peaceful in times of chaos?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 0

## **Capitalize on the momentum.**

Big companies are quick to think, but small companies are quick to act.

That's the best part about keeping your size down: *Speed.*

No waiting for legal to clear a customer service complaint. No standing by for approval before tweeting. No lingering three days for human resources to sign off on your blog post. No spending a year in meetings trying to calculate earning potential and assess how to mitigate risk.

You just go. You just try things.

And you execute with all your might – not all your policies.

*How impatient are you willing to be?*

FEBRUARY 11

## Care about people's experience when they're around you.

Being approachable isn't just about how people experience you; it's how they experience themselves in relation to you.

That's how to inject soul: Give people something they didn't know they wanted. By taking them places they didn't expect to go, you send them on mental journeys from which they never full return. In the immortal words of comedian George Carlin:

*"Even if they didn't want go to there in the first place, once they arrive, they'll be glad you took them there."*

That's the secret nobody bothers to tell you: You're not in business to provide a service – you're in business to center on and become known for a unique way of interacting with the world.

Maybe it's the fastest. Maybe it's the friendliest. Maybe it's the funniest. Doesn't matter. As long as you repeatedly articulate your "-est," injecting soul will be a natural byproduct.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Every organization interacts with people – but not all of them brand it as their inherent, unique superiority.

*How could you speak to your market in a way they're never been spoken to before?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 2

## Care for the right reasons.

Some people spend an awful lot of time, money and energy trying to convince others that they care.

Which, technically, is a form of caring.

My question is: *Why are they caring?*

Because it's actually important to them, or because they know it makes other people feel good? Because it's truly an expression of their feelings, or because they have an agenda attached?

I'm not trying to be cynical – just aggressively skeptical.

Personally, I'd rather you not care than care falsely. Then at least you'd be telling me the truth, as opposed to sending me one of those disturbing greeting cards with my own picture on the cover that you "customized" with that hackneyed cursive font so I would think you actually sat down by candle light and used an fountain pen to tell me how much you cared, when what you *really* care about is recruiting me into the downline of your shady ass multi-level marketing company.

*Do you really care, or just care about looking like you care so you can meet your recruitment quota?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 3

## **Caring does work, though.**

But not as a technique.

You can't bastardize caring into a strategy. There's no formula. There's no handbook. There's no seven-step system. It's not about doing it the right way – it's more about your *willingness* to care, your *awareness* of caring, and the *consistency* with which you do care.

Consider these two ideas:

*People who feel unnecessary won't give you their attention.* You have to make them feel essential. Not just important, valued, special and heard – but essential.

*People won't respond to a voice that doesn't care.* Especially if you only care about looking like you care. That doesn't count. If your motivations for spreading the gospel are misguided, something isn't better than nothing.

In fact, nothing might be better than anything. Caring has a smell, and people know when it's missing.

*Will you dare to care?*

FEBRUARY 14

# Bring your heart.

Love is not a combination lock.

You don't need a holiday to tell people that they're part of your heart.

*Whose valentine are you?*



F E B R U A R Y 1 5

## Check your motivation.

Some people wear their heart on their sleeve – I wear my humanity on my chest.

That's the other reality about the nametag: I'm not doing it to make money, I'm doing it to make a point. Had I been monetarily focused from the get go, I think the intention would have stained the mission, and the idea never would have lasted.

You have to give yourself away.

But:

- If the only reason you give yourself away is to send a signal to the world that you did it, it's probably not worth doing.
- If the only reason you give yourself away is to trick people into congratulating you on your selflessness, it's probably not worth doing.
- If the only reason you give yourself away is because you know it looks good on your resume, it's probably not worth doing.

These types of motivations smack of self-righteousness and spoil the spirit of the process.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Take the time to accurately define why you want to give yourself away.

Otherwise your recipients are likely to return to sender.

*What motivation drives the desire to give yourself away?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 6

## Choose being real over being right.

Your people would much rather have leaders who are real all the time, not right all the time.

If they know you're willing to admit your ignorance, maybe they'd be more willing to volunteer information about what's really going on in the organization.

I'm reminded of what Southwest Airlines president Herb Keller once said:

*"If you create an environment where people truly participate, you don't need control."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Instead of asking people to answer questions, invite them to question answers. Don't worry. Developing a predisposition to compromise doesn't make you weak or small, it makes you human and malleable. It also makes you more likable and less of a pain in the ass to work with.

Be right less.

*Will terminal certainty eat your organization alive?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 7

## Choose the route of transparency.

Regardless of your professional situation, you're competing on sensibility. Always.

Especially when customer and employee trust is at an all-time low.

That's why human-centered companies win: They have a high capacity for caring. A perpetual smile on their organizational face. And their sustained sense of vulnerability draws in customers and employees alike.

The challenge is combining the emotive dimension with operational efficiency. After all: What's the point of strengthening your gentleness if there's no return on your emotional investment?

In Barbara Pagano's *The Transparency Edge*, she shares an assessment survey of five thousand employees. Shockingly, only twenty-six percent of them were highly satisfied with their leader's performance in communicating in a direct and straightforward manner.

That's one quarter of the entire workforce.

*Think they're fully engaged?*

I wonder how many people you're losing by not choosing the route of transparency.

**LET ME ASK YA THIS:** Your brand's soul is what engages people. Lead with it.

*How can you constantly humanize the experience people have of you?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 8

## Clarify what support people can count on.

Give people a continuous flow of support in the best way you can.

Two questions I ask to clarify what kind of help people can count on:

- “What’s the best way I can support you?”
- “How can I help you the most, right now?”

Then, once people start to explain their needs, you can tailor your support accordingly:

*“Alright, David. Sounds like you need a night out with a friend who will listen. I’m slammed Monday and Tuesday, but you can count on me for either Wednesday or Friday. Which works best?”*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Clarity evaporates fear. Stay with people. Even when they desert themselves.

*Are you using a clear, sharp and committed voice to be heard by the people who matter?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 9

## **Clarify your definition.**

I'm not the authority on soul.

*That would be James Brown.*

But I do think it's important that each of us consider what it means to inject it into our work. Here's my philosophy, as a writer, performer, artist and entrepreneur:

To inject soul is to own your gift. To inject soul is to deploy intense humanity. To inject soul is to exhibit naked personhood. To inject soul is to stay in touch with your own story. To inject soul is to enable a near life experience. To inject soul is to widen the boundaries of your being. To inject soul is to create moments of perfect symmetry. And to inject soul is to show people what's under your fingernails.

*What's your definition?*

No matter how you define it, when you inject soul, you are impossible not to watch. When you inject soul, you become a voice worth listening to. When you inject soul, you make people who aren't your customers wish they were. And when you inject soul, you earn a permanent spot in people's hearts.

Sing it loud.

*What do you bring to your work that nobody else in your industry can touch?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 0

# **Come out swinging and you'll be perceived as a threat.**

Pitchers are afraid of Albert Pujols.

Is it because of his average? His on-base percentage? Or that he's the most dominant hitter baseball has seen in years?

Nope. Pitchers are scared of Pujols because of one foundational attribute of his ability: *He comes out swinging.*

He's not looking for a walk. He's not trying to force a balk or a wild pitch. He's not hoping to lean into an inside curve, take one for the team and load the bases.

He's focusing that laser vision of his. That way, if a ball comes anywhere near his wheelhouse, he'll be ready to knock the cover off it. Robert Redford style.

These things make Albert a threat. Which is great for the Cardinals. But it's just the opposite when you're trying to recruit someone.

When you sit down with people, do you threaten them by coming out swinging? Or do you ease into the recruitment-heavy part of the conversation only after you've gauged receptivity?

As much as it pains me to say it: Don't be like Albert. Don't get right down to business.

*How long are you willing to wait before launching into your recruitment pitch?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 1

## Communicate the need.

All love wants is to be believed in. And all people need is to feel needed.

I experienced this truth firsthand several years ago. Two conversations, two different people. Both of whom I was recruiting for my professional organization; and both to whom I made the exact same remark:

*"Look, we need you. Our current membership is filled with too many people who don't matter and don't belong – but you do."*

It just sort of came out. With all the sincerity and honesty I could muster, that's what I said. And it must have struck a nerve, because both people were speechless.

My organization's need was communicated, and their human need to feel needed was confronted.

That's what happens when you acknowledge people's unique contribution and show them that you're conscious of their capability: You inspire them with a vision of what they can contribute. And it all starts by speaking to their need to be acknowledged, need to feel heard, need to share, need for answers and their need to be included.

That's what drives people's decisions: When you speak straight to the heart of human experience.

*Are you paying careful attention to the things people care about?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 2

# **Communicate yourself to the world.**

Branding is finished.

Not as an idea, but as a word.

I don't care what industry you work in. It's not about branding – it's about identity. The best and highest version of yourself. And it's not about company name – it's about constitutional knowledge. The non-negotiable values and decision-making mechanisms that drive your daily world.

That's what customers want to know: *Why you are, who you are and who you aren't.*

And if you're not communicating that to them with consistency, intimacy, honesty and immediacy, your customers will pick someone else.

*What are you using to make your identity more knowable?*



F E B R U A R Y 2 3

## Confidently understand why you are.

There's no use attracting a massive backing if you have no idea why you're trying to move forward.

Before you start building your audience, ask yourself why you want to build it.

And I'm not talking about superficial whys like "making money," "adding value" and "sharing your message."

That's not why you build an audience.

You build an audience to regift your talents. You build an audience because your heart throbs for expression. You build an audience to pay homage to the voices that shaped you. You build an audience because you're pissed off about something. You build an audience because your heart tells you to, your soul requires you to and because God asks you to. You build an audience because it makes life worth living. And you build an audience because you have a responsibility to matter.

Sink inside yourself and touch the center of your why. Because the deeper you question yourself, the easier it will be to begin.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** If your work has no sense of why, the bleachers are going to collapse under the weight of your audience.

*Why are you?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 4

## Compassionately take people's hiding places away from them.

I've been fortunate enough to have a galaxy of mentors.

Every time we get together, they dive into my sea of unspoken emotional needs. And I always thank them for inspiring me to plunge into the depths I know I need to address.

If you want to experiment with this strategy, try this: *Bore into people's statements.*

See what they're made of. Call bullshit proactively, yet respectfully with challenge lines like, "According to whom?" "Since when?" and "That's not the question I asked."

By doing so, you inspire them to motivate themselves for several reasons: First, you show that you forgive their illusions – but refuse to let them forget them. Second, you close the gap between their sense to know and their strength to do. Finally, you reach into people's hearts and touch them where they live.

**ONE CAVEAT:** If you plan to take people's hiding places away from them, never do so at the expense of respect. It's cool to call people out on the carpet, but not to the extent that you give them rug burn.

Inspiration is a symphony conducted in the spirit of love and the key of respect.

*Are you letting people get away with not having to face something again?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 5

## Confront the engagement reality.

Nobody shows up disengaged.

If they did, you never would have brought them on them in the first place.

**HERE'S THE REALITY:** People engage when the fruits of their engagement become transportable assets. People engage when they know they'll become better in all areas of their life – not just beef up the bottom line. People engage when their work isn't a set of tasks, but an opportunity to build a platform that pushes them to something bigger. People engage when they know that they can recoup their discretionary effort when they leave, as opposed to surrendering years of emotional labor to the organization.

People become disengaged over time.

Which means, at some point between the day they started – and the day you caught them taking a nap under their desk in the middle of the day – something broke.

*Will you fix it?*

FEBRUARY 26

## Consciously pursue the unexpected.

There's a reason your people aren't being reached:

*Every other message they receive during the day is just another boring, overextended piece of corporate communication they delete immediately, or, at best, peruse remorsefully.*

Fortunately, you have an opportunity to positively break people's patterns. To respectfully violate their expectations. And to creatively upset their schemas. All you have to do is ask:

*"On a scale of one to ten, how dramatically different is this message from the same recycled drivel people have already chosen to tune out?"*

If you score less than a five, change it.

*Is your message nothing but an unremarkable skin on an outdated skeleton?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 7

## Consider people's unique definitions of engagement.

You don't need to read another book on employee engagement – you need to get your ass out of the office and ask people what engagement feels like to them.

Not what they think engagement is – but what engagement *feels like*.

Use every listening post you can find. From online to offline, from electronic to human, from monitoring tweet streams to walking the floors, whatever gives you insight into how your employees operate is a worthwhile endeavor.

And once you're there, listen deeply. Listen to the facts along with what the facts point to. And listen for the right reasons, too. Not just to flip the answers for your own uses. Not just to boost your ego. And not just to confirm what you already think.

*Listen to learn how your people truly engage.*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The longer you allow organizational fears to prevent you from pursuing the truth about the people who work there, the more shocked you're going to be when they suddenly jet out the door.

*Are you listening to the sound of your own voice or the music of your employee's voice?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 8

## **Consistency affects everyone you encounter.**

You are on display. You are the result of your own pattern integrity. And your purpose as a leader isn't a specific task – it's the way you live your life.

My suggestion: Make your life a constant demonstration. Run a sequence of consistent, similar actions that reinforce to people, "Wow, this gal eats her own dog food."

After all, everything's a performance and everybody's watching. May as well play the character you know best and don't have to memorize lines for.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** There's nothing more influential than a living, breathing example.

*Are your organization's leaders leading or lip servicing?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 9

## Consistency is far better than rare moments of greatness.

Did you know that eighty percent of divorce attorneys reported a spike in the number of cases that use social media for evidence of cheating? According to a study by the American Association of Matrimonial Lawyers:

*"Flirty messages and photographs are increasingly being cited as proof of unreasonable behavior or irreconcilable difference."*

This isn't a computer problem – it's a character problem.

The longer you keep lying to the person you're supposed to be committed to, the more it's going to show – not just on your Facebook page – but on your face. And if you're a cheat, your body will always tell the truth.

If you plan to live a dishonest life offline, there's going to be a huge echo online. And your digital footprint will slip on the technological banana peel to destroy the most important thing in your life.

Don't scapegoat your dishonesty on social media – blame it on social stupidity.

*Is your online performance equal to your offline reality?*

**Meet a  
closed heart  
with kindness.**



**Are you afraid  
to extend your  
heart to people  
who disagree  
with you?**



**You can't outsource  
personality. If you  
don't have time to  
do your own social  
media updates, you  
shouldn't be on it.**



**Are you paying  
strangers to  
tweet for you?**

MARCH

# Constantly reeducate your market.

Good brands evolve, upgrade and mature; but great brands actively share the highlights of that process with their customers. Otherwise people will have a limited understanding of the value you deliver. And it will become increasingly hard for them to be your advocates.

Remind people of three things. First, what you do: That is, your current positioning to the marketplace. Second, what you're doing: That is, your current projects and clients in the marketplace. And third, what you've done: That is, your past work and successes thereof.

This spectrum eliminates the question of, "Should we hire these guys?" and focuses on the solution, "How should we use these guys?" That's a position of diversity and resourcefulness that makes you more buyable and more revisitable.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Just because someone did business with you five years ago doesn't mean they know who, what, where and why you are today.

*How many different ways can people say yes to you?*



MARCH 1

## **Contribution can't be a mere blip on people's radar.**

It has to become a legitimate, long-term trend. That's what makes people engage: When their job makes use of their talent.

The challenge is, not everybody is comfortable being smart. Some people need permission to bring their brilliance to the table. And as their leader, your mission is to create a safe place where individual personality and creativity can shine.

To do so, ask each person the following question:

*"What personal skills are you currently not using in your job?"*

That way, nobody spends her life at a second-hand task.

If you want people to engage, the work they do has to make a significant contribution to something they value.

*Do you provide opportunities to do meaningful work that helps others?*

MARCH 2

## **Convince people that you're doing something important.**

It's not enough to help people dream the same dream as you.

*You also have to educate them on why they should sell it for you.*

The secret, writes Guy Kawasaki in *Selling the Dream*, is to enable as many people as possible to touch, feel and experience your cause.

Literally. If you have to physically run a live demo in public, do it. If you have to build a prototype that paints a detailed picture of the dream's desired future, do it. And if you have to hire a camera crew to follow you around for a week so you can produce a sixty-second promo video to publish on your digital platform, do it.

That's how you go beyond radical honesty and enter into the territory of ridiculous transparency: By being gloriously explicit. By punching people in the face with your dream and making no qualms about how the world will be a better place once it comes true.

*How are you making it easy for people to go with your flow?*

MARCH 3

# Courageously break stupid rules.

Especially the ones that nobody had the right to create or enforce in the first place.

In so doing, three things happen.

**FIRST:** You remind people that most rules aren't really rules – they're devices deployed to control you. To keep you average. To preserve the status quo.

**SECOND:** The willingness to break stupid rules demonstrates the willingness to think for yourself. And in a world where most people delegate the task of thinking to the mediocre masses, doing so is an act of heroism in itself.

**THIRD:** Being a rule breaker pulls people out of their petty preoccupations. It helps them overcome physical and psychological barriers that once stood between them and their goals.

Ultimately, it makes them look in the rear-view mirror of their life and think, "Really? That's it? That's what I've been scared of this whole time? Psht!"

*What stupid rules badly need to be broken?*

MARCH 4

## **Create a setting in which everyone's gifts can flourish.**

Followable leaders are the ones who are confident enough to surround themselves by strong teammates and not be intimidated by their strengths.

On the other hand, when you disable people from exercising their gifts, they stop operating out of their core. And the work they do becomes stale, mediocre and unengaging.

Listen for greatness to show up in each person. Then, attend to whatever surfaces with deep democracy. And by digesting each other's differences, and acknowledging the diversity of consciousness, you will inspire them to remain engaged.

That's what my mentors taught me – you have to give people permission to be. You have to allow them to publicly display their successes.

*How are you meeting the most critical needs of your people?*

MARCH 5

## Create a spirit of openness.

People need a place where they can say what's really on their minds.

Not just their thoughts, but also their feelings. That's the input that matters most.

After all, being a leader is *less* about having the right ideas and *more* about being the right person.

Otherwise you morph into Dilbert's pointy haired boss, who would thoroughly listen to your input, thank you for your suggestions, and then do exactly what he planned all along.

That's the very downfall of countless organizations: Their so-called "culture of openness" is superficially stated, not consistently practiced.

If you want to earn a standing ovation from your internal audience, give voice to people's feelings.

The last thing your department needs is another staff meeting just so people can (not) say what's on their minds.

*What type of communication climate do you create around you?*

MARCH 6

## Create an atmosphere of approachability.

Too many organizations are trapped in outdated hierarchical patterns of mistrust.

Their leaders ignore people's words, shrug off their suggestions or, worse yet, hijack the conversations and turn them into one-way updates. And this leaves people hesitant to speak up for fear of being labeled as a squeaky wheel.

*Not exactly an approachable environment.*

If you want to inspire deeper commitment, try this:

When people walk in the room, create a loving space where they feel comfortable sharing. When people are gathered around, ask them to contribute if they see something you don't see. When people ask for feedback, you reflect their thoughts back to them in a way that makes them feel understood, not mindlessly repeated. And when people bring you their ideas, respond with a fundamentally affirmative attitude by looking them in the eye and telling them how great their ideas are – no matter how big or small.

When trust and belonging become the very oxygen your people breathe, the communication process shifts. For better and for always.

*How will you create a workplace that encourages the generation and execution of its best ideas?*



MARCH 7

## Create the right atmosphere.

I recently read an article in *The Onion* that painted a frighteningly accurate picture of employee disengagement and dissatisfaction. The headline was, “No Machine Can Do My Job As Resentfully As I Can.” It portrayed an embittered office employee who spent most of his days despising and bemoaning his miserable lot:

*“I seethe with the unbearable knowledge that this will be my sole livelihood until the day I die. Struggling to suppress the repulsion and loathing within, I drink before his morning shift just to get through the day, as I am the living, breathing sum of life’s screw-ups, heartbreaks, and regrets; a deeply self-hating man who loathes every second of his working life. And after working at this unventilated shit-prison twelve hours a day for nearly twenty-five years, I have developed no skills other than that of silently counting down the minutes of each workday while cursing my misfortune.”*

Extreme? Yes.

Relatable to the majority of the workforce? *Big yes.*

Contrary to popular conditioning, it is possible to create an environment where humanity, creativity and engagement can flourish.

Work doesn’t have to be legalized torture.

*Is yours?*

MARCH 8

## Cultivate a gratitude practice.

Leah Dieterich's mother always told her to write thank you notes.

So, she does. To everything.

Her blog, [www.thxthxthx.com](http://www.thxthxthx.com), is her daily exercise in gratitude because there's always something to be thankful for. From the important things like "Songs You're Embarrassed to Like," and "Heavy Eyelids that Tell You When You Need to Sleep," to friends and family, love and loneliness, light and darkness, Leah sets out to acknowledge them all.

**THAT'S THE SECRET:** Gratitude isn't a thing you do – it's a virtue you embody.

In the same way that you cultivate a meditation practice, a writing practice or a yoga practice, you also need a gratitude practice.

Because no holiday comes once a year. You don't need a calendar to tell you when to care. Everyday is Thanksgiving. And if you're only grateful for one month out of the year, you missed the point.

Make gratitude like exercise – Something you just do, everyday.

People will notice.

*Have you made giving thanks a non-negotiable?*

MARCH 9

## Curators aren't just for museums.

In an increasingly commoditized marketplace, service is the key differentiator. Competing on price, performance, and features – aka, pure economic value – isn't enough anymore.

Polly Labarre, columnist for *The Huffington Post*, wrote a classic piece on this very topic.

*"Sure, customers love a good deal, but what they love even more is feeling like they've discovered something new. Increasingly, the best brands are waking up to the fact that the way to establish an enduring connection with customers is not to push their own stuff, but to act as a curator; a host to a whole universe of stuff they think will click with people based on shared values."*

Introduce your customers to new things. Help them feel more connected to the front edge of culture.

They'll forget all about the fact that you sell a commodity.

*What value do you provide beyond low price and high quality?*

MARCH 10

## Customers will tell you how to serve them.

In a recent interview with *FastCompany*, Steve Jobs summarized Apple's innovation strategy in four words:

*Convert feedback into inspiration.*

This works. I had the perfect opportunity to execute his suggestion with one of my readers, Dawn. She emailed me with deep concern about an unsuccessful job search:

*"I'm feeling chewed up and spit out. Being jobless is heartbreaking. Where do I get the inner fortitude to get up one more day and try again?"*

Instead of giving her off-the-cuff advice, I spent the next week writing this article:

*"How to Find the Inner Fortitude to Get Up One More Day and Try Again, Even When the World Kicks You in the Crotch with a Golf Shoe."*

To my delight, the blog post was featured on NPR the day it was published.

Thx thx thx!

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Your customers won't just teach you how to stay relevant – they'll tell you how to sell to them effectively.

*Is what you're doing important to the customer, or does it just make you feel better?*

MARCH 11

# Dare to be dumm.

You can't avoid the appearance of ignorance forever.

And it takes tremendous courage and humility to stand up in the middle of a meeting and say, "Does anyone else smell that?" or "Am I the only one, or is this confusing to you guys too?"

That's what approachable, engaging people do: They speak truth to people's hearts. And if you want to do so, keep your eye out for three patterns:

- *Ideas that are simply too convenient to be killed.* Grab a pistol and be the one to speak up. Otherwise nothing will ever change.
- *Problems are so simple and familiar that they become hidden.* Pull them out from behind the mystery curtain and expose them to the world.
- *People who are too comfortable to feel the weight of their own stupidity.* Your job is to find evidence of burden wherever you can.

You're not here to be a downer, but you don't want to put lipstick on the truth.

The goal is to engage and to become a delightful disturbance. To snap open people's eyes, strike at the very root and translate floating abstractions into concrete realities.

*Are you ignoring the elephant in the room, talking about the elephant in the room, or jumping on its back and teaching it how to moonwalk?*

M A R C H 1 2

## Decide how you want to leave people.

Approachability is about how people experience themselves in relation to you.

And while you can't control people's emotions – outside of manipulation, punishment and coercion – what you can do is be more intentional in how you walk away from them.

Want to leave people heard?  
*Reflect their reality by taking notes.*

Want to leave people laughing?  
*Help them evoke the humor in their own lives.*

Want to leave people inspired?  
*Enable them to give birth to their own realizations.*

Your challenge is twofold:

**FIRST:** To identify the baseline emotion you want to leave people with.

**SECOND:** To remind yourself of that emotion on a daily basis.

Because it's not what you know, it's whose life is better because they know you.

*When you walk out of a room how does it change?*

MARCH 13

## Decide where you draw the line.

It's possible to be too approachable.

Sometimes you don't have to help people shop.

Sometimes you don't have to use the  
customer's name seventeen times.

Sometimes you don't have to do anything  
but drop off a bottle of water and go away.

Because the last thing you want to do is violate somebody's personal boundaries. That's a mistake too many organizations make: Not everyone who walks in the door wants an unforgettable experience.

From customers to guests to employees to volunteers, don't be afraid to back off. Instead of over-serving them, try asking people how much interaction they prefer. Ask questions like, "How often would you like me to communicate with you?" and "What method of communication do you prefer most?"

Otherwise, over-personalization becomes an invasion of privacy.

And by giving people too much attention, they feel smothered and intruded upon.

Check please.

*Where are you over-communicating?*

MARCH 14

## Deeper mindfulness plus deliberate effort.

In any relationship, there's a natural complacency that people gravitate toward.

After a certain period of time, you just get comfortable with your rhythms. You let yourself go. And you figure it's just easier to order pizza and watch a movie instead of taking the time to cook dinner and have a real conversation about something important.

**THE PROBLEM IS:** Each of those micro moments of complacency adds up. And before you know it, your relationship has degraded into a predictable, undersexed stalemate that fails to give itself the attention and care it so desperately needs.

I understand the chase can't last forever. But that doesn't give you permission to undercut each other's relational ambition.

**THE GOOD NEWS IS:** You can still be a force in people's lives without forcing yourself in people's lives. As my parents like to remind me, "The secret to a long, healthy marriage is to never get lazy with each other."

Next time you say to yourself, "I don't want to bother her with this minor issue," share it anyway. Share for no reason other than to remind people that they're worth sharing to.

By being radically honest when most people would say nothing, you create an act of caring in a moment of inconvenience.

*Do you bother to bother?*



MARCH 15

## Delete the de-motivators.

If you want to create the space for people to tap into their natural, internal motivation, you have to first consider what de-motivates people. A few examples come to mind:

*Delivering constant criticism, raising your voice, magnifying their mistakes, exhibiting lack of trust, prohibiting any shred of playfulness, making people feel powerless, refusing to recognize success and compensating less for working more.*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Make your own list. Get into the minds of your employees, customers, members, students, children or whomever you hope to inspire.

Next, make a list of their twenty biggest de-motivators. Hell, ask them if you have to. Finally, keep this list posted above your computer. Look at it every day.

By counter-intuitively defining the whitespace around your people's motivation, you'll be able to delete the barriers and fill them with inspiration of the opposite.

*What is the one comment you could make that would absolutely freeze any spark of action?*

MARCH 16

## **Demonstrate interest in the person, not the potential.**

While recruiting, speak to someone as a person.

Not as a position. Not as a prospect. Not as a butt in the seat. Not as a possible board member. Not as a statistic. And not as a number on your recruiting quota so you can attend next year's national conference for half price.

People buy people first.

Successful recruitment is a natural byproduct of speaking to people with an abundance of compassion and an absence of compartmentalization.

*Is that what you're selling?*

MARCH 17

## Design is your friend.

Instead of spewing endless commodities that get trashed after one functional use, joinable brands turn their engagement tools into cool, keepable design items. They create marketing that people seek out and are thankful for.

Take my client, Dennis. He works for the Division of Waste Management in Hamilton, Ontario. And as a way to educate, engage and entertain the residents, his team put together a pocket-sized book of cartoons on recycling and composting.

It's lovable, it's helpful and it's a value-driven promotional tool to build awareness around his organization's brand. Not to mention, the book makes waste management cool.

All because Dennis knew: Design isn't just about aesthetics – it's about utility. And customers always engage when you give them something useful.

On the other hand, the moment you stop adding value to people's lives is the moment your brand starts losing momentum.

People don't need another free pen. They need something beautiful they can play with, show off to their friends and keep in the office for the next five years.

*How quickly is your marketing stored in people's circular file cabinets?*

MARCH 18

## **Dig for documentation.**

Any time one of my colleagues says something even remotely interesting, intelligent or creative, I always offer the same response:

*"That's terrific – have you written about that yet?"*

The goal of this response is to honor people's words with an immediate foundation of affirmation, in the hopes that external validation from someone they trust will inspire them to flesh out their thoughts in greater detail.

When you let people know that their words have weight often enough, eventually enough evidence will accumulate to convince them of their brilliance.

*When people bring you their ideas, are you fundamentally affirmative?*

MARCH 19

## **Disarm the immediate preoccupation.**

Instead of trying to convince people to join you, understand and neutralize their resistance.

Let's say you're having lunch with a few people who used to be affiliated with your organization, but have since dissociated.

*First, remind yourself that alienated people remember.* People rarely forget how you treated them the last time. And if you know you're starting with a negative balance with people, address that issue immediately. Ask them what would bring them back.

*Second, explain why you're worthy of someone's time.* People always make time for what's important to them. And they're ruthless about their time, and are slow to forgive if you waste it on a consistent basis.

Ride that elephant.

*How are you preparing yourself to overcome people's existing concerns about the value of joining you?*

MARCH 20

## Discover someone's desired way to contribute.

People join to give back, to add value to others and help grow the organization.

The trick is, not everyone contributes the same way.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Instead of laying a guilt trip on potential members for not devoting every waking moment of their life to your organization, try asking them how they'd like to contribute.

For example, I despise meetings. They are the bane of my existence. And I refuse to waste my billable time sitting around a table with seven people trying to figure out whose house the Christmas party is going to be held at this year.

On the other hand, I love to write. Actually, that's an understatement: Writing isn't my occupation – it's my religion. And any time I've taken a volunteer position, I've always offered my pen as the principal instrument of my contribution.

Need a newsletter article? Need a blog post? Need a welcome letter to new members? No problem. I'm your guy.

Your challenge is to dive into the lives of the people around. To join them by discovering and honoring their desired way to contribute.

Do so, and you'll be surprised what they're willing to give to your organization.

*How are you helping people help you?*

MARCH 21

## Ditch the pomp.

Speak with a casual voice.

That's how you make communication between employees and customers unexpectedly personal.

Otherwise, if you're too busy defending past decisions, massaging executive egos and destroying evidence of your shortcomings, you'll never carve out the time to be human.

And that's when your people stop listening to you.

**THINK OF IT THIS WAY:** If clothing conveys class, hierarchy and status in your office, your organization is too big.

*Are your messages sending people scurrying for dictionaries?*

MARCH 22

## Do some quick math.

Take a look at the sum total of your customer experience.

If you judge it to be worth more than the amount of money it would take to remedy a simple problem that slightly bends the rules – but amazes the customer – do it.

Better to beg for forgiveness than ask for permission.

Besides, what's your boss going to say?

*"Ginsberg! What the hell were you thinking? You mean to tell me you paid five dollars out of your own wallet just to make that customer instantly happy? Why didn't you instruct him to wait at the front desk, call me first, fill out an incident form, run the paperwork past human resources and solve the problem seventeen minutes later like we taught you in our sterile, unrealistic orientation program four years ago?"*

That's called taking ownership of the problem.

More companies need to trust their employees to do so.

*How creative are you allowing your frontline staff to get with their customer service solving approaches?*



MARCH 23

## Don't dismiss your organizational heritage.

To set the stage for commitment, the leaders of your organization need to help the people connect their actions to a larger story. Otherwise employees will continue to wonder if their effort is worth the effort.

Storytelling is the primary medium for preserving that heritage.

The only problem is, company leaders usually confuse “knowing the company story” with “memorizing tired, flat language on laminated mission cards.”

What matters is that every employee  
absorbs the organizational why.

What matters is that every employee  
freely talks about company roots.

Otherwise emotional attachment remains remarkably low.

And it becomes harder and harder for people's work to invoke a sense of gratification in their company history.

*When was the last time your waiter at Olive Garden spent ten minutes telling your table about the origins of authentic Italian food?*

MARCH 24

## Don't impose your own direction.

I guarantee that you currently have a dear friend whose spouse, significant other or partner is someone you'd like to see walk into a snake pit wearing a rat skin bodysuit.

I know. It's painful to watch someone you love have no idea that person they've dedicated their life to is completely wrong for them.

And not just your opinion – a literal mismatch from hell.

But it's not your place to say that. I don't care how close you are to a person – you can't try to convince someone to fall out of love. The power of the heart is simply too substantial. You will lose that battle.

Even if you did sit your best friend down and say, "Look, Marie, I need to tell you, I'm pretty sure your boyfriend is a serial murderer."

Do you think she would listen?

No. She'd say you're crazy. She'd say you don't really know him. And she'd say his machete collection is for hunting purposes only.

**LOOK:** Sometimes people aren't ready to hear things yet. And if you make the mistake of crossing that line before their ears are tuned into the right frequency, you run the risk of shutting them down permanently. And that's when people really get hurt.

The best thing you can do is make observations. No opinions. No suggestions. Just things you notice. And you need to present those things in a respectful, curious and confidential manner – in the hopes that the people you love will eventually realize that dating a convicted killer isn't the healthiest relationship decision.

*Are you willing to be an objective observer?*

MARCH 25

## Don't inform – form.

Surprise creates anxiety in the air, which is the best time to give someone new ideas.

Anything that makes people pause, consider your ideas and become a little more conscious –is always worth the time.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Ask people to remember a time in their life when they said, “I’d never do that!” Then ask them to tell you the story about when they did it.

You’ll find people to be significantly more receptive to your ideas once they’ve just proven to themselves that they’re clearly willing to explore new things.

*How could you make the whole song a chorus?*

MARCH 26

## Don't force your brand into a box.

Here's the problem with our hyperspeed, instant gratification culture: People who fail to summarize their brand's uniqueness in three seconds are shunned.

Sadly, there's all this social pressure to know how to articulate your value in a concise, intriguing and relevant manner. As if companies who didn't were the scum of the marketplace.

Excuse me, but branding isn't that simple. First of all, the term "branding" is finished. This is about identity. This is about bringing your humanity to the moment. Branding is for cattle. Secondly, while positioning statements are fun to come up with – and make you feel good about your value when they're staring back at you from your shiny new website – branding isn't some empty slogan you knock out on a Tuesday afternoon with your mastermind group.

Branding takes time. *Years*. And yours will evolve, just like your life evolves. Hell, mine took five years to crystallize, only to be upgraded two years later.

If you can summarize the entire scope of value that you, as a human being, deliver – in five words – then you're doing your customers a massive disservice.

Walt Whitman was right: *You are large. You contain multitudes.* And if you want people to join you, you have to peel the branding onion slowly. Otherwise, limiting your brand to some arbitrary, one-sentence overarching statement will limit its ability to grow into something better.

A forced brand is a forgotten one.

*Have you ever read Apple's positioning statement?*

MARCH 27

## **Don't get over yourself – stay over yourself.**

Your organization is just one part of your people's total life mosaic, not the sole focus.

Accept this. Stop operating out of the old school model that loyalty is an entitlement. It's not. You have to earn it and re-earn it daily.

Instead, start adjusting your company to the rhythm of its constituents. And understand that work isn't the only determining factor in how your people live their lives.

Especially younger generations. If you want them to engage, you have to show them that you respect their commitments outside of the organization.

That's part of the process of staying over yourself: Focusing less on getting people to join you and focusing more on trying to join them first.

Who knows? Maybe your people would engage more if they felt their lives were participated in, too.

*Are you fitting people into your nice little plan or celebrating how you fit into their lives?*

MARCH 28

## Don't let emotions take a backseat.

Humans are problem-solving creatures.

And naturally, our default response to a customer issue is to launch right into problem solving mode.

But while searching for an immediate solution is a smart move for demonstrating a sense of urgency and resolve, be careful not to sacrifice sensibility for speed.

Clear the air first. Own the affect before you fix the effect. And attend to a person's emotional needs before you start fixing their physical ailments. Otherwise they won't be receptive to help, won't walk away feeling heard and won't walk back feeling excited.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Your humanity is not marked by your elevation above people, but your identification with them.

*How does your company preserve sensitivity to the human spirit?*

MARCH 29

## Education means fascination.

I understand your hesitancy.

You think that if you make your customers smarter, they won't need you.

Not true. In fact, it's the exact opposite. If you expand their thinking, grow their knowledge base and stretch their brains, they'll actually need and love and respect and want you more.

**THAT'S THE BEST PART:** Companies that educate, fascinate. And fascination, according to author and consultant Sally Hogshead, plays a major role in every type of decision-making – from the brands you choose, the songs you remember, the person you marry, and the employees you hire.

The hard part is to trust yourself, trust your resources and trust the process.

To believe that the people you add value to too won't outgrow their need for your help.

*How fascinating do customers think your organization is?*

MARCH 30

## Embed their passion into the pavement that leads the way.

People engage when they're consistently given the opportunity to do what they do best. When their work is united with their sense of life. And when what they do becomes a vehicle for living what is important to them.

The secret is to find out what's under people's fingernails. To identify the labor that stays with them wherever they go, becomes part of their language and merges with their very being.

This information is priceless.

But it's not something you create a field for in your database – it's something you learn by listening to people's hearts. It's something you learn by asking people passion finding questions like, "If you were the last human on Earth, what would you still do every day?"

**HERE'S THE POINT:** Knowing what's under people's fingernails doesn't just give you their hot button, it gives you their entire motherboard.

Not to manipulate them, but to inspire them to motivate themselves.

*How quickly do you introduce passion into the engagement equation?*



MARCH 31

## Embed your personality into your premises.

I once worked at a mom-and-pop furniture store in Portland.

The owners leveraged self-disclosure to its fullest extent. You couldn't step five feet into their store without seeing pictures of their family, nostalgic newspaper articles and personal memorabilia from the early days of the business.

These decorations engaged transient customers, contributed to the personality of the business and brought the store to life. What's more, there was no doubt in the customer's mind: *You knew who these people were.* You knew exactly who you were buying from. It's no surprise they averaged fifty million a year.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop telling your customers how you are and start showing them who you are.

Especially if you have an office, store, branch or location with high traffic. Take advantage of those eyeballs.

Make sure they're clear about what you say you're committed to caring about.

Make sure they don't leave until they have an accurate picture of who you are.

Otherwise they'll never share your story.

*What makes your walls come alive?*

**Wrong is the  
new brilliant.**



**Are you smart  
enough to be  
dumb when it  
matters?**

**Draw breaths –  
not conclusions.**



**How are you  
oxygenating your  
conversations?**

APRIL

# Embrace the equalizers of life.

During a recent spoken word concert, Henry Rollins made a comment that managed to transcend age, gender, ethnicity and background:

*"Look guys, all of us share one thing in common:  
None of us is going to make it out of this century alive.  
Let's work together to make it as good as possible."*

**GREAT COMMUNICATION LESSON:** When you  
highlight universal truths you hit individual nerves.

Pay careful attention to the things people care about.

Penetrate the core.

Get beneath the surface of people's lives.

Listen hard to people's aims and then hit them where they live.

*Are you talking locally but speaking globally?*



APRIL 1

## Emotion is technology of the soul.

Watson is an artificial intelligence program who wiped the *Jeopardy!* floor with reigning champions, Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter.

However, the computer did manage to answer one question wrong:  
*The one about art.*

Interesting. I guess having access to two hundred million pages of content still doesn't mean you know how to feel.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The heartbeat of the human experience is fueled by emotion, not information.

Instead of speaking to your customers and employees with bland, lifeless jargon, try putting a little blood into it. Instead of delivering emotionally illiterate, robotic non-service, try bringing your humanity to the moment.

Companies who win operate from the heart, not the handbook.

If you want to inject more soul, turn off your computer and turn on your corazon.

*How colorful is your company's emotional palette?*

APRIL 2

## Empathy is valuable, but execution is priceless.

When people come into your office and bleed all over you, the default response is to fire up the empathy engine.

Which is smart. Acknowledging people's feelings, honoring their situation and affirming the courage it takes to share is an approachable, respectful response. And you absolutely want to show people that you care enough to be hurt when they're upset.

You also need to care enough to be responsive when they're in need. Standing knee deep in the gushing rapids of the human condition only matters if you help people get to shore.

**MY SUGGESTION:** Stop empathetically listening to people's concerns and start immediately acting on them.

Not everyone needs a sound listener. Some people need a swift executor.

*How are you promoting a humanely considerate environment?*

APRIL 3

## Expression is essential to engagement.

Most organizational structures are designed to restrict individual expression, mitigate dissent and preserve the status quo.

Which is great for the leaders, but makes the employees want to shoot themselves with a staple gun.

Leave the policing to the cops. You don't need more procedures – you need more philosophy.

**AND NOTE THE DISTINCTION:** Policies are restrictive devices that keep people from doing something; philosophies are enabling devices that empower people to do something.

Trust people to establish their own structures to maintain focus. And give people free reign to design their own workplace nirvana. When they can influence their work environment, they will work better, harder and smarter.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** It's awfully hard to engage in work that conflicts with your internal compass.

*Can your people express themselves without resorting to code?*

APRIL 4

## Emphasize your expanded role.

Do your customers *truly* know all the different ways they can engage your services, or do they just assume you're a one-trick pony like everybody else?

That's the secret to helping customers get to know your business: Transitioning from "Should we hire them?" to "How should we use them?"

I made this transition a few years ago. My role expanded from some guy who wrote books and gave speeches to a trusted resource. Now my clients use me in several different ways: *Speaking, Facilitating, Books, Online Learning, Rent Scott's Brain, On-Camera Talent* and *Brandtag Identity Collages & Campaigns*.

This not only diversifies my business and positions me as a valued asset, but educates my clients on who I am through the depth of what I can deliver.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Physically map out a chart of every single possible way somebody can use you. Then, articulate that diverse offering to emphasize your expanded role.

Customers won't just know you – they'll know how to use you.

*How many different ways do you make money?*



APRIL 5

## **Enable a regular attention stream.**

Attention is currency.

We live *in* a world of continually eroding confidence.

We work *for* a world of steadily declining attention span.

We market *to* a world of gradually fragmenting participation.

If your organization wants to retain relevancy, you have to remember that you're competing against everything else in people's worlds.

Take faith organizations, for example. Congregational vitality is at an all time low because churches are trying to buy attention with boring.

Doesn't work that way. I don't care what version of God you believe in: People don't come to services that fail to engage their spirit.

As Josh Kauffman explains in *The Personal MBA*, "Most of the people in this world don't – and will never – care about what you're doing. Your challenge is to earn the attention of the people who are likely to buy from you. Otherwise, people ignore what they don't care about."

*How will you combat your customers' overwhelming urge to ignore you?*

APRIL 6

## Enable contribution ripples.

Not just into the life of the organization, but into their personal lives too.

Without that sense of reciprocity, people labor in vain. And they don't engage because they're too busy wondering if the work they're doing will disappear into the corporate ether.

On the other hand, when you stop looking over people's shoulders – and when you make it safe for them to experiment – you demonstrate trust in their abilities. That's when brilliance gets unlocked. That's when you evoke people's capacity to dream. And that's when they taste the sweet liberation of what's possible.

All because you believed in their untapped potential for growth.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** When people view their work as a gateway to something bigger – not just the daily grind – they actually want to come in every day.

And they engage because they're treated as unique individuals, not as a means to organizational ends.

*Are you actually building people, or just building your own dream and using people as bricks?*

APRIL 7

## Enable others to build their success around yours.

In 2007, David Letterman's production company became the first to cut a deal with the striking Writers Guild of America. This enabled his show to resume production with their writing staffs.

As Dave told *The New York Times*:

*"We take care of our people. And we're happy to be going back to work, and particularly pleased to be doing it with our writers. But this is not a solution to the strike, which unfortunately continues to disrupt the lives of thousands. But I hope it will be seen as a step in the right direction."*

Furthermore, Letterman also agreed to pay his other non-working staff members (hair, makeup, grips, prop guys, etc) until the end of the strike. Out of his pocket.

**LOOK:** You might not have a production team of a hundred people. But I imagine there's a constituency that gravitates toward you, hoping your leadership will help enable their success.

*Who's warming their hands by your fire?*

APRIL 8

## Encourage and celebrate their mistakes.

When I was a kid, my favorite song from *Sesame Street* was,  
“Everybody Makes Mistakes.” It goes like this:

*“If you make a mistake, you shouldn’t start to cry. Mistakes are not  
so bad, and here’s why. Everyone makes mistakes, oh yes they do.  
Your sister and your brother and your dad and mother too. Big  
people, small people, matter of fact, all people. And if everyone in the  
whole wide world makes mistakes, then why can’t you?”*

Human beings are naturally fallible creatures. They screw up every  
day. But they still need reminders that *making* a mistake isn’t the  
same as *being* a mistake.

Next time people you care about bite the big one, help them release  
their identification with the flub. Remind them that the moment you  
learn from a mistake is the moment it ceases to be a mistake.

Failure is an option. Not learning from that failure isn’t.

*What language do you use with people when they fall short?*

APRIL 9

# Engagement is the new marketing.

For the past decade, I've never left the house without nametags.

Everywhere I go, people ask me if they can have one. And I'm happy to pass them out. *To strangers, to friends, to random kids at the ballpark, whatever.* My brand doesn't discriminate.

**THE SECRET IS:** I don't pass them out to make people wear nametags – I pass them out to make a point.

*My brand is participatory.*

Personally, I don't even care if people wear the nametags. Most of them don't. What matters is that they join me that spontaneous moment of authentic human interaction, infused with a sprit of humor, playfulness and connection. *That's my brand.* And their life is better because of it.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Determine the level of participation garnered by yours. After all, brand perception hinges on human interaction.

Your brand could always become more participatory. And every encounter you have with another person either adds to – or subtracts from – its overall joinability.

*Do customers see your brand as a one-way street?*

APRIL 10

## Engagement must be realistic.

Don't get me wrong.

It's a fine idea to assume your people will engage if they know their work makes a difference to the organization.

But let's not shit ourselves.

People don't care about the organization as much as the organization thinks they do. They care about themselves, their career, their bank account, their families and their future.

That's why much of the existing material on engagement, while nice in principle, is myopic in practice. It fails to address the issue of self-interest. It refuses to be sensitive to the needs of the human spirit. And it doesn't focus on building people, rather, on building the organizational dream and exploiting people to do it.

Scott Adams nailed this in a classic Dilbert cartoon:

*"We need more of what management calls Employee Engagement. I don't know the details, but it has something to do with you idiots working harder for the same pay."*

Be realistic about your people.

*What delusions are you afraid to confront?*

APRIL 11

## Envision a more ambitious platform.

Ideally, one that allows users to collaborate and resolve issues on their own.

Otherwise you end up micromanaging every minor conversation. And nothing scares the engagement out of people faster than knowing they're being constantly monitored.

**HERE'S THE COOL PART:** When you give your people a forum to connect, they naturally start to convince others of your value. And you can't beat that kind of marketing.

Whether you use online boards, blogs or other chat functions, learn to back off. Sure, you can moderate. But true engagement isn't about control – it's about letting go. It's not about managing the process – it's about starting a conversation and then getting the hell out of the way.

It's like passengers on a plane: If they need you, they'll holler.

*Are you willing to surrender the reins and show your people that you trust them enough to interact on their own?*

APRIL 12

## Err on the side of embodiment.

Jesus didn't just tell stories.

He *was* the story.

That's what enabled his dream to endure.

That's what made his vision eminently sellable to the masses.

That's what inspired his followers to leap out of their sandals and paint the earth with his dream for the next two thousand years.

*Fortunately, you don't need to be a Christian to be a follower of Christ.*

**NEW COMMANDMENT:** Stop being a storyteller and start being a storyliver.

The proof is already there. All you have to do is figure out what questions you've been answering with your life since your dream started. Write them down. And support each question with at least three specific stories and experiences from your life.

Then, use that reservoir of embodiment as ammo to mount an evidence campaign to influence those who matter most.

Hallelujah.

*How much evidence will you need to take the people who matter lightyears beyond reasonable doubt?*



APRIL 13

## Establish an air of freshness.

It's impossible for customers to feel heard, feel seen and feel essential when your service is delivered in a monotonous, empty tone.

Like a great stage actor, your job is to make sure that every member of the audience feels like they're hearing your words for the first time. Even if it's only one person. That's still an audience.

Take it from a guy who's worn a nametag every day for eleven years: *People make the same five jokes every single day.*

But I never let my responses get stale. I don't snap at people. And I certainly don't roll my eyes and say, "Yes, Captain Obvious, I'm aware that I'm still wearing a nametag. Thanks for the tip."

Instead, I have fun with people. I change my answers every few months, just to keep it fresh.

Next time someone asks you a question you've heard a thousand times, don't reach for ready-made replies. Instead of being rigidly scripted and annoyingly canned, dance in the moment.

Respond to the unique needs of the individual, not from the mechanical instructions of the employee handbook.

*Will you surrender to thy script or thy soul?*

APRIL 14

## Everybody recruits somebody.

New members to join your organization.

New volunteers to donate their time to your cause.

New customers to do business with your company.

New employees to offer their loyalty to your enterprise.

New congregants to share their faith with your community.

New friends to join your cult and drink the purple punch to commit mass suicide.

Whomever you're recruiting – and whatever you're recruiting for – there are certain approaches that work, and certain approaches that don't work.

Holding people up at gunpoint? *Very effective recruiting strategy.*

Chasing people down in the parking lot of Safeway until they finally make eye contact with you so you can waste the next seven minutes of their life vomiting the benefits of joining your organization? *Not very effective.*

Find what works for you and do it daily, regardless of what your title says.

*What's your recruitment strategy?*

APRIL 15

## Evidence of humanity is everywhere – study it.

When *The Cluetrain Manifesto* first came out, nobody knew it would become a global phenomenon.

Not even the authors. But those four guys were substantially ahead of their time. They predicted where the web was going, and they were right. Here's my favorite excerpt:

*"Business, at bottom, is fundamentally human. And natural, human conversation is the true language of commerce – because the human voice is the music we have always listened to, and still best understand."*

Doc Searls was onto something: When you humanize, you harmonize. And when you harmonize, you monetize.

*What's your brand's emotional intelligence score?*

APRIL 16

## Excavate the universal human experience.

What you do isn't what you really do.

There's always something bigger. There's always something that matters more.

When I speak to recruiters and staffing professionals, I remind them that their job isn't to manage people – it's to enable the explosion of human potential.

When I work with nurses and healthcare professionals, I teach them that their job is to give oxygen to people's souls by allowing the dignity of self-definition.

When I train company leaders, I show them that their job is to connect the duty of today with the dream of tomorrow.

When I workshop with relocation specialists and moving companies, I remind them that their job isn't to move boxes – it's to unpack the contents of the human heart.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Master the deeper humanity within your work, then embed it into your job function on a daily basis.

*When you go to work, what are you really doing all day?*

APRIL 17

## Expect less from technology and more from each other.

Approachability isn't going away.

*In fact, it's becoming more essential by the day.*

If you want to inject it into your organization, you have to make things unexpectedly personal.

**COMPUTE THIS:** Instead of outsourcing the human function, practice interactional casualness. Compress your personality into micro moments of individual expression.

Not as calculated actions, but as loving impulses.

Otherwise your brand will come across as cold and alienating. And your flat and inexpressive language will go unnoticed.

**BELIEVE ME:** Investing time and money to inject soul is always worthwhile

Expose the place where you really live, fearlessly open the closed room and bring all of yourself to everything you do.

It might be inconvenient, but it's never impossible.

*Where are you sacrificing experiences for expenses?*

APRIL 18

## Exponentially increase your activity level.

From tweets to emails to phone calls to lunch meetings, how many real interactions did you have with your customers last week?

What if you tripled that number next week?

**REMEMBER:** Trust grows with repeated impressions.

*What emotional foundation is your company pouring?*

APRIL 19

## Expose your nakedness as a person.

The world is a mirror.

However you act is a permission slip for others to do the same.

Those who choose to be open invite others around them to be open; but those who choose to keep their truth close to their chest signal others around them to shut down.

The question is whether you're willing to reach out and risk living with both arms. Whether you're courageous and rare enough to occupy your vulnerability in a space of mutual openness.

Unfortunately, it takes time and courage become comfortable with that level of emotional honesty. John Powell's groundbreaking work on identity and self-disclosure explains why:

*"I am afraid to tell you who I am because if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am, and that's all I have."*

Risk it anyway. Break the box you've put around yourself and let people like you.

Show the world who you are and, more importantly, why you are.

*What is forcing you to live in a way that is untrue to who you are?*

APRIL 20

## **Express yourself three-dimensionally.**

I recently watched a documentary called *A Sense of Life*.

It's the first authorized film about the life and work of the controversial author Ayn Rand. And what moved me most during the movie was Rand's approach to audience questioning.

Known for staying on stage hours after her lecture was scheduled to be over, Ayn wouldn't just answer people's questions.

She would point out the errors that led to those questions.

She would also take the time to learn what was in her readers' minds.

She would use each question as a springboard to a broader explanation.

She would suggest the new set of questions that would come tomorrow.

And as a result, her voice, her message and her life altered the philosophical landscape forever.

That's the profitability of askability: When you penetratingly come straight at everything people say – your voice is always heard.

*How many questions are people afraid to ask you?*



APRIL 21

## Face time never fails.

I'm not a futurist, but here's my prediction:

*Face-to-face is making a comeback.*

People miss people. We've been held hostage by instant, electronic communication for the past ten years, and it's time to get back to basics.

Never underestimate the power of having lunch with someone.

That's what The Nametag Principle is founded upon: Laying a foundation of comfort and honesty at the onset.

Reach out to people and saying something like:

*"Hey Brian: You're cool. I'm cool. We should hang out. Would you be interested in having a Zero Agenda Conversation sometime?"*

That's all you have to say. No technique. No system. No hidden plan. Just two people talking. Like we used to do. Kind of hard to resist.

I've been initiating those conversations for years and never once been rejected.<sup>1</sup>

**THE ONLY CAVEAT IS:** No unnatural, unnecessary sneaking of your organization's name into the conversation. No wearing of your company logo shirt in the hopes that they'll notice the emblem and ask a question about it. No handing them a brochure you conveniently had in your pocket the whole time right as the waiter brings the check.

Just be cool. Have a conversation with another human being. Zero agenda.

I know it's a lot to ask. But people rarely forget such gestures.

*What would happen if you tripled your amount of face time?*

<sup>1</sup> Except my daily emails to Scarlett Johansen. Stupid LAPD.

APRIL 22

## Fear is the great distracting force.

Fear impairs people's ability to sustain loyalty.

According to Dr. Judith Bardwick, author of *One Foot Out The Door*:

*"Fearful people can't perform at their best because fear destroys the wherewithal to do their best work."*

If you want to lower the threat level of your environment, let love lead the way. Let embodied humanity own the day.

Take Southwest Airlines, for example. Whereas most companies use employees as objects to leverage – they treat employees as people to love. No wonder they've been the most profitable airline since the early seventies.

Interestingly, did you know that their stock symbol was "LUV"?

Sounds like a pretty non-threatening workplace to me.

**BUCKLE THIS:** Fear makes people smaller; love makes people larger.

*If your employees could give your company a hug, would they run across a field with open arms?*

APRIL 23

## Figure out why people are.

It doesn't matter what you do for a living, it matters why you do it.

That's what defines people. That's what drives them to contribute. And if you want to increase joinability, I suggest you touch the center of their why. Even if it's as simple as asking them, "Why do you do what you do?"

It's amazing how telling this question is.

**THE COOL PART IS:** Once you have their answer, you can connect their why to the brand you represent.

Take my friend Doug. He lives and breathes technology. And few people I know are more resourceful when it comes to leveraging technology to make group communication clearer, faster and more relaxing.

But I only know this because I inquired about Doug's why. Because I actively petitioned to get know him at his core.

As a result, I was able to find the perfect spot for him on our board of directors. And our brand would never have been the same without him.

*Are you getting in people's heads or trying on people's hearts?*

APRIL 24

## Find out what joining looks like to them.

Everybody joins differently.

A single guy in his thirties approaches joining a group differently than a retired widow in her sixties.

Or, if you've read *Bowling Alone*, you know that some people aren't even joiners at all.

If your organization seeks to reach a diverse group of new members, you have to go out of your way to find out how people prefer to join. Without this information, your outreach efforts will fall on deaf ears.

I don't care if you have the hippest brand in the world: If you're leaving voicemail messages on a college student's landline, odds are she will never, ever call you back.

Wait. What's a landline?

**HERE'S THE REALITY:** Some people just want to pay their dues, show up to five meetings a year and get on with their lives.

They're never going to volunteer. They're never going to win member of the year. And they're never going to spearhead the party planning committee, no matter how many board members nominate them.

As a leader, you need to be okay with this reality.

Stop compartmentalizing people and just let them join as they see fit.

*Are you preaching to the atheists?*

APRIL 25

## Fixing is for plumbers.

Editing has nothing to do with writing.

Technically, to edit is to correct the core of something.

I don't know about you, but any time someone attempts to do that to me, my heart freaks out. If I can't express myself, I suffocate.

Like the time I went on a date with an actual editor. Huge mistake. She constantly corrected everything I did, said and believed. She was like a giant red pen, but with boobs.

**HERE'S THE REALITY:** People don't want to be fixed. They want to be heard. They want to been seen. And they want to express themselves fully and freely. Next time you feel the creeping urge to correct the core of someone, staple your tongue to the roof of your mouth.

Instead of trying to improve people, stand on the edge of yourself and salute them. Then, attend to whatever surfaces with deep democracy. And listen as loudly as you can.

By engaging with this posture, you make it easy for people to show up as the best, highest version of themselves.

*Whom are you trying to lock inside your editing booth?*

APRIL 26

## Flush out the fear.

Here's the danger in being known as an emotional time bomb:

*The people around you disengage, walk on eggshells and burn their time looking over their shoulder instead of executing what matters.*

If you want your people to stop complying and start committing, begin by taking radical responsibility for your attitude.

I'm not suggesting you suppress or ignore your emotions. But stepping away from some of that stress might make communicating with you a more relaxing experience.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Comfort precedes intimacy and intimacy strengthens commitment.

Stop wearing your anger as an accessory. You're scaring people.

*What can you control that your people are afraid of?*

APRIL 27

## Force-feeding truth doesn't work.

When I was in kindergarten, our class had a Tasting Party.

Every student had to eat one of everything. *Everything*. Even if they didn't like it, they still had to try it.

I remember putting a green olive in mouth.

Then I remember immediately gagging and vomiting.

And I've never eaten another green olive since.

Nothing personal against olives. I'm sure they're delicious. And it's not their fault I don't like them.

**THE PROBLEM IS:** Force fed truth always tastes terrible.

But we're not talking about olives anymore. When you try to evangelize by cramming things down people's throats – without consideration or consent – you lose.

*Are you presenting or puking?*

APRIL 28

## Fulfill the need of materialization.

Human beings possess an inherent desire to materialize their love and admiration for people and things that are essential to their lives.

That's why they get tattoos of their spouse's names, stand in line to get celebrity autographs, frame pictures of their pets and embed badges of their favorite companies on their website.

**THIS PROVES MY THEORY:** Joinability is a function of ownability.

*How can your brand create tangible, ownable assets that your people will regularly and enthusiastically show to their friends? That's the question.*

Maker's Mark distributes Ambassador Cards to their most dedicated patrons. Nike stores laminate digital headshots and print them on lanyard badges. Both of these engagement tools work because they don't interrupt and disturb customers; rather, they weave their brand communication into people's existing social fabric.

**REMEMBER:** You can't ignore something when you're a part of the action.

Make people virtual participants in the scene and your brand's film will rock.

*Are you helping people with what they're already doing or artificially squeezing yourself into their already overcrowded lives?*



APRIL 29

# Get over your product and get behind your personhood.

In a recent blog post, cartoonist Hugh McLeod wrote:

*"Nobody's reading your blog because of your art. Or because they have an inherent love for purple dogs and green sofas. They're reading your blog because the person you are inspires them. Not because they're thinking of buying your paintings. But because the way you approach your work motivates them. It sets an example for them. It stands for something that resonates with them. It leads them to somewhere that they also want to go."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop explaining who and what; start demonstrating how and why.

That's the ultimate instrument of your expression. *Your life. Your being. Your truth.*

Customers, readers and fans – that already enjoy your work – will go absolutely crazy when you reveal the unique process behind it.

*Do you believe that you're more than just a pretty picture?*

APRIL 30

## Give people a front row seat to their brilliance.

Most people don't realize how brilliant they are.

This stems from: A lack of self-belief, a lack of external affirmation or a lack of human mirrors in their life.

Or, maybe they're just too close to themselves to see it.

**THE SECRET IS:** Recognition isn't just an interactional gift – it's also an emotional release.

And a few things happen when you give it:

You create a world of delight.

*Which increases their level of engagement.*

*Which reminds people of their fundamental efficacy.*

You create a significant emotional event.

*Which establishes a memory that sticks in their mind forever.*

*Which drives people to display the work they're capable of.*

You create a safe haven for people to fall in love with themselves.

*Which helps them fall in love with you, too.*

*Which helps people pull out their inner vitality.*

If you were smart, you'd focus on making others feel smart.

*What do you reflect for people?*

**Keep commitments,  
not secrets.**



**What is your  
brand hiding?**

MAY

## Give compliments that matter.

The first time I attended a yoga posture clinic, my body did things I thought only circus performers could do. Since then, my practice has never been the same. And I remember thinking, “How can I show gratitude for this accomplishment?”

**HERE’S WHAT I DID:** After class, I approached our guest instructor with the following compliment, “Ren, thanks for giving me permission to impress myself.”

He was speechless. And so was I.  
It was a moment we’d never forget.

Sadly, several months later I found out that than Ren had passed away. Apparently he was extremely sick with cancer, even though none of his students could tell. All the more reason to give compliments that matter: You never know when – or if – you’re going to see that person again.

May as well leave them feeling essential to the world.

*Where could you be more gregarious in your gratitude?*



MAY 1

## Give people permission to be remarkable.

When I first told my parents that I wanted to wear a nametag everyday for the rest of my life, they responded with a four-letter word: *Cool*.

Not exactly the four-letter word you would expect, but that's just the kind people they are: They're fundamentally affirmative. They say yes to it all. And unless you're doing something dangerous or disrespectful, they never ask you to edit yourself.

*Cool.*

Instead of superimposing your prefabricated definition of who they should be, endow your people with the dignity of self-expression. Let them inject their personality into everything they do. And respond to them with a foundation of affirmation.

You'll find that by enabling regular expressions of eccentricity and individuality, people will become more of themselves when they're around you.

All you'll have to do is sit back and watch the show.

*Have you removed all restrictions of individual expression?*

MAY 2

## Give people permission to pursue their dreams.

Your organization needs to be a place where people can lead fulfilling lives.

Working for you should help people get where they want to go.

*Otherwise your team is destined for mediocrity.*

That's what thriving organizations do: Help people experience a real and regular connection between the duty of today and the dream of tomorrow. Otherwise it's just a job. It's just a paycheck. And the company is viewed as an economic mechanism and little more.

On the other hand, when people start to see the connection between their duty and their dream, loyalty skyrockets.

Because people are always grateful to whoever helps them achieve their dream.

And don't get me started on their spouses. Can you imagine how good it feels to wake up next to someone who has dreams to chase? Maybe it's time to stop telling employees what your demands are and start asking employees what their dreams are.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Your job is to be the spark. Because you can give people permission to pursue their dream – but you can't take responsibility for their achieving it.

*How long ago did your people stop dreaming?*

MAY 3

# **Give people what they want, not what you assume they need.**

Employees don't give a damn about maximizing profits or shareholder value.

*They're anchored in purpose.*

Here's a rapid-fire list of what your people really want:

People want a chance to be themselves openly.

*Are you making it easy for them to express their personal style?*

People want more meaning, not more things to store in their garage.

*Are you trying to motivate them with material irrelevancies?*

People want to be attached to something that's more than just a commercial enterprise.

*Are you helping them connect their actions to a larger story?*

Give them what they want.

*Are you asking people to take a job or join a crusade?*

MAY 4

# **Give people what they want, not what you assume they desire.**

I'm not finished.

People want to be missed when they don't show.

*Are you giving them a glimpse of what the organization would lose if they ceased to exist?*

People want to be proud of what they do.

*Are you helping them become known for their unique contributions?*

People want to feel secure in expressing the type of workplace they want to be a part of.

*Are you reminding them what they're trying to build and why?*

Ultimately, organizations that actively cultivate the purpose driven nature of people's work get a standing ovation every time.

*Are you giving people the wrong things?*



MAY 5

## **Give their truth a megaphone.**

People also want leaders who enable their spirit.

They want organizations that enable their passions.

Focus on this, and it's amazing how many other things fall into place. Especially engagement. When people are never forced to restrict their interests, their passion goes from spark to flame to inferno. And it explodes through the company walls, providing warmth to everyone in its path.

If I ever had to get a real job – which I won't – that's the kind of place I'd want to work everyday.

Unfortunately, most organizations have been stripped of their humanness. They treat people as cogs in the assembly line, not individuals in the game called life. And their people become easily intimidated and silenced by the walls of formality, preventing them from expressing themselves freely.

Then they wonder why their culture, service and bottom line suffer.

Don't let this happen to your organization.

Because the bloodiest crime committed in the corporate world is the subjugation of the human spirit.

*Is there enough evidence to find you guilty?*

MAY 6

## Give yourself away.

When I started wearing a nametag everyday, I wasn't doing it to get attention.

*I was doing it to give myself away.*

Of course, I didn't realize that until eleven years later.

But now, as I look back on the journey, it occurs to me how powerful this idea is.

When you give yourself away, you make people glow.

When you give yourself away, you become a voice worth listening to.

When you give yourself away, you widen the boundaries of your being.

But.

Giving yourself away isn't about creating a sense of indebtedness and social pressure to reciprocate. It's not about becoming a one-woman welcome mat for everyone you meet. And it's not about whoring yourself out and violating your own boundaries.

Been there, done that, bought the t-shirt.

Giving yourself away is about bringing your humanity to the moment. Yes, it may arouse suspicion. People might think you're crazy. Or too generous. Or too naïve. But you can't silence your own voice for fear of being misunderstood.

Emerson once said, "The only gift is a portion of thyself."

Maybe it's about time you boxed, wrapped and delivered it.

*How do you give yourself away?*

MAY 7

## Give your brand three dimensions.

Cooking websites are getting smarter.

They know that their users don't just want recipes. They also want to learn what others thought about the recipe, what ingredients they added, what spices they used, what side they paired it with, what wine goes with it and what their families thought about it.

Their users want to become better cooks, not just better at following directions.

If you want people to join you, know this: *Information is price of admission*. Giving people a bunch of facts isn't enough. To out heart the competition, you have to offer people context, perspective and community.

Public radio is another brand that does this beautifully: They speak straight to the heart of the human experience. They explore new angles most stations miss. And they create a safe place to learn that broadens the listener's cultural sensibilities. You can't get that from top forty stations.

Customers want to listen to the whole song. And if all you're giving them is a few random notes, they're going to go somewhere else.

*How many dimensions does your brand deliver?*

MAY 8

## **Go above solving the immediate problem.**

My mentor is a master of this.

When we have one of our many deep conversations, he never fails to uncover the unspoken need, while simultaneously clarifying the core issue.

When I give answers, he often replies: "That's not the question I asked you."

When I ask questions, he often replies: "Here's the bigger question you're asking."

Bill doesn't let you get away with anything. He listens to the core of what's happening and responds by tapping into your humanity.

*Are you slowing down to find out what's behind people's words?*

MAY 9

## Go out of your way to gush.

I'm a board member of a small organization comprised of professional speakers, consultants and other thought leaders.

Once a quarter, we meet in a convenient location for an energizing day of brainstorming, masterminding and bullshit-free discussion.

I'll never forget what happened immediately after our inaugural meeting:

I went straight back to my hotel room at midnight and emailed three of my colleagues who were unable to attend the session. I told them how my brain, heart and spirit were simultaneously overflowing, and that I insisted on have lunch so I could gush about the meeting.

We got together a week later and I spent the better part of an hour infecting them with my energy and passion.

Not to sell them on the group.

Not to convince them to come to the next meeting.

Not to create a convenient deficit position that could only be filled by the thing I was selling.

Just to gush. Just to let the infection cascade out of my pores like an Amazon waterfall.

To the delight of the group, all three of my friends committed to attending the next meeting. And they loved it just as much as I did.

*Who could you set up an agenda-free gush session with next week?*

MAY 10

## Gratitude is the great gravitator.

A few more reasons why people engage:

When they're allowed to publicly display their successes.

When they're applauded for their strengths and not berated for their weaknesses.

Combine those two and you will make people feel essential:

*"Janet, your role has a direct impact on something that matters. The value of your contribution is calculable. You're more than just a helpful addition to our organization – you're a vital component. Thank you, thank you."*

She'll stick around.

*How does your organization make gratitude and recognition a palpable, recurrent practice?*

MAY 11

## Greeting is the engine of seen.

My parents were high school sweethearts.

They've been together more than forty years. And when I asked them to share their recipe for a successful, enduring partnership, here's what they advised:

*"We never got lazy with each other."*

Too bad more couples don't practice that. After all: Relationships work when you work at them. Otherwise they degrade into predictable, boring, complacent stalemates. And that's when people start to feel invisible.

One test is to pay attention to the length of time you devote to greeting people.

*How long do you hold eye contact? Handshakes? Hugs? Kisses?*

I've found that there is an inverse relationship between the length of your greeting and the level at which people feel seen.

Ten seconds. Minimum.

*How many of your employees feel invisible?*

MAY 12

## Hang on their home turf.

Phone calls don't cut it.

*My recruiting efforts usually include breaking bread with people.*

Personally, I'd rather meet people for lunch at their office or in their neighborhood. In my experience, that's a better window into their world. That's a smoother transition from "How are you?" to "Who are you?"

Occasionally, I might even have dinner at a prospective joiner's home.

**THAT'S THE BIG WIN:** When you meet their families. Eat their food. Hang on their turf.

You might talk about joining. You might not. The point is to meet people where they are. Literally.

Sure beats sitting on your ass with crossed fingers and high hopes.

*Whose home turf could you visit this week?*



MAY 13

## Have a message that's worthy of being heard.

Fascination trumps relevance.

Moment to moment, you want your audience to be curious about what will happen next.

**HERE'S HOW:** Creating a message and a messenger worth looking at. Make sure you have enough going on in your life to be interesting to talk with, listen to and be heard by.

Do not underestimate the importance of this.

Everything you've learned so far in this book accomplishes nothing without a baseline level of interestingness.

*How much time are you spending – each day – becoming more fascinating?*

MAY 14

## **Help people become impressed with themselves.**

Lead them towards the answers they need to find.

Try using leading, one-word questions like, “But...?” “And...?” or “Because...?”

This puts the conversational ball in their corner, equipping them to uncover their own solutions. It also shows people that you trust them enough to find their own answers. And lastly, one-word questions reinforce their sense of self-reliance.

All of which infect them with a steady stream of self-belief.

*Are you thriving in the economy of words?*

MAY 15

## Help people feel a sense of self-achievement.

In the book *Leadership & Nursing Management*, author Diane Huber explains:

*"Remember people's psychological drive and primary need to accomplish things."*

Make a list called, "Top Ten Things My Members Want to Accomplish." Match group behaviors to desires. Think about what, specifically, your group is providing to help your people accomplish those things

Done and done.

*How are you helping your members put checkmarks next to their goals?*

MAY 16

## Highlight individual essentialness.

I practice this every morning on my blog.

After all, my readers are my followers – and I want them to feel essential.

**HERE'S THE MOVE:** After publishing each post, I ask myself, “Who inspired the ideas in this piece?” Then, I individually email or tag the two or three people whose names; ideas or stories show up in the text.

Usually something simple like:

*“Morning Jim! Just wanted to let you know that I blogged about you this morning. Here’s the link. Your story shows up in paragraph six. And thanks for the continued inspiration. I couldn’t have written this piece without you!”*

That’s how I make people feel essential: By honoring their words and edifying their lives.

It takes five minutes a day.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** People perk up when they hear the sound of their own name – but they take action when they see the sight of their own name.

*Whose name could you put up in lights?*

MAY 17

## Hit them in the wallet quicker.

One of my mentoring clients is a nurse practitioner.

He consults with hospitals, healthcare organizations and other medical professionals on how to practice heart-centered care.

During one of our email mentoring sessions, he enlightened me about the mindset of a typical hospital administrator:

*"If it doesn't directly relate to patient care, they don't care."*

Damn. Sounds like to them, that's what matters. It's a bottom-line focus. It's a self-interest that pivots on the principle of profitability.

Sadly, this isn't just for hospitals – it's for all organizations.

Sometimes you have to hit them in wallet quicker. That's how nice becomes necessary: When what you do unearths your customer's deeply felt needs.

*Is your organization selling a better mousetrap or a dead mouse?*

MAY 18

## Hold up a mirror to yourself.

People fundamentally disconnect from their work for a variety of reasons:

*When they've done the exact same thing for too long, when they feel like they can't succeed no matter how hard they try, when they're forced to conform to what you want them to be and when their effort is no longer worth the reward.*

How many of those issues run rampant in your office?

**TRY THIS:** Tell the truth about your organization's current level of commitment:

- Do your people grudgingly concede or gratefully crusade?
- Do you tell people what your demands are or ask them about their dreams?
- Do your employees come to work every day because they love it, or because you've degraded them into obedient, soul-dead, conformist worker bees?

When you begin waking to these truths, you'll gain a greater understanding of what it's going to take to get all of your people singing off the same page.

*How many people on your team willingly provide discretionary effort on a consistent basis?*

MAY 19

# Honesty is the new marketing.

I've dabbled with dishonesty before.

Doesn't look good on me. But, I completely understand why human beings do it:

*It saves face, shifts the blame, avoids punishment, evades confrontation, protects your situation, spares people's feelings, helps you get your way, makes you feel better about yourself and manipulates the way others perceive you.*

What's not to like?

**THE ONLY PROBLEM IS:** I'm a horrible liar. Honesty is too much a part of my personal constitution as a human being to lie. When I don't tell the truth – to myself, to others and to the world – my body broadcasts it like a drive in movie.

So I just tell the truth. As often as possible. Which doesn't mean I never lie. But I'm doing the best I can. And don't get me wrong: I would love to be dishonest.

But frankly, it's too much work. And I've got books to write.

That's what I never understood about the corporate world: They treat honesty like it's some sort of organizational initiative. Excuse me, but that's freaking ludicrous. Honesty shouldn't have to be a policy.

If you have to tell your people to tell the truth, you need new people.

So what if it scares people. Tell them how you really feel. It might change everything.

*How are you branding your honesty?*

MAY 20

## Honor people's capacity to express.

Companies are terrified of allowing employees to inject their personality into the workplace and, god forbid, be free.

The problem with this command and control approach is that it leads to impersonal, emotionless non-service where employees are objectified and quickly discarded. And nothing could be less approachable.

If you want to humanize the workplace, believe in people enough to let them find their way. Don't make them feel guilty for their talents. Don't block the spontaneity that colors their world. Instead of assigning instructions for performing every task, let them breathe.

*Psst!* Jonny McHelicopter. Stop hovering. Instead, encourage people to suggest improved ways of doing things.

That's how you treat people like people – not like tools to transmit your directions.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** People engage when they have permission to create – not just instructions to comply.

*How are you letting people live their truth?*



MAY 21

## Honor the audience of one.

Stop disrespectfully dividing your attention between the person in front of you and the people you're giving snippets of your digital attention to.

You're sacrificing sincere conversations that count for superficial connections that merely add up.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** *When you're with people – really be with people.*

Make them feel like the only person in the room. Hell, make them feel like the only person in the world. Make sure that what you're doing – right now – isn't telling this person that there's someone else you'd rather be interacting with.

Do you really think they don't see you checking your smartphone under the table?

Come on. People need people in their life who can be bigger than that. Have some respect for your audience of one. Don't allow the convenience of being connected to tear apart the traditional social fabric.

Just because you're instantly connected to the masses doesn't mean you're intimately connected to the people who matter.

*What do people get when they get you?*

MAY 22

## Hovering is for helicopters.

One thing I admire about my parents is their consistent willingness to let me screw up.

Which, from what I hear, is a painful thing for any parent to do.

*Because they're your kids. They're your babies. And you don't want them to be in pain.*

However, there's a huge difference between getting hurt and being injured. And I think I've finally figured out why my parents allow this:

*They're sadistic.*

Just kidding. It's because they trust in their own parenting abilities.

They believe they raised me right. And when I do screw up, they have faith that I will tap into the foundation of character that they spent the last thirty years of their lives pouring.

And wouldn't you know it? Every time I screw up – which happens a lot – they back off and let me figure out how to handle it on my own. Sure, they're there to help. And guide. And ask questions. And offer suggestions.

But they never let me get injured.

And as a result, my wounds heal under the antiseptic of my own actions; the scars of which ultimately help contribute a greater verse to the song of life. All because they had enough self-control and self-trust to stop hovering and start heeding.

*Are you willing to back off?*

MAY 23

# Humanize the workplace.

Being human is good for business.

I have no data to measure this.

I have no research to prove this.

I have no statistics to support this.

*Nobody does.* If they did, it wouldn't be human.

**THAT'S THE THING:** Humanizing the workplace is not a process that can be comfortably quantified. And because of that, most organizations overlook it.

Fortunately, you don't need to look very far to find evidence of the profitability of approachability.

If you want to humanize the workplace, you don't need a formula. You need to capture heartshare. You need to treat people like people. You need to make them feel essential.

*If your company were charged with the crime of being human, would there be enough evidence to convict you?*

MAY 24

## Humanize your doctrine.

Most internal communications are a joke.

They're unreadable, unapproachable and usually a waste of paper. And every additional message people receive from their organization becomes another boring, overextended piece of uninspiring drivel they delete immediately or, at best, peruse passively.

If you want to deliver messages that cut through the internal clutter and arrest your people's attention, you have to meet them where they are, but refuse to leave them where they are. And it doesn't have to be mind blowing, it just has to be heart flowing.

After all, honesty trumps brilliance any day of the week.

Next time you send out some form of internal communications, ask yourself, "Is this beautifully readable or dreadfully uninspiring?"

Because it can't just be what you think is interesting.

Nice to know information isn't always nice to engage information.

*Is this message actually important to your people, or does it just make the leadership team feel better?*

MAY 25

## **“I told you so” leads to “I resent you so.”**

Now that you’ve backed off, listened, and let the people you love figure out things on their own, there’s only one thing left to do:

*Smother your smugness.*

Saying or implying any version of “I told you so,” negates all the hard work you’ve put in so far. Don’t do it. It makes you look arrogant and makes them feel small.

Instead, trust that she knows you knew – the whole time – that she never should have married that jerk.

No need to rub it in her face.

Instead of reminding people that you’re always right, just wait. And when people eventually figure out how stupid they’ve been the whole time, you just smile and ask them what they’ve learned. And then you reflect together. The learning cycle comes to a close, and you move onto the next lesson.

*How patient are you willing to be with the people you love?*

MAY 26

# Identify the real currency.

Too many organizations are operating from the obsolete paradigm that people come to work to make money.

*Nice try, Gordon Gecko.*

But throwing more money at people isn't the answer. Throwing more meaning at them is.

Truth is, people care less about the check and more about signed card the check came in. They hunger for the validation of being known, seen and heard. And they crave a work environment that allows them to express their creativity as loudly as possible.

Not that money doesn't motivate. *It absolutely does.* But dollars aren't the only defining factor of human engagement.

**HERE'S THE REAL CURRENCY:** People invest themselves in things they truly admire. People commit when they're allowed to lead the kind of life they want.

Figure out what each person's currency is, and then pay them with that every week. Equality, while nice in theory, isn't always the best policy. Sure, treating everybody the exact same way saves time, but it costs commitment.

**THE REALITY IS:** People engage when they're treated according to their own unique values.

*Are you discerning and testing how each of your people wants to be treated?*

MAY 27

# Identity has universal appeal.

An eye-watering story about how you climbed Mt. Everest with no oxygen, a broken rib nothing but your faith to keep you going isn't exactly universal.

First of all, nobody else in the world – except other loonies who climb mountains – can relate to you.

Secondly, unless every member of your audience is guaranteed to share your religious beliefs, keep God out of the equation. Otherwise you risk alienation.

Instead of your frostbitten mountaineering adventures, a more human story would be revealing that you walked into the office every morning for a year, wanting to quit.

A more human story would be admitting that you cheated on your low-carb diet by polishing off a three-pound bag of pretzels when nobody was looking.<sup>2</sup>

Your stories need to make audiences think, “Me too!” and not, “No way!”

*What questions could you ask yourself as reminders to keep it human?*

<sup>2</sup> Don't judge me.

MAY 28

# Idolatry is insufficient.

I recently read a fascinating article by Steven Resnick on *The Bleacher Report*.

His claim was that professional athletes weren't role models as much as they were idols.

*"On the basketball court, Jordan could do pretty much what he wanted: He could shoot, he could pass, he could defend, and he could literally fly through the air. But does that really make Jordan a role model? It's not to say that professional athletes do not do good things for their communities. But to say that athletes are role models just because they are in the spotlight is a ridiculous assertion. The biggest part to being a role model is the personal interaction you have with the person."*

As you've already learned: It's not about being the life of the party – it's about bringing other people to life at the party.

The secret is convincing those people that they were the ones who turned the switch on.

Whereas idols are regarded with blind adoration, role models are regarded with substantial connection. It's not about perfection – it's about personhood.

Within the relationships that matter, your challenge is to make that move: From the superficial to the substantial.

Otherwise you're just a statue.

*Do people idolize you or identify with you?*



MAY 29

## **If you see people bleeding, don't pretend they aren't really hurting.**

It's like the homeless veteran with the cardboard sign.

You don't have to give him your life savings – but at least acknowledge the guy.

I'm reminded of a 2005 article from *Law Enforcement News* about approaching invisible people:

*"You know who they are. They are the homeless wandering the alleyways mumbling. They are the preachers on the street corners declaring they are Jesus Christ. They are the 'invisible' people the public ignores, but as law enforcement officers you must see them. You are their guardians. You are their protectors. And being able to talk to the invisible man means being able to communicate with every man."*

Practice a little *namaste*: The spirit in me honors the spirit in you.

That doesn't mean you have to save everybody.

That doesn't mean you have to bandage the blood of all who hurt.

That doesn't mean you have to clear out your entire drawer of car change.

But don't pretend they're not there.

They know you see them. And you know that they know you see them.

*How many people did you go out of your way to ignore last week?*

MAY 30

## Imperfection is not a liability.

No movie better captures this principle than *The King's Speech*.

My favorite scene is right after Colin Firth finishes his war address to the nation. And after months of emotional distress and intense training to overcome his speech impediment, therapist Geoffrey Rush, says, "You still stammered."

But with a relaxed smile, the king replies, "I had to throw in a few so they knew it was me."

That's how you speak human: By letting people experience you experiencing failure.

*You're not the pope.* It's okay to market your imperfections. Next time you mess up, simply apologize for your error and show people how you'll avoid it in the future. They'll relax, respond with empathy and think more of you than if you hadn't messed up in the first place.

**WHAT'S MORE:** They won't sue you – they'll pursue you. Again and again. And next time, they'll bring their friends. Because you're one of the few people big enough to flaunt your imperfection.

Mistakes are a chance to make the company smarter.

*Are you afraid to admit them because you see every customer as a potential plaintiff in a malpractice suit?*

MAY 31

## Improv trumps scripting.

The minute you start robotically reacting to customer and employee requests with scripts, policies, stock-phrases and pre-rehearsed answers, you lose. And so do they.

You're a human. May as well put that humanity to use.

People don't want scripts – they want sensibility.

People don't want lines pulled from your handbook – they want words scraped from your heart.

Employee training and orientation can only simulate so many “real life customer interactions.”

Learn to improvise, react, respond and riff with each individual's experience.

Like a jazz drummer, but without the jazz cigarette.

*When does the feeling of formality keep you from communicating freely, honestly and personably?*

**Be indiscriminate  
and promiscuous  
with your service.**



**Are you willing  
to love something  
to death to bring  
it to life?**

**You can't  
outsource  
presence.**



**Are you resorting  
to gimmickry to  
let people know  
you're there?**

JUNE

# Inbreak is the new outreach.

Brands that claim to “start with the customer in mind” are full of crap. What they’re really trying to do is figure out how customers fit into their nice little marketing plan so they can bother them into buying. *Nice try, Don Draper, but that approach is broken.* If you want customers to join your brand, actually start with the customer.

Focus on how your brand fits into people’s lives. That’s inbreak. That’s joining people first. And when you take this counterintuitive approach, a few cool things happen. First, you proactively meet people where they live instead of cleverly sucking them into your marketing vortex. This lowers the threat level of your offering.

Second, you extend respect for people’s life situations. This demonstrates empathy, respect and boundaries. Third, by joining people first, you make them feel seen, heard and participated in.

This delivers the social gift of gratitude.

And lastly, instead of proving to people that you’re the kind of brand they can live with, you allow people to show you that they’re the kind of person you can’t live without.

*Which of your customers are just waiting for you to join them?*



J U N E 1

## Increase your mental flexibility.

Have you ever worked with somebody who went out of their way to pretend like they cared?

Like the boss who thoroughly listens to your input, thanks you for your suggestion, and then goes back to doing exactly what he planned all along.

*Geh.*

Nothing makes people feel smaller. I'm reminded of a classic Scott Adams cartoon in which Dilbert undergoes a performance evaluation. Sitting across the table in complete silence, his manager says:

*"I'm not going to comment, I'll just look at you until you agree with me."*

If you want people to feel essential, let them experience that they can change your mind. Be quick to ask for their opinion, and be slow to interrupt when they give it. This shows them that you can bend. That you're vulnerable enough to admit that your perceptions might be misguided.

Mostly, that you're willing to shelf your ego and approach everyone as your mentor.

*Do you treat people like vestigial parts, helpful additions or vital components?*

J U N E 2

## Indulge in your humanity.

I've been wearing a nametag twenty-four seven for the past decade.

What can I say?

*Some people wear their heart on their sleeve – I wear my humanity on my chest.*

**TRUTH IS:** The more vulnerable you are, the more open you are. The more open you are, the less you have to hide. The less you have to hide, the more relaxed you become. And the more relaxed you become, the more effectively you can treat people like people.

Simple but not easy.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Instead of making endless plans to reduce unpredictability, mitigate risk and preserve your sense of control, try surrendering. Learn to treat your vulnerability as an advantage. And remember the words of Henry James:

*"To be opened to risk is to risk being shattered. But without shattering, there is no glory."*

You can't cram everything into a process.

Let improvisation pull the rug out from under the rigidity of the predictable.

*What do you need to surrender to?*



JUNE 3

# Influence is a function of infection.

Not a fatal disease, of course. We'll leave that to the zombies.

Instead, let's talk about your role as a leader. Because the word "infect" comes from the Latin *inficere*, which means, "to put in."

**THAT'S THE BIG QUESTION:** What are you putting into people?

*Fire? Love? Creativity? Negativity? Inspiration? Indifference? Enthusiasm? Salmonella?*

It might not matter. With the exception of most diseases, what you infect people with isn't as important as how you infect them.

**LOOK, FOCKER:** Infection has nothing to do with being sick. It's about transferring emotion. It's about putting something into people. It's about influencing them with your state of being.

Spend your days doing that, and you won't even need the zombies.

*What are you putting into people?*

J U N E 4

## **Infect through being.**

Ram Dass wrote in *All There Is*:

*"The only thing you have to offer to another person, ever, is your state of being. The degree of consciousness with which you're protesting determines how well they can hear what it is you're really saying."*

Next time you're having a conversation with a friend, employee, volunteer or complete stranger – thrust your whole self into that encounter.

When you passionately and respectfully present people with a compelling vision of the future – and, the choice to be both participant in and creator of it – you indirectly make them want to ride along with you.

*Is your personhood infectious?*

J U N E 5

## Inject soul.

When I was in college, my roommate and I started a band.

Our first gig was at the campus record store. Eight people showed up, our guitars were out of tune, and I'm pretty sure there was something green my teeth.

We didn't even meet any girls after the show. *What a waste.*

But the one thing I'll never forget was what my roommate whispered to me between songs:

*"Dude, you're singing with too much soul. Take it easy."*

We never played out in public again. And from that day forth, I vowed to never take it easy.

Because there's no such thing as singing with too much soul.

That's The Nametag Principle in action: Soul informs brand, and brand informs your bank account.

Inject it into everything. James Brown would be proud.

*How much social capital have you earned this week?*

J U N E 6

## Inspire commitment.

Not compliance – commitment. Huge difference.

In *The Power of Strategic Commitment*, they said it best:

*“Commitment is the innate willingness of people to follow and contribute; compliance is the forced adherence to plans created through manipulation, punishment and coercion.”*

That’s the difference between doing the job and a delivering the brand.

**THE PROBLEM IS:** Zero commitment means zero engagement, and zero engagement means zero profits.

But, when you inspire commitment *to* the brand inside the organization, you inspire belief *in* the brand outside the organization.

That’s when you stop making money and start making history.

*How much engagement is your organization hemorrhaging due to weak commitment?*

J U N E 7

## **Inspire in others of a vision of what they can contribute.**

The night before delivering a career-changing keynote, I handed my friend Dixie a note.

I told her not to read it until she went to bed that night. It read:

*"You own tomorrow. I believe in you."*

Twenty-four hours later, she did. Big time. And all it took was seven words.

I wonder who you could deliver a simple, handwritten note to in the next week that would become infected.

*How will you help people taste the sweet liberation of what's possible?*

J U N E 8

## Inspire people to motivate themselves.

Your employees are lazy. Your coworkers are stuck. Your children are lethargic. Your members are stagnant. Your customers are sluggish.

*I blame it all on Chris Farley.*

His *Saturday Night Live* character, Matt Foley, convinced us that a boisterous man in a plaid blazer, hopped up on twelve cups of coffee – who lived in a van down by the river – could motivate another human being.

Yeah no.

**TURNS OUT:** You can't motivate anybody to do anything.

All you can do is inspire them to motivate themselves.

*How well do you do that?*

JUNE 9

## Inspire people to see the world as you do.

In her book, *The Story Factor*, Annette Simmons reminds us that people don't want more information; they want faith in you, your goals, your success and the story you tell.

*"That's why people pick up where you left off: Because they believe."*

The hard part is getting them to drink the punch.

Recently I launched [www.brandtag.org](http://www.brandtag.org), my series of customized, limited edition art pieces. It's by far the riskiest thing I've ever shipped.

But what most people don't know about this project, however, is that it took fifteen months to execute. Not because I was procrastinating. Rather, because I was documenting every single phase of the creative process – then privately sharing it in a twenty-minute slide show presentation – with people who matter to me.

Partly to obtain their feedback, but also to infect them with my vision of what the world would look like when these art pieces finally shipped. And to my delight, when Brandtag set sail, those people were already on board and willing to help me paddle.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** If people can't see the passion in your face, they won't hear a word that comes out of your mouth.

*Will you do whatever it takes to get your dream into the hearts of the people who matter most?*

J U N E 1 0

## **Install an emotional disturbance.**

Bob Dylan once wrote, "The purpose of art is to stop time."

If you want to accomplish that, you have to disappear from the page.  
To hide the memory of your hand. To democratize your message in a  
way that meets your audience where they are.

These are the things that engage immediately.

These are the ways messages get heard, not just listened to.

*Do you get people's full attention as soon as they taste you?*



J U N E 1 1

## Instead of answering questions, answer unspoken needs.

Keep your third ear open for the message communicated, not just the words spoken.

That's the unspoken need.

**THE COOL PART IS:** When you practice noticing what people are afraid of revealing, you'll quickly learn what it is they long for.

But only if you penetrate the mask.

*How can you give people permission to share what they're afraid of revealing?*

J U N E 1 2

## **Intrinsic pride creates emotional commitment.**

People who work for Google don't tell their friends they're computer programmers.

They say they work for Google.

And why wouldn't they? *It's Google.* Of course they take pride in their job. T

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** If people answer the question, "What do you do?" with the name of the organization, that means their self-esteem and identity is connected to the sense of belonging of that organization. It's a vital part of their sense of self. They're committed and involved. Their affiliation to the company reinstates their sense of pride. And because their identity is intimately connected to – and invested in – the organization itself, they'll commit to doing whatever it takes to make that organization succeed.

That's what a worldwide survey from Towers Perrin proved: Organizational symbols or logos logo are visible manifestations of pride.

Think it's an accident that all those geeks in Palo Alto wear Google hoodies?

Nope. And you would do the same.

*How much company pride do your people have?*

J U N E 13

## Invent things in your own image.

You can't create anything other than yourself.

It's all an extension of your unique personality.

Take Facebook: The color blue dominates the layout because Mark Zuckerberg is red/green colorblind.

Take Apple: The people who get hired are the ones who fit Steve Jobs' vision and working style.

This is not an accident. And while your brand probably doesn't compare to those two behemoths, what you *can* do is emulate the same principle into your own world.

**TRY THIS:** Embed your why into the very fabric of whatever you create. Allow purpose to fuel personality. Because while you're known for what you do and remembered for how you do it – you're defined by why you do it.

This approach to innovation will keep your work real, honest and human. All you have to do is tell the story of who you are with your whole heart.

If that's not your own image, I don't know what is.

*Are you following your passions or people's perceptions?*

J U N E 1 4

## Involvement isn't something you can force upon people.

People always make time for what's important to them.

Which means, if they aren't joining your organization, it might not be your fault.

Maybe Saturday morning is a terrible time for them to attend chapter functions because their kids have soccer practice. Maybe they're just out of college and can't commit to weekly board meetings because they'd rather go to happy hour with their friends.

It doesn't mean they don't like you, it just means they have different priorities.

In the book *Brains on Fire*, my friend Robbin Phillips writes about this very idea:

*"It's not about how customers fit into your marketing plan, but rather about how you fit into their lives."*

**TRY THIS:** Instead of assuming people are apathetic, uncommitted heathens, ask them how your organization might become a part of their schedule.

Then, once you've gathered consensus, consider alternating your organization's activity schedule to accommodate a diverse group of member priorities.

*Are you starting with the customer in mind or just starting with the customer?*

J U N E 1 5

## **It's just easier to say hi to everybody.**

The highlight of wearing a nametag all the time is that it generates spontaneous moments of authentic human interaction, infused with a spirit sprit of humor, playfulness and connection.

This happened on a recent trip to Atlanta. My flight attendant noticed my nametag and made a classic comment:

*"I wish all my passengers wore nametags, that way I wouldn't have to say sir!"*

It made my day. And imagine it certainly brightened hers. Do that five times a day for a decade, and you can't help but market your humanity.

But only if you're consistent.

*How many of those moments did you have last week?*

J U N E 1 6

## **It's never too late for the truth.**

Honesty is scary.

Not just for you, but for the people around you.

Any time you honestly, sincerely and candidly share your opinion about something that matters to you, there's always that one insecure, cynical twit who just has to remark, "Why don't you tell me how you really feel?"

Um, I just did. Get used to it.

*Do you respect people enough to tell them the truth?*

J U N E 17

## Jolt your audience awake.

Pundits doubted Obama.

With limited legislative experience, they assumed his background wasn't sufficient enough to get him elected.

"He's just a community organizer," they argued.

Funny, considering Obama organized the most powerful community in the world. And his audience of sixty-nine million fans propelled him into the presidency.

*How will you engage the world and make it listen to you?*

The word "engage" comes from the French *engagier*, which means, "under pledge."

I wonder what pledge you're making to the world. Because if you don't have one, your audience will brush you off the stage faster than the Creed Reunion Tour.

Be like Barack. Don't give people the opportunity to be passive.

Embody an attitude that jolts people awake to pay attention to you.

*How do people experience themselves in relation to you?*

J U N E 18

## Keep people in control.

The feeling of being in control is a basic human need.

Your challenge is to make sure your users don't lose that feeling.

In the psychology manual, *The Handbook of Competence and Motivation*, the research proved that human beings operate out of a model to feel autonomous and in control of their environment and actions.

**HERE'S WHAT I DO:** At the beginning of my presentations, I give the audience my cell phone number. And I tell them that if they have any questions, comments or feedback, to text me. Then, time allowing, I'll address as many of them as I can.

This approach wins for three reasons. First, it's a cool way to interact with audience members. Secondly, by introducing anonymity, it creates an askable environment that makes people feel comfortable speaking up. Finally, the option of texting allows users to offer feedback at their own pace.

Ultimately, these three things reinforce people's sense of control over the direction of the discussion.

*How will you do the same?*



J U N E 1 9

## Keep people from walking out the door.

If you don't want people quitting you, you've got to figure out how to make love stay.

That was the central idea of Tom Robbins' book, *Still Life With Woodpecker*.

*"One day you wake up and find that the magic is gone. You hustle to get it back, but by then it's usually too late, you've used it up. What you have to do is work like hell at making additional magic right from the start. To make love stay, wake love up in the middle of the night and tell it the world is on fire. Dash to the bedroom window and pee out of it. Casually return to bed and assure love that everything is going to be all right. Fall asleep. Love will be there in the morning."*

**THAT'S ALL ENGAGEMENT IS:** Making love stay.

And odds are, you won't retain everybody. But if you make a conscious effort to engage people in the most human, most approachable and most respectful manner, your organization will greatly improve its chances of making love stay.

*Will your doors open?*

J U N E 2 0

## Kill them with consistency.

Never underestimate the followability of commitment.

Commitment grips people.

Commitment reaches people.

Commitment opens the door to every possible opportunity you can imagine.

**THE HARD PART IS:** You can't just commit when you're comfortable.

Radical transparency without regularity is inauthenticity. Your commitment – that is, the reflection of your deepest, human values – is something you have to communicate daily.

It's not a question of how committed you are; it's a question of how consistently consistent you communicate that commitment to the people who matter most.

Otherwise you're just winking in the dark.

Use your consistency as the conduit of your character.

*Do you show up when you're exhausted, not just expected?*

J U N E 2 1

## Know the emotion you're selling.

People's hearts engage when they have a handle to latch onto.

Without that specific emotion, they'll never gain a deeper understanding of which pervasive, expensive and relevant problem your work solves.

Last month, I spent a few hours during my annual company retreat reflecting on this very issue. I thought long and hard about the emotions connected to my brand as a writer, speaker, mentor, publisher, artist and entrepreneur.

Here's what I came up with:

*I delete average. I advocate against normality. I take people's hiding places away from them. I unload the guilt people have been carrying around for years. I kick people's addiction to permission. I petition people to inject their personality into all they do.*

My final list came out to about a hundred different emotions. Pretty cool exercise.

**POINT BEING:** If you want to capture heartshare, you have to peel away the superficiality.

Make sure your mission is more than a statement.

*How will you bring your cause to life?*

J U N E 2 2

## **Know that people aren't bound to you.**

Peter Drucker famously suggested that all organizations should treat their people as volunteers.

This is a smart, strategic and realistic approach. And it completely recolors the timbre of your encounters with people.

Volunteers, after all, do what they do because they want to – not because they need to. And if they don't like the direction things are moving in, they're gone.

This is especially applicable to the top producers and high achievers of your organization.

Recruiters are probably hounding them on a daily basis. And if you haven't confronted the fact that people are loaning their talents to you until something better comes along, you're in for one hell of a wake up call.

Considering the culture and economic shifts to a more entrepreneurial marketplace – and the fact that the median time a person stays in one job is four years – you should be grateful that people have given up their most valuable resource to become part of your organization.

Never rest on your engagement laurels. Golden handcuffs notwithstanding, most people they can leave anytime they want. In the words of Chris Rock, "People are only as loyal as their options."

*What are you pretending not to know?*

J U N E 2 3

## Know what emotion you're selling.

Feelings determine actions.

You've got to emotionally involve people.

You've got to determine what experience you deliver

You've got to guarantee its consistent delivery.

One way to do so is by becoming an expert in memory creation. To practice planting moments in your daily interactions that give people something they'll never forget.

The smaller, the better. When you go out of your way to make the mundane memorable, you convert rare into remarkable. And that's when you create a significant emotional event that tugs people by the heart.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Businesses that retain a strong emotional connection with their customers don't go out of business.

Leaving emotional memories to chance is too dangerous.

*How will you remind yourself to create a significant emotional event?*

J U N E 2 4

## Know when the cost of disclosure is too high.

Like anything, transparency requires balance.

You don't want to become a victim of your own approachability. Take it from a guy who's been wearing a nametag twenty-four seven for over a decade: Personal privacy is a beautiful thing.

And while I believe that anonymity is bankruptcy; I also believe that boundaries are saviors. You can't be so transparent that you lose the magic. After all, that's part of why people do business with you: *Because you intrigue the hell out of them.*

If you're too transparent, you run the risk of disappearing completely. You have to maintain some level of mystique. Otherwise your ability to fascinate will evaporate.

The challenge is figuring out where you draw your line.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** If you don't set boundaries for yourself – other people will set them for you. And then they will violate them. And then they will tell all their little friends that it's okay to do the same.

All because you never set a precedent of no.

*Will your transparency degrade into invisibility?*

J U N E 2 5

## **Lay a foundation of affirmation.**

That way, no matter what people say, you instinctively respond favorably.

This increases their level of receptivity, which increases their infectability.

Even if you don't know what to say to someone, you can always respond with the word, "Wow." It's a neutral, versatile, empathetic, non-judgmental and emotionally unreactive term. It buys you some time until you can define your official response. It also helps you maintain composure when presented with unexpected, difficult or crucial information.

Ultimately, it creates objective space in the conversation, which grants the speaker permission to continue.

*How positive are your default responses to people?*

J U N E 2 6

## Lay bare your belief.

If Martin Luther King, Jr's speech were called, "I Have a Plan," nobody would have showed up.

Fortunately, he didn't have a plan – he had a dream. And he spent those famous seventeen minutes painting a stunning picture of what it looked like. As a result, he captured the heart of an entire generation.

All because he laid bare his belief.

And if you want to follow his example, try this: Instead of telling people what needs to change, show them what you believe.

Because as much as people hate change, it's still awfully hard to resist a man on a mission. Especially when that mission reflects their worldview.

**THE BEST PART IS:** When you radiate belief outward and give full scope to your colorful imagination, you challenge people to consider their own dream. What's more, you inspire them unleash the love to make that dream come true.

And as long as you believe what you believe because you actually believe – not because someone told you to believe and you mindlessly followed – heartshare will be yours.

*Are you selling to people who want what you sell or believe what you believe?*



J U N E 2 7

## Lead with practices; follow with principles.

We live in a tangible world where concreteness is followable.

And the beliefs held in your heart are immaterial when compared to the actions taken with your feet.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Leaders who articulate values as verbs, win.

*Are you living your faith out in the world or lip servicing your beliefs from behind a desk?*

J U N E 2 8

## Lead with your constitution.

When I first posted my profile to an online dating site, I was given up to four thousand words to describe myself.

But unlike every other long-winded, self-absorbed, meathead candidate on the directory, I opted not to ramble for pages about my personal preferences, accomplishments and interests.

Instead, I concisely listed the ten non-negotiable values of my personal constitution as a human being. Then, I requested that anyone who resonated with at least eight of them should email me.

It wasn't some hackneyed strategy. I was just being human.

And sure enough, I immediately connected on a real level with a very special person.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Rather than leave your humanity lying dormant inside you, reach within yourself to find out your own truth and try a little radical openness.

I swear, when you operate with greater transparency, life's attitude toward you changes.

It's cool as hell. Plus chicks dig it.

*How will your humanity run the show today?*

J U N E 2 9

# Lead with your person and follow with your profession.

People buy people first.

**THAT MEANS:** Values before vocation, individuality before industry, personality before position and humanity before statistics.

**THAT MEANS:** Mortals, not markets; divine beings, not demographics; people, not numbers.

Begin with a conscious awareness of this philosophy.

You won't just be ahead of the game; you'll be one of the few companies actually playing it.

*When you put your best foot forward, are you wearing wooden shoes or going barefoot?*

J U N E 3 0

## Learn from the best.

*Companies That Care* is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the well being of employees.

According to their mission, ten characteristics define the standard for all organizations desiring to be recognized as caring, responsible institutions:

- Sustain a work environment founded on dignity and respect for all employees
- Make employees feel their jobs are important
- Cultivate the full potential of all employees
- Encourage individual pursuit of work/life balance
- Enable the well-being of individuals and their families through compensation, benefits, policies and practices
- Develop great leaders, at all levels, who excel at managing people as well as results
- Appreciate and recognize the contributions of people who work there
- Establish and communicate standards for ethical behavior and integrity
- Get involved in community endeavors and/or public policy *and finally*
- Consider the human toll when making business decisions.

That should keep you busy for a while.

*How well do you and your organization model those characteristics of caring?*

**Naked is the  
new uniform.**



**Are you willing  
to lay it bare?**

JULY

# Learn to look good naked.

Dishonesty has a limited shelf life.

Organizational leaders don't go to jail because  
some intern squealed; they go to jail because  
they're morally bankrupt cracker honkeys.

*Who are you blaming your lies on?*



J U L Y 1

# Learn how to disappear.

I was in Tokyo when it happened.

After two hours of eating the freshest, most delicious sushi of my life, the proud chef looked me in the eye and imparted a priceless life lesson:

*"Sushi that taste like fish, no good sushi."*

Think how this applies to your organization:

If your sales efforts make customers feel like they're being sold to...

*... No good sushi.*

If your writing voice makes readers feel like they're being lectured ...

*... No good sushi.*

If your leadership style makes people feel like they're being controlled ...

*... No good sushi.*

If your marketing activity makes prospects feel like they're being targeted ...

*... No good sushi.*

If your recruiting strategy makes candidates feel like they're being proselytized ...

*... No good sushi.*

Hai!

*How will you disappear?*

J U L Y 2

## Learn people's learning styles.

Not everyone needs to come to the Sunday service.

Maybe they're Wednesday night small group discussion people. Maybe they're homebodies who'd rather listen to the audio recording of the sermon online while drinking coffee in their bed with their dogs.

Doesn't make them any less of a member; it just means they process information differently.

And only when you understand these preferences can you tailor your messages accordingly.

Again, I'm not just talking about congregations. These principles apply to anyone who has members. Take my professional association. Last year they started publishing their monthly audio newsletter as a podcast on iTunes. *Finally*. Good lord. If I had to open another goddamn compact disc shrink wrapped to my magazine, I was going to kill somebody.

*How many potential members are you missing because your message isn't tuned into their frequency?*



J U L Y 3

# Learn to be an imperfectionist.

Mistakes are a chance to make the company smarter.

If you're not making them regularly, you're not risking enough.

As I read in *The Magic in Your Mind*:

*"When imperfectness enters a man's soul, he is able to show that he does not live alone in the world, but with millions of others, in whose hearts exists the same animating spirit."*

Don't be the company who never shows any real ugliness. Boldly flaunt your imperfection.

Sounds like a nice place to work to me.

*Do you trust that your people want the real you?*

JULY 4

## Leave a tender moment alone.

I once had the chance to meet one of my heroes.

After his speech, I made my way to the front of the meet and greet line. We shook hands, and he asked me if I wanted to get a picture.

But for the first time in a long time, instead of fumbling over my smart phone to take a picture I could later use to prove to all my friends that we'd actually met, I told Mark that I'd rather just remember the moment instead.

So I did. And so did he. And I never forgot it. Probably never will.

That's what happens when you capture life with the camera of the heart.

When you encounter the people who matter most, allow those interactions to profoundly penetrate you. Breathe in their love. And let the pearl sink.

Otherwise your life experience becomes nothing but an overcrowded external hard drive.

*What is your addiction to documentation preventing you from fully experiencing?*

JULY 5

# Leave people better, day one.

**LEAVE PEOPLE ALIVE.** Helping someone live life is the ultimate human connection. And if you can help them embed their passion into the pavement of the conversation, they'll never forget you. *Are you asking people about the weather or their passion?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE BELIEVING.** People don't remember people who inundate them with information; they remember people who choose to live a better story. *Are you still adding extra noise into people's already overcrowded lives?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE BREATHLESS.** Bother to show up when you're scared. Tell the truth when there's no reason to be honest. And dare to care when it's inconvenient. In your rarity, you will become remarkable. *Did you make them gasp?*

*How do you leave people?*

JULY 6

## Leave people better, day two.

**LEAVE PEOPLE BURNING.** Everyone you meet is a pocket full of firecrackers waiting for a match. And if you can be the person to kindle their sleeping fire, they won't just remember you – they'll share their flame with you. *Are you a pyromaniac?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE CONFIDENT.** People need people who believe in them more than they believe in themselves. Otherwise they'll never feel like they have permission to soar. *How will you inspire them with a vision of what they can contribute?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE CONNECTED.** Position yourself as a catalyst for connection. After all, sometimes the best way to secure a spot in someone's heart is to secure them a spot in someone else's. *Are you a master of the email introduction?*

*How do you leave people?*

JULY 7

## Leave people better, day three.

**LEAVE PEOPLE DISTURBED.** Picasso said, "You have to wake people up. Revolutionize their way of identifying things. You've got to create images they won't accept." *Did you evoke emotion?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE ELEVATED.** Get them high by slipping the drug of recognition into their drink. Then, make sure the people who matter are around when you put their brilliance on display. *Whose name could you put up in lights?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE EMPOWERED.** Let them come to their own conclusions. Allow them arrive at their own decisions. And encourage their wounds to heal under antiseptic of their own actions. *Did you assert authority or offer assistance?*

*How do you leave people?*

JULY 8

## Leave people better, day four.

**LEAVE PEOPLE EQUALED.** Observe without accusing, insinuate without imposing and describe without prescribing. This legitimizes their feelings and dances in the moment. *Did you meet them where they are?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE FAITHFUL.** Your story should lay naked your belief. Then make them believe. Then make them proud to take the first step. *Did you let people pick up where you left off?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE HEARD.** Put up a verbal mirror so others might experience themselves as you do. Show them their words have weight by taking notes on the conversation, then emailing them a copy five minutes later. *Did you reflect their reality back to them?*

*How do you leave people?*

JULY 9

## Leave people better, day five.

**LEAVE PEOPLE HONORED.** Respond positively to their unique experience of the world. Look them in the eye and tell them how great their ideas are, no matter how big or small. *Did you respond to them with fundamental affirmation?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE IMPRESSED.** Not with you, but with themselves. All you have to do is put their brilliance on display; then give them a front row seat. *Did you become a stand for their greatness?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE INFECTED.** Comment penetratingly on what you observe. Compel them to examine a facet of their own consciousness. And you will enable a civil rights movement of the heart. *What do you breathe into people?*

*How do you leave people?*

JULY 10

## Leave people better, day six.

**LEAVE PEOPLE LAUGHING.** Nobody wants to be changed – they just want to be entertained. Make your way into people’s hearts by taking a detour through their funny bone. *Do you help people invoke the inherent humor in their own lives?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE LIBERATED.** Create a safe place where individual creativity can shine. Petition people to inject their personality into everything they do. And make no restrictions on self-expression. *Who are you asking to edit themselves?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE PEACEFUL.** In your conversations, remember to breathe. Remember to pause. Remember to laugh. Remember to touch. Remember to have fun. And last, remember to embrace silence. *Did you make communication a relaxing experience?*

*How do you leave people?*



JULY 11

## Leave people better, day seven.

**LEAVE PEOPLE PONDERING.** That's the other pathway to the heart: Through the mind. And if you can catapult people to think about what they're doing and why they're doing it, you won't be forgotten. *Whose brain do you toggle?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE REEVALUATING.** If you can reset the compass in people's brain so they can better feel what's important in life, you win. And so do they. *Did you invite them to confront what matters?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE REFRESHED.** Figure out which of your unique experiences have afforded you with the deepest amount of perspective. Then, creatively deliver your message from that space. *How does your experience add a new dimension to their picture?*

*How do you leave people?*

JULY 12

## Leave people better, day eight.

**LEAVE PEOPLE RELIEVED.** Wearing a nametag every day isn't memorable because it's rare; it's memorable because it's one less name people have to worry about forgetting. *Whose life do you make easier?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE REMEMBERED.** Every time you interact with someone, repeat back something specific they said during your last encounter. Then tell them how their words affected your life. *Did you reinforce their contribution to your experience?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE SEEN.** You look with your eyes, but seeing is something you do with the heart. Instead of handling people, treat them. Instead of manipulating them, harmonize with them. *Did you make anyone feel invisible this week?*

*How do you leave people?*

JULY 13

## Leave people better, day nine.

**LEAVE PEOPLE SHOVED.** Petition them to take the plunge. Challenge them to play for keeps. And show them what they can't see for themselves. *Did you disrupt their inertia?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE SMARTER.** Instead of giving them facts, help them find their own wisdom. After all, people are always completely open to what they tell themselves. *How will you widen their circumference of genius?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE SPEECHFUL.** If people are speechless, you're doing something wrong. Interacting with you should invite people to talk more. *Did you excavate their brilliance?*

*How do you leave people?*

JULY 14

## Leave people better, day ten.

**LEAVE PEOPLE VALIDATED.** Not everybody needs information. Sometimes they just need affirmation of what they were already thinking, and verification that they aren't completely crazy. *How do you make people feel not alone?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE WANTED.** Everybody wants to be wanted. If you want to take up residence inside people's hearts, be explicit. Tell them you've come to town, just to pursue them. They won't be able to resist. *How do you inflame desirability?*

**LEAVE PEOPLE WELCOMED.** Love always leaves people with a choice. But if you never give people the freedom to accept or decline, it's not an invitation – it's a demand. *Are your fingers pointing or clenched in a fist?*

*How do you leave people?*

JULY 15

## Let customers take the steering wheel.

Joinability comes from vulnerability. That is, surrendering certain parts of your brand as the cost of growth.

It's time to join the post-scarcity, open-source, gift economy.

**FIRST:** Give users and fans the ability to create and improve your online content. They'll become your brand spokespeople just by being themselves.

**SECOND:** Enable your customers to build communities and networks under the umbrella of your platform. They'll multiply your audience beyond what you could have accomplished alone.

**THIRD:** Encourage people to build their own products and businesses connected to your brand. They'll become your mobile sales force, global marketing department and perpetual listening platform.

As a result, they'll elevate your platform to the point that it becomes a catapult. And then, as your brand becomes an infinite source of infinite opportunity, they won't give joining a second thought.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Surrender is the new control. Customers want to be pilots, not just passengers. Let them control their brand experience and they'll thank you by telling everybody.

*How vulnerable are you willing to be?*

JULY 16

## Less outreach, More inbreak.

In the pivotal book, *Jim and Casper Go to Church*, I read the following:

*"Find out which groups in your community are already making life better for people, and join them. Rather than start groups, you could join theirs. Rather than trying to convert people, you could join to connect with and serve people."*

That's the difference between "outreaching," which is inviting people to join your group, and "inbreaking," which is joining an existing community action.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Consider the types of members you hope to attract. What groups are they already a part of? What role in the community do they currently occupy? Create a gameplan to take a more active role in those spaces.

Your members shouldn't have to adjust to you – you should adapt for them.

There are people out there just dying to join you. And they will. As long as you're willing to take the first step.

*How joinable are you?*

JULY 17

## Let people reach you first.

Sometimes a resting posture is the move that matters at the moment.

As Kafka reminds us:

*"You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen. Do not even listen, simply wait, be quiet, still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked. It has no choice. It will roll in ecstasy at your feet."*

**THE POINT IS:** Joinable is a two-way street. Some people would rather take the first steps themselves.

And they will, but only if there's enough trust. Only if there's a certain amount of predictability in your brand for them to reach you. Otherwise the arm you extend ends up hanging in the breeze like the nerd who tries to high five the quarterback.

Fortunately, when you give people permission to reach you first, you earn the right to reciprocate. And as long as you do so respectfully, you win.

No heavy-handedness. No lapel latching. No demands. No authoritarianism.

Just an invitation.

*How reachable are you?*

J U L Y 1 8

## Let people stay loyal to themselves.

I don't drink.

It's not a religious thing. It's not an addiction thing. *Just a personal preference.*

I don't like alcohol, I hate being out of control of my body and I can't handle hangovers.

Plus I'm high on life. And occasionally paint thinner.

But what's fascinating is how difficult it is for some people to wrap their heads around this choice. I'm reminded of a girl I dated who was so colossally insecure, that she once refused to order dinner until I had a drink with her. *Swear to god.*

So instead of making a scene, I decided to make a point: When my beer arrived, I chugged the entire pint, set the glass down on the table and walked out of the restaurant. And I never spoke to her again.

**LESSON LEARNED:** The only thing worse than people trying to define who you are, is when they work overtime to make you believe their definition.

Stop pressuring people into your idealized version of what a normal person should be. You're jailing their truth.

Let them wear their own face, not the mask that makes you feel better about your own ugliness.

*Are you relentlessly requiring people to adjust who they are to accommodate your selfish insecurities?*



JULY 19

# Let people into the moment.

Advertising is the tax you pay for being boring.

The only unit of marketing that matters is human engagement. Ever. Everything else is bothering people into buying you by killing trees.

And engagement isn't just a transaction, either – it's an ongoing process. Consider these key elements:

- Open a direct channel to your customers. That gives them an opportunity to engage. *How many different ways can people contact you?*
- Build a platform for their voices to be heard. That taps into their creative flair. How are you making it easy for people to express themselves?
- Leave your door unlocked in perpetuity. That gives people permission to reengage over and over again. *What's your policy for treating repeat business?*

Engaging in an ongoing daily conversation isn't just an opportunity – it's a responsibility. And if your brand doesn't induce participation, your bank account will endure devaluation.

*How do you invite people to participate in your brand?*

JULY 20

## Love makes everything easier.

In Rob Bell's tremendous book, *Velvet Elvis*, he said:

*"You rarely defend the things you love. You enjoy them, tell others about them and invite others to enjoy with you."*

Evangelizing your company is that easy: Show people the picture of what you love – then give them the opportunity to see what you see.

No need to puke scripture or force-feed statistics. Just transfer emotion. Infect people with your passion by allowing it to overflow into the conversation. Allow expression to flow unhindered and unencumbered.

Stay away from *proclamational evangelism* (crying out publicly, wearing a sandwich board around your neck). And steer clear of *confrontational evangelism* (creating conflict interpersonally, scaring people into hiding). Instead, shoot for *incarnational evangelism* (embodying your truth, consistently and lovingly).

And if you don't think you're an evangelist for something, look harder.

*Are you defending or infecting?*

JULY 21

## Love your limits.

I have no sense of direction. I used to litter constantly. I recently had six cavities filled. I'm useless when it comes to details. And I couldn't change a tire if a Green Beret was jamming a rifle against my temple.

There. *That feels better.*

Are you sharing your limits?

Hope so. Because when you let previously disregarded aspects of yourself come to the surface and acknowledge and embrace all aspects of who you are, people relax.

*Where do you suck?*

J U L Y 2 2

## Maintain a posture of grace.

As you spread the word about your company, you're bound to run into a few doubters.

The secret is to accommodate their unbelief, without running after people begging and pleading them to reconsider.

Three words: Act with propriety.

Present your organization's message – your gospel, if you will – in a way that's challenging enough to disqualify the disinterested, yet provoke the desirous.

Then, if you still sense that it's a lost cause, let them go.

Stop chasing after the disinterested.

Stop rearranging your routine around people who don't get the joke.

Spend time with people who want to be with you.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** You can't make someone believe – all you can do is give her more information.

*Are your fingers pointing or clenched in a fist?*

J U L Y 2 3

## Maintain a steady stream of minor enhancements.

Organizational relevancy doesn't mean radical, just regular.

The secret to keeping the stream flowing is to implement routine relevancy audits.

Ask yourself and your team questions like:

- *What irrelevancies have you recently discarded?*
- *What do you share that people actually give a damn about?*
- *Is the information you have truly relevant to the client and the client's situation?*

This will fuel your ability to make minor enhancements along the way.

Interestingly, the word "relevant" comes from the Latin *relevare*, which means, "to lessen, lighten or relieve."

This creates a few more questions for your audit:

- What does your value relieve customers of?
- What pain do you lessen for your customers?
- What burden do you lighten for your customers?

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Relevancy isn't a chore; it's an ongoing progression.

It's not just about becoming relevant, it's about relentlessly pursuing relevance to make sure you continue to matter to the people who matter.

*Are you combining relevancy with frequency?*

JULY 24

## **Make a conscious, consistent effort.**

Evidence of irrelevance is pervasive:

Start-up companies are spending hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars creating an elegant solution to a problem nobody has.

Membership organizations are suffering low attendance and because traditional, boring, and non-engaging programming refuses to align with multi-generational preferences.

Government-funded advocacy groups are draining their entire budgets conserving insignificant resources that are going extinct anyway.

Corporate advertisers are projecting onto customers what they think they ought to want, instead of actually listening to their problems and satisfying a compelling need.

It's not an issue of financing.

*It's about focusing.*

*It's about keeping the brand current.*

*It's about embracing the spirit of today.*

*It's about directly communicating with your audience in a meaningful, honest way.*

That's how you retain relevance: You establish a direct link between the journey of your organization and the joy of the people it serves.

*How much profitability are you sacrificing by being irrelevant?*

JULY 25

## Make communication a relaxing experience.

During a recent outpatient procedure, my podiatrist administered three shots of local anesthetic to my foot.

I wanted to kill him.

But as painful as it was, I'll never forget hearing the following words:

*"It's over Scott. I'm not going to hurt you anymore."*

Definitely one of the great calming remarks I've ever heard. That's what I love about Dr. Kauffman: He's a light and comfort to everyone he encounters. Nothing could be more relaxing.

On the other hand, some medical professionals' mere presence stresses patients out. And if you want to avoid this label, the key is to ask yourself two key questions:

- *When you walk into a room, how does it change?*
- *When you walk out of a room, how does it change?*

If you're not satisfied with the reactions you've been getting, don't criticize the room. Instead, look in the mirror.

Because whatever change occurs to a room as you enter and exist in it is a tangible representation of how your character, actions, words, reputation and personality have both preceded and affected the people around you.

*What affect does your presence you have on the complexion of the room?*

J U L Y 2 6

## Make each appearance a complete spectacle.

*Rolling Stone* once asked James Brown which of his shows was his best.

His answer: "My next one."

To mirror this philosophy in your own work, consider three ideas.

*Train your performer's eye.* Walk through the world constantly asking the question, "Is this a performance opportunity?" If so, take it. Because somebody's always watching. And they're waiting for permission to be taken over by your performance.

*Plant moments in your performances.* Ideally, ones that give your audience something they'll always remember. The spreadability of these moments will become your instant audience multiplier.

*Make your mistakes interesting.* Instead of hiding them, highlight them. Don't overlook the value of the unintentional notes in your life.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The best promotion is a brilliant performance.

*When's your next show?*



JULY 27

## Make it easy to contribute.

People derive psychological satisfaction from doing giving back.

Make contribution easy. Continually recognize people's contributions as they come in. This cycle of affirmation encourages people to return with more keepers each time.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Create a question-friendly environment. Give new people space to share. Work on boosting your askability.

And never forget to acknowledge the newbies. They might have a contribution the likes of which your organization has never seen.

*Whose voice are you unintentionally silencing?*

J U L Y 2 8

## Make it tangible.

Never overestimate the power of the tactile.

Even if it's a scrap of paper with a two-line message that you slip into somebody's daily planner when she's not looking.

Physically giving somebody something that you went out of your way to obtain – even if it only took two minutes to do so – never goes unappreciated.

There's something especially powerful about tangibility. People like stuff.

And it doesn't matter what you bring for someone. Only that you bring it.

*How will you personify your desire to care?*

JULY 29

## Make loving you easy.

In the book *I Love You More Than My Dog*, Jeanne Bliss explores the power of telling people that you believe in them:

*"With those words, we honor the recipient. We give up control and return it back to the sender. And there is an energy that comes from being believed, from being trusted, and from sending that trust back to people."*

That's how you earn the right to a continued relationship. That's how you earn the right to have employees not just telling your story – but also convincing others to become characters in it. You love them. You believe in them. And you remind them that you do everyday. Every single day. Otherwise they're gone.

Think of it this way: If your spouse only said she loved you once a month, you'd be divorced quicker than Larry King.

Don't let your organization become another statistic.

*How often are you gushing over your people?*

JULY 30

## Make no restrictions on people's testimony.

Engaged organizations don't need to spend millions on marketing.

*If done right, their people will do it for them.*

They don't need to sell the world on the quality of the springs; they just give others the chance to jump on the trampoline with them.

That's what happens when people are fully engaged: They're not just committed – they're contagious. They're living brochures of the organization's awesomeness. And they voluntarily infect others with their experience in the hopes that those people will jump ship and join them.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Put a system in place that removes the restriction of their expression. From blogs to message boards to meetup groups to online communities, the available tools – both online and offline – are endless.

The whole point is to give their river a voice, then give their voice a platform.

Because if you make it easy to spread the word, your most engaged people will make sure that everybody knows it.

*How are you letting your own people do your marketing for you?*

J U L Y 31

## Make others look like heroes.

Every time I give a speech, I have two primary responsibilities.

To be amazing.

To make the person who booked me look like a hero.

Because in the back of my mind, I know what she's thinking: *Will this guy deliver?*

That's what happens any time someone hires, books, engages or commissions you – they put their ass on the line. And if you suck, they look stupid; and if they look stupid, they look for a new job.

For that reason, you have to establish expectational clarity. You have to telegraph your reliability. And you have to deliver a series of small promises consistently.

**THE ONLY CAVEAT IS:** They have to be the right promises. You get no brownie points for delivering what the customer doesn't ask for or doesn't need.

Focus on that, and you'll make heroes out of people.

*Who have you made your cohort in heroic crime?*

**You can't  
outsource  
friendship.**



**Are you filtering  
your life solely  
through pixels?**

**Love is the  
best comeback.**



**Are you willing to  
idle your motor  
even when you  
feel like grinding  
your gears?**

AUGUST

# Make passion palpable.

People want to bring their passion to work. That's the principal path to experiencing emotional fulfillment.

But if you continually require them to compartmentalize every area of their life into convenient little boxes, they may never get the chance to bring their awesomeness to fruition. What's more, dismissing people's passions disengages their hearts and creates a thick wall of resentment.

Encourage and challenge people to live out their best thoughts. Give people what they need to get things done for their own lives. And to remain sensitive to people's personal worlds and legitimate needs.

With that kind of permission, they're free to pursue personal wholeness no matter what comes their way.

Those are the type of people who not only stick around, but also stick up for the organization when others put it down.

*What passions are you asking people to put on hold?*





AUGUST 1

# **Making people feel important isn't that important.**

Congratulations.

You remember names. You celebrate birthdays. You memorize preferences.

*But that's not what makes people stay.*

Making people feel valued, important, special, needed – or whatever other simplistic leadership instructions you read in *How to Win Friends and Influence People* – is pretty much expected at this point. It's the baseline requirement of being approachable.

*But that's not what makes people stay.*

If you want the people who matter most to show up in full voice, work their hearts out for you and spread the organizational love like a fever, you have to make them feel *essential*.

Essential meaning, "Your work matters."

Essential meaning, "We would crumble without you."

Essential meaning, "If you were gone, people would notice."

Making people feel important isn't that important.

What matters is that you honor their essence as a human being.

*Are you a practitioner of essentialism?*

AUGUST 2

## Make the mundane memorable.

Sam Walton was the first retailer to require all of his employees to wear nametags.

“Nametags help my customers get to know the people they buy from,” he said.

*How do your customers get to know you?*

Here are a few ideas that might stick:

- What if you did video interviews with each of the company executives about their individual leadership visions?
- What if you removed everything from your purse, bag or wallet – spread it out on a table in an orderly fashion – then took a picture of it and posted it on your blog?
- What if, instead of your boring resume, bio or curriculum vitae, you published a downloadable and printable copy your Personal Constitution, Professional Philosophy, Theory of the Universe?

Try one of these strategies. Make mundane memorable.

Show your people who you really are.

*What's your nametag?*

AUGUST 3

## **Make transparency your natural tendency.**

People follow people because of how they think, not what they do.

If you want to build your audience, either bring your brain to the table or take your ass to the door.

But strike a balance between sharing your life and puking your troubles. There's a difference between transparency and group therapy.

Instead, learn to be a strategic screw up. Be selective about what you reveal.

Yes, remain committed to communicating how you feel. But before you start vomiting in the name of authenticity, always ask yourself the question, "Is this actually important to my audience, or does it just make me feel better?"

You need to give your audience a chance to imagine with you.

That way it's participation, not just voyeurism.

*Are you free enough to risk being seen by people?*

AUGUST 4

## Make transplanting easy.

In addition to being the most successful cartoonist in the world, Scott Adams also happens to be a trained hypnotist.

He wrote a blog post a few years back about how Dilbert is designed using tricks he learned from hypnosis:

*"The reason Dilbert has no last name, and the boss has no name, and the company has no name, and the town has no name is because of my hypnosis training. I remove all the obvious obstacles to imagining Dilbert works at your company."*

I'm not suggesting you enroll in a night class to learn how to hypnotize people. Rather, consider what Scott Adams has done successfully for twenty years: Making it extremely easy for the readers of his comics to transplant themselves into them.

Your challenge is simple, but not easy: *Don't tell people about your experience – take them into it.*

People don't want to hear stories. They want to become the characters in the stories.

*How are you inviting your audience to become part of your world?*

AUGUST 5

## **Make your customers smarter.**

Contrary to popular practice, it's not smart to have dumb customers.

The more your customers learn, the more profit you earn.

The more your customers know, the more your business grows.

The more your customers understand, the more powerful your brand.

Teach them.

*Are your customers people who pay your salary or pupils enrolled in your class?*

AUGUST 6

## **Make your mission more than a statement.**

The bigger the company, the less likely people are to feel essential.

Take internal communications: If your words don't speak directly to what's important to them, you're nothing but spam.

That's another problem with big companies: Their sense of mission easily fades. And under the weight of irrelevant action, they perish spending time on the wrong priorities.

Stay in touch with your own story. In a commoditized marketplace, it's all you've got.

*Are the messages that deliver that story notably professional or dubiously slick?*

AUGUST 7

## Make yourself clearly knowable.

Familiarity doesn't breed contempt – it breeds comfort.

Even if that means forgoing aesthetic inconvenience for interpersonal comfort.

Hiding the true picture of who you are is a form of reputational risk you can't afford to take.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** To unveil is to enchant, and to enchant is to engage.

It's time to pull back the curtain and show the world your goods.

*What unnecessary title is preventing people from getting to know the real you?*

AUGUST 8

## Make yourself more bounceable.

Getting people to volunteer information and open up to you is a big challenge.

Which makes sense: Nobody wants to risk saying something stupid, rocking the boat, getting eaten alive or potentially getting canned.

People need reassurance that their ideas will be greeted with a welcoming heart in a safe, honest, question-friendly environment. And the secret is to lay a foundation of affirmation. To instantly reassure people that you appreciate their ideas, regardless of their value.

A few *Phrases That Pay* include, "I'm glad you spoke up," "Thank you for letting me know," "I had no idea, thanks for telling me," and "I'm so glad we had this conversation."

**THINK OF IT THIS WAY:** Buddhists monks never ring bells; they invite the bells to sound.

If your people are disengaged, maybe it's time to stop ringing and start inviting.

*Are you encouraging people to save their opinion for later or allowing them say the essential thing that is within them?*



AUGUST 9

## Make complimenting memorable.

Before you start bootlicking, ask yourself:

- What attributes of her core self do I admire?
- What facets of his personhood are most attractive?
- What could I say to honor this person's uniqueness?

Then you can pay compliments that matter – not just flatter.

And if you're concerned that your comment will "go to their head," don't worry – it won't. It will go to their heart. It will remain there forever. And they will be more engaged than an Iowa farm girl on college graduation day.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The interpersonal impact of a compliment is directly proportionate to the level of thought required to deliver it.

*Do your words make people feel important or essential?*

AUGUST 10

## Market your humanity.

My business card is a nametag.

But it doesn't say "Scott."

*It says "Scott's Friend."*

I do this for three few reasons.

- To assure people that face-to-face is coming back. And, that regardless of age, technology or personality, nothing will ever beat human contact.
- To remind people that you can't filter every experience of your life through pixels – not if you want that life to matter.
- To show people that it's still cool to meet people the old fashion way: By touching their skin, looking them straight in the eyes and taking to them with your mouth.

If you want to engage your people, bring all of yourself to everything you do.

*Is your humanity your company's greatest competitive advantage?*

AUGUST 11

## Meet people where they are.

When asked to describe the work of Leonardo da Vinci, colleague and mentor Sandro Botticelli said, "His work will reward you from every angle."

In my experience as a public speaker, I've found a helpful way to foster that process.

At the beginning of every presentation, here what I tell my audiences, "I'm here to do three things: Share my story and the lessons attached to it, make suggestions and ask questions. That's it. Cool?"

Sure enough, these three components enable the audience members to plug themselves into my equations, thus creating a unique experience for each individual.

Your mission is the same: *Meet people where they are.*

Accept everything, reject nothing and attend to people with deep democracy.

*What generic formulas are you allowing people to plug their unique selves into?*

AUGUST 12

## Meet the now need.

People want to be heard first and helped second.

Always honor this priority.

If you treat people's ideas as inconvenient interruptions to your uninspiring monologues, you lose them forever.

If you over empathize by interrupting people's stories to share another selfish, inconsequential diatribe, you lose them forever.

If you only listen to people to use their comments as backboards against which you can try out your snappy new stand-up material, you lose them forever.

Stop circling back to remind people how vastly experienced you are at their reality.

Instead, try listening to people – not just to your improvements for them. Choose to hear the whole person. And develop a vocabulary for the personal by speaking with humanizing language, not perfect phrases you were forced to memorize from your employee empathy class.

Their now need is what matters the most. Meet it.

*Why are you listening?*

AUGUST 13

## Memorialize the impact.

It's one thing to tell someone they're brilliant; it's another thing to quote that person on your blog, publish it for the entire world to see and then email them with the link as an official thank-you for the inspiration.

That's what I do. Every single day. And it takes less than five minutes.

**THE COOL PART IS:** The Internet is forever. Which means that person's quote isn't going away. Which means they don't just have a front row seat to their own brilliance – they have season tickets.

**THE GOOD NEWS IS:** You don't need a blog to do this.

You need to listen, you need to remember, you need to publish on a public platform and you need to personally let the person know you've done so.

People don't forget.

*Whose name did you put up in lights last week?*

AUGUST 14

## Mind the ratio.

Caring is like epoxy glue: It only takes a few drops to hold something together.

Next time you're debating whether or not to care, remember how beautifully imbalanced the ratio is.

I'm reminded of my grandma Mimi. Every time my brother and I would visit her senior living community, she would spend the next three weeks telling everyone she knew about our time together.

You'd think I discovered the cure for cancer. But all we did was have dinner. And that's when I learned a valuable lesson: *It's so easy to make people happy.*

All you have to do is ask yourself: What's this person's epoxy? Then, take the initiative to care.

Meanwhile, overcome inertia by constantly replaying mental reruns of past moments when the caring ratio exploded. That's all the motivation you'll need.

*Do you have the courage to care?*

AUGUST 15

## Miracles capture attention.

When I became president of my local association, I had an idea: At the beginning of every meeting, one member is selected to share a miracle.

*Something that never would have been possible without the organization's assistance.*

Call it a testimony. Call it a story. Call it the price of admission.

**THE POINT IS:** We invited people to share their personal experience. The benefit of the benefit of the benefit of membership.

The kind of stuff you can't find on the website or in the brochure.

The kind of stuff that makes first-timers and guests think, "And where, exactly, is this many splendored thing they sing about?"

*How are you soliciting, sharing and capturing the miracles of being part of your organization?*

AUGUST 16

## Mood matters.

According to a twenty-year study published in a 2008 issue of *Time*, emotions can pass among a network of people up to three degrees of separation away:

*"Your joy may, to a larger extent than you realize, be determined by how cheerful your friends' friends' friends are, even if some of the people in this chain are total strangers to you."*

Moods are contagious. Do you infect people with the right one?

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** As a leader, people are looking to your face to see where the organization is going.

*If you asked the five people who spent the most time with you, what one word would they use to describe your mood?*



AUGUST 17

## Move from nice to necessary.

That's nice, but... *We're not Apple.*

That's nice, but... *That doesn't help me.*

That's nice, but... *How much will this cost?*

That's nice, but... *How does that affect the bottom line?*

That's nice, but... *That doesn't really answer my question.*

So much for the power of nice.

Not that there's anything wrong with being nice.

**HERE'S THE DIFFERENCE:** Nice gets commended, necessary gets compensated.

Never overlook the stark difference between the value you think you deliver, and the value your customers actually remember.

*Which word describes the work you do?*

AUGUST 18

## Mum is overrated.

The only thing worse than saying something untrue is saying nothing.

Turns out the opposite of honesty isn't lying – it's omitting.

Too many organizations who are clearly terrified of having smart, healthy, proactive customers are keeping their mouths shut at the expense of the people they serve.

Believe it or not, our government actually did something cool for a change. They were smart enough to stop shutting up. A few years ago, [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov) was launched as the government's official website that provides easy access to data related to Recovery Act spending.

It allows for the reporting of potential fraud, waste and abuse. And it has pictures, graphs, numbers, interviews, videos – you name it. All in the name of not staying mum.

I wonder what your organization is choosing not to reveal to your customers that's actually causing more stress, pain and profit than if you had just told the truth in the first place. I wonder.

*Are you willing to be honest and direct at the risk of jeopardizing the relationship?*

AUGUST 19

## Never get lazy with your audience.

About ten years ago, U2 learned this lesson the hard way.

Their album, *Pop*, sold fewer copies than any other record in their catalogue. As a result, the group made a public declaration:

*"Our band is reapplying for the job of the best band in the world."*

But this wasn't bravado or a publicity stunt – it was pure conviction. They sincerely wanted to squash the complacency they'd built around themselves.

So they worked their tails off. And a year later, their tenth record, *All That You Can't Leave Behind*, sold over thirty five million copies and won seven Grammys. All because they rooted out any sense of entitlement and got back to work.

Of course, those guys can afford the setback. You can't. Your challenge is to take action quicker than they did. After all, by the time you realize you're trapped in the grasp of complacency, it's already too late.

You're simply too close to yourself.

*Are you standing on whale fishing for minnows?*

AUGUST 20

## Never let them catch you acting.

Michael Caine has appeared in over one hundred movies.

He's been acting for over fifty years, earned several Academy Awards and was even knighted by the Queen of England. In a recent interview on public radio, Caine discussed the very concept of disappearing:

*"If someone in my audience watches my performance and thinks, 'Wow, that Michael Caine is such an amazing actor,' then I've failed."*

That's his mantra: *The art is hiding the art.* Not just in acting, but in business too.

*Disappearing*, as you learned earlier. No good sushi.

Most membership organizations miss this. And they could exponentially increase their joinability if they just stopped hawking membership and started hailing community.

**TRUTH IS:** Membership isn't a piece of paper you receive – it's a feeling you remember.

Instead of puking the group benefits all over perfect candidates, I just say, "Look, don't worry about joining. Just come hang out with us. We like your brain."

You'd be amazed how much more responsive, more willing to show up and more willing to come back people are when they don't feel like they're being recruited.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** You don't have to be a joiner to be a member.

*How are you hiding the art of what your organization does?*

AUGUST 21

## **Never overlook the profitability of accessibility.**

According to a recent survey by eMarketer, small businesses are not only keeping up with large companies, they're actually beating them when it comes to acquiring customers via social media.

The report found that nearly half of small businesses around the world have acquired a customer via social media, as compared to twenty-eight percent of larger businesses with larger budgets.

*What have you published this week?*

AUGUST 22

## Never underestimate the profitability of findability.

If they can't find you, they can't use you; and if they can't use you, it won't matter how friendly you are.

Visitors will leave before they get a chance to become customers.

Peter Morville is the father of findability. He first defined the term in 2005 in his book *Ambient Findability*:

*"The ability of users to identify an appropriate website and navigate the pages of the site to discover and retrieve relevant information resources."*

*Ease and comfort.* That's the secret.

*Relevancy and realness.* That's the next secret.

*Demonstrating to users that you're worth being found.* That's the final secret.

Then, the only thing issue left to consider is: "What happens after users find you?"

Because what your users experience isn't as important as the friendliness with which they experience it.

Findability enables approachability.

*How findable are you?*

AUGUST 23

## Never underestimate the value of volume.

My favorite scene in *The Bucket List* is when Jack Nicholson makes a crucial decision:

*He's going to kiss the most beautiful girl in the world.*

Confused, Morgan Freeman asks him how he plans to accomplish that.

And in one word, Jack says it all: "Volume."

That's what all audience builders know: You have to play the numbers. You have to increase the probability of success by virtue of volume.

Take the Grateful Dead. If anyone knew how to build an audience, they did. But contrary to popular belief, their success didn't just come from their legendary shows. Live concerts weren't the sole source of their massive followership. Sure, they did over two thousand shows – but the Grateful Dead still made records. Over a hundred and thirty, to be exact. That's more than any other rock band in history.

If you want to keep on trucking with your audience, you have to come to terms with something: You're not writing a book. Or publishing a blog. Or dropping an album.

You're contributing to an ongoing body of work. Forever.

*What level of volume has your audience come to expect of you?*

AUGUST 24

## **Nobody wants to dread going into work.**

Disengagement is a product of organizational structure.

If you don't recognize, remedy and revisit these issues on a regular basis, nothing will ever get upgraded.

You have the potential to become an environment where approachability, creativity and engagement can flourish.

Let it.

*Are your people staring at the clock?*



AUGUST 25

## Nourish their interests.

My friend Gil Wagner, founder of Yellow Tie International, had this to say on joinability:

*"Emotionally, the association's philosophies must fit mine. I suggest an open circle environment – both in welcoming new people and in welcoming their ideas – a giving spirit and a mission that feels right. Logically, the math must work out. The expected benefit must fit with my needs at the time."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Belonging is a powerful emotion – appeal to it.

*How are you speaking to the self-interest of future members?*

AUGUST 26

## Offer unprecedented access to information.

Privacy is so last century.

Even if you refuse to lay your cards out on the table, people are still going to learn what they need to know about you on their own. May as well beat the news home.

Besides, opacity breeds mistrust.

Just ask blogger and online marketing Chris Brogan. On the bio page of his website, there's a disclosure list of every single relationship he maintains: *Affiliations, partnerships, board positions, advertising commitments and product endorsements.*

His clients love this. His non-clients love this. And people all around the web are talking about Brogan's informational undressing.

*When was the last time somebody blogged about your contact page?*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Be unusually honest, radically transparent and disarmingly respectful to the organizations and individuals with which you connect. Leave no doubt in their minds about who, what and why you are.

*How could you magnify what you can't hide anyway?*

AUGUST 27

## **Offer yourself as a source of accessibility and candor.**

When it comes to new members, employees or guests, make sure your actions silently say:

*"I'm here if you need me. And if you don't, that's cool too. Just know: I promise not to bullshit you."*

That way, if they ever need honest answers to questions they aren't used to getting, you are there.

Through your example of accessibility and candor, they will eventually will feel comfortable enough to join.

*Are you willing to be somebody's first friend who also tells the naked truth about the organization?*

AUGUST 28

## Orthopraxy, not orthodoxy.

People respond to people who have been there. And people would rather see a sermon than hear one.

Focus your efforts on the right practices, not the right beliefs.

Instead of practicing what you preach; try preaching what you practice.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Be good news before you share it. Make sure the message you're preaching is the dominant reality of your life. Note any gaps between your onstage performance and your backstage reality. Announce your intentions through your actions.

That way your evangelism efforts will be a function of insinuation, not imposition.

*Are you smoking what you're selling?*

AUGUST 29

## Oxygenate the conversation.

People who incorporate deep, slow breathing into their daily actions never fail to become the calming force.

Doing so is like taking your foot off the gas and engaging the conversational brakes. And according to a recent report from the National Institute of Mental Health, your breathing rhythm is a method to train the body's reaction to stressful situations and dampen the production of harmful stress hormones.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Next time one of your coworkers starts freaking out, don't tell them to take a deep breath. You run the risk of sounding like their third grade teacher. Instead, try engaging your own lungs first. You'll find that actions of calm will inspire people to relax, whereas instructions for calm still incite people to react.

When you own your breath, nobody can steal your peace; but when you inspire others to own their breath, nobody will want you to leave the room.

Fast heart, slow lungs.

*How's your breathing?*

AUGUST 30

## Pamper people's memories.

If there's one thing I've learned from wearing a nametag twenty-four seven for the past decade, it's that most people suck at remembering.

Not just names, but everything.

Partly because they don't pay attention.

Partly because they don't write everything down.

Partly because human memory is a mysterious fig.

**POINT BEING:** If something as simple as a nametag can increase interpersonal friendliness, consider how you might pamper people's memories within your user experience.

The human memory can handle about seven bits of information at a time. Do everything you can to accommodate that capacity. Make it easy for people to organize and remember material.

The friendliness of their user experience will skyrocket.

*Do your people's brains love you?*

AUGUST 31

## Panic requires instructions.

Consider the famous emergency with Qantas Flight 32.

According to the *Associated Press* article, a jet engine as big as a bus had disintegrated, blasting shrapnel holes in the super jumbo's wing.

The odds of that many failures occurring simultaneously were one in and a hundred million.

But veteran pilot Richard de Crespigny handled the chaos exquisitely. I even listened to the announcement recorded on a passenger's cell phone, and The Captain was perfectly collected. Here's the transcript:

*"We have a technical issue with our engine. We have dealt with this situation. The aircraft is secure. And we're going to have to hold for a little while as we lighten our load and perform a number of checklists. Thanks for your patience and we promise to keep you posted."*

Thanks to his calming force, the aircraft averted what could have been a catastrophe.

Whether you're flying a plane, leading a team, consoling a teammate or delivering a presentation to a frightened audience, the lesson is the same: *People want to know what action you're going to take to fix their problem.* This preserves their sense of control and realigns the balance of power.

Explain every step of the process. Even the things that could possibly go wrong.

Timelines reduce anxiety.

*Will your calm influence infect the people around you?*

**Advertising is just  
a word for people  
who don't have  
enough friends.**



**Do your  
interactions  
matter?**



**Professional is just  
a word for people  
who seek to  
sanitize the soul  
out of business.**



**When does the  
feeling of formality  
keep you from  
communicating  
freely?**

SEPTEMBER

## Pass the torch.

Making a name for yourself means  
helping others make a name for themselves.

Help people light their own fire. Giving them permission to  
express their personal brand unabashedly so their  
unique light shines bright and consistently.

Not only does this color their daily experience, it also reinforces their  
freedom and invites them to demonstrate their creativity. Otherwise,  
crushed under the weight of can't, they wind up loathing their work.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The people you work with  
would give anything for the opportunity to show you  
how much soul they really have.

Be an enabler of that. Help people believe in  
their own possibility a little more.

They'll work their hearts out for you.

*Do you love yourself enough to get the hell out of the  
way so people can articulate their fabulousness?*



SEPTEMBER 1

## Participation isn't the same as engagement.

On a breakfast table, the chicken participated – but the pig was engaged.

*Which category do your people fit in?*

To participate is to take – to engage is to pledge.

To participate is to show up for you – to engage is to share with others.

To participate is to take a look around – to engage is to take purposeful action.

This makes participation more of a one-way street, and engagement more of a give-and-take exchange. And to ensure you have more of the latter, try this:

*Don't conclude your message with a thank you – conclude it with a call to action.*

Solicit engagement with a question, a challenge or a fill in the blank exercise. Give people ample space to express themselves on your platform. And then keep the loop open to allow other people in your tribe to contribute to the ongoing discussion.

That's the kind of engagement that involves risk taking, spontaneity and socially supported co-creation.

*Are your people participating as helpful additions; or engaging as vital components?*

S E P T E M B E R 2

## Passion is the great prioritizer.

When passion enters the equation, the rules change.

The shy become outgoing, the introverted become assertive and the disconnected become engaged. Decisions become easier. And regardless of what that passion is, people will use it as their barometer, compass, map and walking stick.

Let it lead the way. After all, the word “passion” comes from the Latin *passio*, which means, “to suffer.”

You might start by asking people the two best passion-finding questions:

- *What would you suffer to do?*
- *What would cause you suffering if you did not do?*

Next, once you’ve gathered their answers, you can embed passion into the pavement that leads the way to wherever they’re going. Ask the question: “*What personal skills have you not tapped into yet to add value to your customers?*”

I asked this to a client over the summer. Turns out that Kyle, the marketing director, loved to write. But Rachel, his boss, had no idea. After an honest and open discussion, they decided to put his passion to use. Rachel made him editor of the company newsletter. And Kyle was more motivated than ever.

That’s the best part about introducing passion into the motivation equation: People arrive at their destination faster, better, with more fun and by their own design.

*Do you know what’s under your people’s fingernails?*

SEPTEMBER 3

## Payment isn't the panacea.

It's easy to scapegoat lack of commitment on lack of compensation.

But as I learned from the aforementioned *Power of Strategic Commitment*, "Giving people more money does nothing but make them wealthier unhappy people."

Think of it like a bottle of Febreze: You spray it on smoky clothing when you get home from the bar. The only problem is, the next day all you have is a shirt that smells like Febreze – and smoke.

*You didn't change the fundamental nature of anything; you just put a layer of chemicals over it.*

The same goes for inspiring commitment: It's not for sale. If you really want people to engage wholeheartedly, enable authorship – not just readership. After all, people always commit to what they help create. And they're always willing to invest in what they truly admire.

But they'll never experience emotional fulfillment until you enable their passions to remain an integral part of their worklife.

That's the other distinction between compliance and commitment: One is taking a job – the other is undertaking a crusade.

*Are your people receiving a substantial return on their emotional investment?*

SEPTEMBER 4

## Peel away superficiality.

George Carlin once told *Rolling Stone*:

*"It took a while for my material to evolve and crystallize. When I was young, I was writing superficially from the front of my head, not from the matrix in the back of my head."*

As a writer, I've recently found the same trend occurring in my own work.

I used to publish articles on how to be a good listener. *Which is important, but not as essential as leaving people heard.*

I used to give presentations about making unforgettable first impressions. *Which is important, but not as essential as understanding how people experience you.*

I used to do interviews on how to get noticed, get remembered and get business. *Which is important, but not as essential as how to matter.*

See the evolution?

Continually peel away the superficiality of your messages and start cutting down to the bone. People will listen.

*Are ready to take your messages to a deeper level?*

SEPTEMBER 5

## People crave transcendence.

If you want your people to show up when they're exhausted – not just expected – you have to appeal to their fundamental desire for work that has meaning.

After all, people engage when they've been given permission to flex the muscle of why. And by actively cultivating the purpose driven nature of their work, you provide deeper context for all their effort.

The question you have to ask yourself every day: *To what extent are your people anchored in purpose?*

If they're not, you can expect about as much commitment a kamikaze pilot on his thirty-ninth mission.

And I'm not saying purpose isn't a panacea. But life's heaviest burden is having nothing to carry.

**LOOK:** People want to be in love. Nobody wants to spend a third of her life in an activity that has no meaning.

Work should be a place of fulfillment – not sacrifice.

*Is working for you something to be endured or enjoyed?*

SEPTEMBER 6

## People want to be treated – not handled.

To “treat” is to respect.

*To love. To attend to. And to leave people feeling known, seen and heard.*

To “handle” is to manage.

*To manipulate. And to leave people feeling tolerated, dealt with and circumvented.*

Which approach do you think people prefer?

Odds are, the latter. And I bet they can tell the difference, too. Especially customers. They know exactly what it feels like to interact with someone who, five minutes before dragging his carcass out on the sales floor, got a phone call from a coworker who said, “Hey, can you go handle this bitchy lady on line three?”

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Declare a moratorium on handling. Post signs around your office that read, “Treated, not handled.” And tell employees that anytime they use the word “handle,” they have to donate twenty bucks to the curse jar.

The money will add up quickly. You could even throw a party for your customers at the end of the year. Maybe they’ll feel treated for once.

Handling is what you do to raw meat – treating is what you do to a work of art.

*Can you imagine how your organization would change if your people transformed from a gathering to a gallery?*



SEPTEMBER 7

## Personal expression trumps professional polish.

As a public speaker, it eats away at me to watch speakers who are too polished, too rehearsed and too choreographed.

That's the problem with Toastmasters: They focus so much on the mechanics that they forget about the humanity. And they churn out a population of public speakers who are so rigid that they couldn't order dinner without a script.

**HERE'S THE REALITY:** Speaking with the human voice means honoring the moment. Tapping into your expressive faculties and sharing from place of imperfect truth.

*You don't need public speaking lessons – you need to cut your soul open.*

That's who people relate to, that's who people sit down for and that's who people tell their friends about. The one person brave enough to bare his truth.

If you do that, people won't care how many times you say "um."

*Have you crossed the fine line between preparation and automation?*

S E P T E M B E R 8

## Photography is priceless.

A picture doesn't just say a thousand words – its earns a thousand dollars.

In my experience, a cool, interesting, unique and brand consistent headshot has the power to book new business, secure media interviews and capture the eyes, hearts and wallets off the masses.

But only if you do it right. Only if you pay a real photographer real money to capture the real you. Otherwise your headshot comes out as the same bland, fist-to-chin, Sears Portrait Studio tripe that every other amateur uses on the profile of her online profile.

*Blech.*

On the other hand, when your pictures rock, the world doesn't just pay attention – it pays dividends.

I'll never forget the time I gave a speech in Biloxi, Mississippi. While commuting from the hotel to the conference center, I unexpectedly drove past my own headshot on a highway billboard. I was so stunned that I nearly swerved off the road.

Talk about surreal. But apparently my client loved the picture so much, she wanted to share it with the entire city. And I was happy to let her.

*Is your headshot billboard worthy?*

SEPTEMBER 9

## Pick a lane.

A brand without focus is a brand forgotten.

Try to make everybody happy, and you lose.

Try to make everybody like you, and you lose.

Try to make everybody want you, and you lose.

But that's what big companies do.

**LESSON LEARNED:** Success is a process of elimination. It's learning what your brand can live without.

Before growing any bigger, ask yourself questions like:

*Will this choice add to my life force or rob me of my energy?*

*Does this choice add wood to my internal fire or sprinkle water on it?*

*Will this choice propel me toward an inspiring future or will it keep me stuck in the past?*

Stop your driving your brand all over the interstate. You'll either get pulled over, cause an accident or annoy other drivers. Plus, it'll take forever to get to your destination.

*Doesn't it make sense to just pick a lane and stay there?*

SEPTEMBER 10

## Pinpoint the influences.

In the book *Gentle Persuasion*, author Dr. Joe Aldrich shares a helpful list of factors that influence a person's receptivity. As you think about your outreach and recruiting efforts, consider the challenge question I've added to each one:

The existing loyalties of this person.  
*Where else are they affiliated?*

The transitions facing the individual.  
*What changes are they going through?*

The condition of the soil of this person's soul.  
*What is their heart leaning heavily toward?*

The nature and stability of this person's relationships.  
*Whom do they love, and who loves them?*

The previous attempts to approach or invite this person.  
*Who burned, scared or scarred them in the past?*

The caricatures that distort someone's grasp of something.  
*What existing prejudices do they hold?*

Adjust your efforts accordingly.

*What is influencing the people you're trying to evangelize?*

SEPTEMBER 11

## **Pinpoint the influences, part two.**

I'm not done. Other influences affecting receptivity include:

The people this person has known and their influence upon him. *Who are they hanging with?*

The degree of satisfaction or lack thereof with this person's life. *Are they happy?*

The nature and frequency of past contacts with this person. *How many times have they already been bugged?*

The circumstances under which someone learned something. *Do they believe what they believe because they actually believe, or because someone told them to believe and they mindlessly followed?*

The spot where this person sits on the continuum between opposition and acceptance of something. *What are they resisting?*

*What is influencing the people you're trying to evangelize?*

SEPTEMBER 12

## **Plan is a four-letter word.**

Big organizations love to plan because planning preserves their sense of control.

It underwrites the illusion that they know what they're doing.

The problem is, planning is a big decision. And big decisions cause you to prematurely commit to a trajectory that might later prove to be unprofitable.

What's more, over time, the more you plan, the harder it becomes to invite healthy derailments. And that's how you miss unlabeled opportunities to grow: When you're too busy managing the stress of planning to experience the benefits of executing.

Stay small. Don't artificially inflate yourself off by making gods out of your plans.

*Have your long-term plans turned into anchors?*

S E P T E M B E R 13

## **Position yourself as a peer.**

I'm talking about a real friend.

Someone who knows what you ache for.

Someone who's well versed in your why.

Someone who knows how you think, how you live and whom you love.

Be that person for people.

*Do your clients, coworkers and superiors think of you that way?*

SEPTEMBER 14

## **Position yourself as a problem solver.**

Jack Trout wrote in *Positioning*:

*"Don't create the product – build the position behind the product in the prospect's mind."*

This means you're the answer to something that matters.

You don't just learn about your customers' businesses – you learn about their brain. You try their heads on. And when the time comes, you practice restraint when it comes to delivering answers.

No need to deploy every weapon you have.

No need to teach them how to build a watch.

Just tell people what time it is.

*What is your brand the answer to?*



SEPTEMBER 15

## Practice selective neglect.

If you spend too much time caring about things you shouldn't care about, the things you *should be* caring about will fall apart.

And then you really *will* care.

It's all about discretion. That's what I tell the members of my mentoring program:

*"I care less about where you go and more about who you become while you're going there."*

That's my filter. And your job is to create a similar filter to gauge the "care currency" of your endeavors. You might try questions like:

*Does this relationship nourish me?*

*Ten years from now, what will I wish I had spent more time doing today?*

*Is this experience going to help me become the best, highest version of myself?*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Part of caring is knowing what not to care about.

*What's your compass for finding what matters?*

S E P T E M B E R 16

## Preserve customer control.

Did you know that most “close door” buttons on elevators don’t work?

It’s true. They’re called placebo buttons. They’ve been around since the Americans with Disabilities Act passed about twenty years ago. And according to the act’s homepage, the button is there for workers and emergency personnel to use, and it only works with a key.

Also, according to the Otis Elevator Company, most door close buttons can’t override the minimum required amount of time doors can stay open. Whether or not you press the buttons, the doors will eventually close.

Then why the dummy buttons?

*To preserve people’s sense of control.*

**THINK ABOUT IT:** All customers are control freaks. And whether you serve them online, offline, in the air or in person – you have make a conscious effort to preserve their sense of control.

*What’s your elevator button?*

SEPTEMBER 17

## Preserve freedom of mind.

Nothing disengages a human being faster than the annihilation of independent thought.

That's how you activate someone's built in pushback mechanism: By demanding homogeneity of beliefs.

**THE PROBLEM IS:** Too many organizations turn mental settling into a silent epidemic. And as a result, their people are stripped of their humanness.

Dave Snowden addressed this issue in a recent article on *Cognitive Edge*. He suggests creating boundaries around compatible but different cultures – even if a little healthy conflict arises.

**THE POINT IS:** You have to make certain that people's dearly held sense of individualism is honored. That their work unites with their own sense of life. And that they're treated like individuals on the frontline – not integers on the company report.

Otherwise they'll be out the door faster than you can say, "Tuesday is Soylent Green Day."

*When does the feeling of formality keep your people from communicating freely?*

S E P T E M B E R 18

## Preserve people's fingerprints.

As an artist, I make a conscious effort to alert people when they've inspired my work.

Not with a thank you note. Not with a one-word text message. And not with some insincere compliment they forget by lunch. I physically gift them a copy of the finished product they helped to create.

Whether it's a book, an article or a Brandtag, I want them to own it. Because it wouldn't have come into existence without them, and they deserve to see it live.

Notice I said gift – *not give*.

If you want to make people feel essential, don't give expecting reciprocation.

Gift to keep your art in motion.

Gift to bring yourself closer to the recipient.

Gift to let people to know their words have weight.

Gift to help people remember that their existence matters.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Success never comes unassisted.

Learn how to thank or get out now.

*How do you pay homage to the voices that shape you?*

SEPTEMBER 19

## **Proficiency and passion aren't enough.**

Yes, be excellent at what you do.

Yes, do what you do with a white-hot fire in your belly.

*But make certain those aren't the only two moves in your playbook.*

In the current economic marketplace, competence is assumed and enthusiasm is expected. As such, proficiency and passion are merely the price of admission. The bunny slope. The cover charge for competing in the game of business.

And unless you can connect those two things to a context that's relevant for your people, you lose.

*Does your passion do something besides burn people?*

S E P T E M B E R 2 0

## **Profitability comes from revisitability.**

In the final scene of *Ratatouille*, the snobby food critic skeptically takes a bite of Chef Remy's special dish.

He expects to be disgusted, but ends up pleasantly surprised. When the food hits his lips, he instantly flashes back fifty years:

*He sees his childhood as a French peasant. He pictures his mother, his home and his family. And he remembers his humble beginnings. When the flashback ends, a tear forms in his eye as he scarfs down the rest of dish with absolute delight.*

In the next day's newspaper, he publishes the following review:

*"To say that both the meal and its maker have challenged my preconceptions about fine cooking is a gross understatement. They have rocked me to my core. And I will return to Chef Remy soon, hungry for more."*

That's revisitability.

*What do you do that brings people back for more of you?*

S E P T E M B E R 21

## Provide a safe haven for self-definition.

During a recent newspaper interview, the reporter asked me where I built my creative foundation. I told him about *Gifted and Talented Education*, the extra curricular program in which I spent six crucial years of my childhood.

**IT WAS AWESOME:** We learned how to think, when to think, and most importantly, why to think. Plus we got pulled out of math class. I hated math class.

**HERE'S THE BEST PART:** Our instructor, Mrs. Ray, gave us an irrevocable license to create. *Rules, schmules*. For two hours a week, we had a permanent permission slip to be whatever and whomever we wanted, with zero consequences. And irregardlessliable of how crazy our ideas were, she greenlighted everything. Even when we made up our own words. Like the one I used in the previous sentence.

We need more Mrs. Rays. She understood the value of letting people see through their own eyes. She created a sacred place of refuge where the eccentric kids always felt at home. And she promised that we could come to that home without any interference in expressing our own individuality.

*Who was the first person that let you live by your own definitions?*

SEPTEMBER 22

## Provide a virtual steering wheel.

My friend Chris Johnson sells flat rate web jobs.

One of the cool things about working with his company is the *very* moment your transaction is complete, you're prompted with a video. It doubles as a thank-you note and multimedia tutorial:

*"Thanks for your purchase. This brief video will explain exactly how to use the program you just paid for. That way you can get the most out of our services."*

This is a perfect tool for preserving customer control for several reasons. First, it's immediate. No waiting. No wondering. And no window between when you buy and when you start using.

Second, the video closes the execution gap. Instead of customers just paying money and then fading into the ether, Chris equips them with step-by-step instructions to optimize their purchase.

Finally, the video ensures that customers know exactly what they are buying. And that level of expectational clarity is priceless.

*How are you guiding your customers along the uncertain path?*



S E P T E M B E R 23

## Provide clear, consistent contact points.

As a lifelong control freak, I'm fortunate to have a web team whose amazing client service appeases my obsessive-compulsive tendencies.

Every time I put in a request for a programming modification, they email me with a copy of my Support Ticket. It includes my original request, a status report and the name of the tech involved with my project.

Over the life of the project, I'm emailed with occasional, non-annoying updates that keep me posted on the ticket's progress. Eventually, when the ticket is done, I can offer feedback on the process.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The speed of the response is the response. Even if you're not able to solve your customer's problem right away, consistent assurance that you're on the case keeps them in control.

*How are do you update your customers on their statuses?*

S E P T E M B E R 24

## **Punch a few stamps on their sandwich card.**

During high school, several of my friends worked at a local sandwich shop.

As you might expect from teenagers, they tended to get a little stamp happy on my sub club card.

Yes, this habit was unethical, dishonest and probably cost the store thousands of dollars in free sandwiches over the years.

But you have to understand: *The sandwiches were really, really good.*

Still, the image of the sandwich card is a helpful reminder of how to liberate the inner motivation of others. According to Dan & Chip Heath's bestseller, *Switch*:

*"One way to motivate action is to make people feel as though they're already closer to the finish line than they might have thought."*

Figure out how to throw people that lifeline.

*Whose card are you stamping?*

S E P T E M B E R 2 5

## Puncture people's delusions of inadequacy.

Next time someone tries to convince you how much they suck at something, simply ask them, "According to whom?"

Odds are, they won't have a valid source.

Another question I find helpful is, "What evidence do you have to support that belief?"

It's a bit annoying, but it does drive home your point.

**ALSO, TRY THIS:** Help people replay mental reruns of past victories. Mount the evidence heap high enough where they'll have no choice but to think, "You know what? I'm actually pretty awesome after all."

Ultimately, by showing faith in others, they believe in themselves, feel more highly of themselves and identify the stories they're telling to themselves.

*How acute is your nose for personal falsehood?*

S E P T E M B E R 2 6

## Put a little blood into it.

As a writer, I invest myself very personally in everything I write.

This is very risky, but that's the whole point. The bloodier my words are, the more engaged my readers become.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Self-disclosure earns trust. And people engage when they operate from a place of trust because they're not wasting their energy protecting themselves.

Find a way to ship a small piece of who you are with everything that goes out the door. That's what earns you the right to be engaged with. That's what earns your organization the right to have its story told.

Because it's not just how well you know your customer – it's how well your customers know you.

*What are you using to make your identity more knowable?*

SEPTEMBER 27

## Put away the red pen.

People want freedom.

Freedom to think.  
Freedom to speak.  
Freedom to be.

It's a natural motivator of engagement.

**THE PROBLEM IS:** Everybody's got a red pen.

And the ones who use them to edit people are making this world a painful place to live.

**REMEMBER:** It's hard to create value when you don't have a voice.

Show people that their voice is welcome and they'll sing their hearts out for you.

*Who are you editing?*

SEPTEMBER 28

## Put something into people.

A great book doesn't inform you, it infects you.

The Nametag Principle is the same: You have to breathe life into people's understanding of themselves. Otherwise they may never realize their own potential.

As Benjamin Hoff explained in *The Tao of Pooh*:

*"No matter how useful we may be, sometimes it takes us a while to recognize our own value."*

That's why infection is so critical. You're putting something into people.

*How will you send people back with a lighter step?*

SEPTEMBER 29

## Reach the world.

Sing it with me: *"I will no longer be a non-force."*

That's the mantra of your mission.

Whether you're the leader of a congregation, the executive director of a non-profit, the author of a mommy blog or a political candidate running for office, the dream still remains the same.

To reach the world, and to turn it upside down once you get there.

*Are you up to the challenge?*

SEPTEMBER 30

## Recall your roots of gratitude.

Growing up, our family had everything.

For that very reason, my parents regularly reminded my brother and me:

*"Look, we have things most families don't. And because of that, it's your responsibility to become a model of gratitude to everyone you encounter. When people buy you dinner, you thank them before you leave the restaurant. When someone throws a party, you walk up to the host as soon as you get there, look them in the eye, and thank them for inviting you. And here's how we'll know if you guys are doing it: When the other parents to come up to us, they'll say, 'Wow, Mark and Jane, those Ginsberg boys are so grateful!'"*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Ingratitude is absolutely appalling and unacceptable behavior.

Especially if you have more to be thankful for than most.

*Where did you learn how to thank?*



**If they can't find  
you, they can't join  
you. And if they  
can't join you, you  
can't win.**



**Is your love  
worth finding?**

OCTOBER

# Recognize the humor & absurdity of being human.

That's what Scott Adams has been doing for over two decades.

Dilbert never fails to illustrate just how stupid, selfish and silly our species really is. Here are a few of my favorite one-liners that speak straight to the heard of the human experience:

*"I will now silently stare at you until you agree with me."*

*"I'm going to listen to your ideas, intently, then go on doing exactly what I had already planned before you walked in the door."*

*"We don't care what you reserved. Here at Hertz, we're in the business of selling car insurance and overpriced gas."*

No wonder he's syndicated in two thousand papers.

*What humorous aspect of your humanity will you leverage?*



OCTOBER 1

# Recognition is the mainspring of motivation.

As long as we're talking about thanking, you might want to write this down:

*People crave recognition.*

But you knew that. It's a universal human need. And it's one of the chief determinants of human engagement. And whether or not people satisfy that need depends on if they can answer, "yes" to the following question:

*Is my voice heard here?*

My friend Derek Weber is a master of this. His marketing agency, goBRANDgo, has a Win Wall in their office. Every time an employee achieves a victory of any kind – from landing a new client to delivering ahead of schedule to killing that pesky mosquito that's been buzzing around the office since August – they write it on a sticky note.

The cool part is, each employee has his or her own color. Then, at the end of the week, they aggregate all the wins onto a blog post for the entire world to see.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** It's not about just praising people publicly – it's about being a stand for people's greatness. It's about giving them a front row seat to their own brilliance – while inviting the rest of the world to sit in the audience with them.

Don't bastardize recognition into another corporate initiative.

Make it a constitutional ingredient.

*How are you making gratitude palpable and recurrent?*

OCTOBER 2

## Recognize the paradise of imperfection.

Exerting your imperfect humanity is one of the hallmarks of being an approachable leader.

The secret is personifying it – not preaching it.

Maybe Leonard Cohen was right. In his song, “Anthem,” he sang:

*“Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.”*

See the difference? One is speaking from your head; the other is living from your heart.

**REMEMBER:** Telling the truth about your darkness keeps you in the light.

*Are you willing to occupy your vulnerability for the sake of building a deeper, more human connection with your constituency?*

OCTOBER 3

## Recognize when inspiration isn't sufficient.

I once bought my girlfriend an elliptical.

Huge mistake. She used it twice. After that, its primary function was a clothesline.

*Money well spent.*

Eventually, I realized that her lack of motivation didn't stem from a lack of equipment – it stemmed from a lack of commitment. Exercise simply wasn't something she valued. Her health was not a priority. And there was nothing I could do to change that.

*No matter how hard I tried. No matter how many books I read. And no matter how inspiring I was in my own fitness regime.*

Any number multiplied by zero is still zero.

**THE REALITY IS:** People don't change because you want them to – they change because *they* want to. They change because the pain to stay the same is greater. And part of your job as a leader is to discern whether or not it's worth investing the effort.

Especially when it comes to non-believers. Because in my experience, converting atheists is an exercise in futility. As my friend Joe once told me, "You can either change people – or change people."

The choice is yours.

*What are you killing yourself over that isn't going to change regardless?*

OCTOBER 4

## Rededicate your company's commitment to being human.

Everyone and their mother is an expert on social media.

*Whoopee.* Excuse me while I york all over my keyboard.

**THE REAL QUESTION IS:** *Have you become too obsessed with technology to see your company's humanity?*

You don't need another ebook, six-hour audio system or three-day boot camp on how leverage the power of LinkedIn. You need to sit in a room with ten people who matter and figure out how to make them feel essential.

Instead of telling customers that their call is important to you, just answer the phone sooner.

*Have you made a conscious choice to humanize your work, workforce and workplace?*

OCTOBER 5

## Reframe exit questions.

Over the years I've consulted with thousands of hotels, hospitality associations and other customer service organizations.

And in my experience, the best question to ask a customer at the end of a transaction is not, "How else may I be of service to you?" but rather, "What else can I help you learn?"

**TRUTH IS:** Customers don't need more service – they need more answers. And this particular question works for three reasons:

*First, it's unexpected.* And the best way to attract someone's attention is to break her patterns.

*Second, it's thought provoking.* And anytime your customers are thinking more and complying less, you win.

*Finally, it's open ended.* This decreases the likelihood of hearing the most useless, unleverageable customer answer of all time: "Fine."

That's an exit question. Reframe it and win.

*Does your organization deliver customer service or customer answers?*

OCTOBER 6

## Refuse to leave people where they are.

Customers don't want to be handled, managed or dealt with.

*They want to be better.*

And the only way that's going to happen is if you add value to them.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Make a list of the fifty most common questions asked by your customers. Write a paragraph-long answer for each one. Hire a professional designer to convert the text into a downloadable ebook. Then, give it away for free on your website. Print out hard copies. Save it on jump drives with your logos on it and physically hand it to every customer that walks in the door along with a note that reads, "Fifty answers to the fifty questions running through your head right now. You're welcome."

**THE POINT IS:** When you deliver education *to* your customers, you move forward *with* your customers and stay relevant in the eyes *of* your customers.

That's what I would do.

*If you were arrested and charged with adding value to people, would there be enough evidence to convict you?*



OCTOBER 7

## Refuse to sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate.

The reason delaying gratification is such an admirable quality is because so few people possess the patience to do it.

We live in a Veruca Salt Culture: Accepting periods of minimal progress along the windy road to success isn't a favored pastime.

Instead, people are addicted to short cuts. Which, last time I checked my maps, don't work. Shortcuts cause stress, rarely succeed and often backfire. They never go unpunished. They are a refuge for slackers and a lazy man's panacea.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop looking for the easy win and start running the developmental gauntlet. Be patient with, have confidence in and add value to your own resources.

As a result, you won't just become successful – you'll be emulatable.

*Are you willing to risk today's time for tomorrow's treasure?*

OCTOBER 8

## Refuse to take ownership of their emotions.

Everyone works with someone who creates more drama than a high school prom queen.

Next time they start freaking out, don't waste your breath telling them to calm down. This does nothing but compound their frustration.

Instead, become a body of water.

Still yourself. Keep your vocal pitch and volume low. Limit your physical movements. And avoid anything that might fuel already escalating emotions.

This practice, while it takes significant self-control, will invite people to see the reflection of their own reactivity and enable the release of negative energy. And hopefully, as their emotional engine runs out of steam, your stillness will serve as a subtle bell of awareness to bring people back to center.

Either that or they'll club you over the head with a stapler.

**REMEMBER:** You can't put people at ease if you're not at ease with yourself.

*Is your silence a positive motivator?*

OCTOBER 9

## Reinforce people's sense of thee.

In a worldwide survey to test employee engagement, Towers Perrin found that an organization's symbol or logo was a key indicator, as it is the visible manifestation of pride.

Not unlike the first round draft pick who holds up his shiny new uniform in front of all the cameras and says, "I'm proud to wear the Laker Jersey," when people's work invokes a sense of gratification, they engage.

Take Anheuser Busch, for example.

People who work there don't brag to their friends that they work for "some" beer company, or even "a" beer company.

They work for *thee* beer company. The big mama. The grand daddy.

Your challenge is to pinpoint the vehicle of your brand's superiority.

Think about the one thing your organization does that nobody else can touch – and reinforce it daily. Your people will want to attach themselves to that.

*What are you the world heavyweight champion of?*

OCTOBER 10

## Reinforce social belongingness.

The simplest way to make someone feel like they belong is to actually make them belong. Take Metallica, for example. A few years ago, they began searching for a new bass player. After weeks of auditions, they finally decided on a musician named Robert Trujillo.

But instead of throwing him a welcome party, they just offered him a million dollar advance for joining the band.

*One. Million. Dollars.*

Think he was engaged? Think he felt like he belonged? You better believe it. They put their money where their mouth was – literally – affirmed the value he brought to the table and said, “This is how much it means to us that you become part of our family.”

Don’t pay people off just pay attention to them – reinforce social belonging instead.

*Will you let your world open up and swallow the people who matter most, or will their efforts be another silent symphony?*

OCTOBER 11

## **Release the need to constantly add value.**

Be responsive instead of reactive.

Reacting is a reflex; responding is a choice. And as an approachable leader, if you want to monopolize the listening, don't bulldoze.

Don't take over. Don't try to fix or solve. And don't add too much value to the conversation.

Dance in the moment and respond to the other person's immediate experience. Grant people enough space to be and say what is true.

Their change is not your war.

Lay your conversational weapons down and let the people you love fight the good fight.

*Is your need to add value crushing people's commitment to finding solutions on their own?*

OCTOBER 12

## **Remember the customer of the customer.**

As a professional speaker, I travel a lot.

And although I experience my share of airline delays, when my ride picks me up at the airport, she's never uncertain about my flight status.

She parks in the Cell Phone Lot. It's a new feature offered at Lambert International that beautifully preserves customer control. Located a few blocks from the main terminal, it opens early and closes late. And with a giant screen indicating flight statuses, airline records and other relevant information, picker-uppers can relax in their cars without worrying about when – or if – their loved ones are going to arrive.

What I like about this example doesn't just focus on the customer, but the people closest to the customer. Who, if you think about it, are is a customers too.

Your job is to figure out whom your customer needs to look good for. Whom they need to make happy. Whom they're coming home to.

*Are you forgetting about the people who matter to the people who matter?*

OCTOBER 13

## Remove the posture of pretense.

In Jason Jennings's book, *Think Big, Act Small*, he profiled a collection of thriving organizations that are winning the size game. And what struck me most about the book's featured organizations was the long list of things they consciously chose not to champion:

*No bloated hierarchy. No committees to go in front of to get permission. No building monuments to indulge in the executive's ego. No corner offices protected by layers of assistants. No impenetrable walls to separate leaders from their people. No expansion for the sake of expansion. No doing unnatural things just to gain marketshare.*

Can your organization let those things go?

If so, make a conscious decision to scale back by abandoning things whose time has passed. When you delete what is no longer working, you can grow judiciously where it makes the most sense.

*What are you keeping around to make you feel like you're bigger than you really are?*

OCTOBER 14

## Renew your relevance to adapt to your customer's lifestyle.

McDonald's now offers free wifi.

Which sucks, because growing up in the eighties, the only technological advances at my McDonald's were the motion activated toilet flushers. And even those didn't always work.

Thirty years later, offering free wifi is the perfect strategy to renew that company's relevancy. Especially considering the dramatic differences between their customer and their end user.

Parents don't care about the food. They just want to check their email while their kids play on the monkey bars. Kids, on the other hand, just want to stuff their faces and hang out with their friends.

*What's your gameplan for responding to your customer's lifestyle?*

**SIMPLE:** Just ask.

Try your customer's heads on. Or, try being a customer yourself. That's how you find out what hassles and inconveniences surround the experience of doing business with you.

Uncover that and your organization will renew its relevance faster than you can say, "You want fries with that?"

*What customer lifestyle change do you need to adapt to?*



OCTOBER 15

## Reprogram people's experience banks.

Once you've seen a ghost, you're always afraid of the dark.

That's the problem with traditional evangelism: Force-fed truth causes people to develop allergies toward that truth. Which means the bodily reaction anytime that truth is encountered will be rejection. *Yikes.*

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:** If you force-feed people once, and they may never swallow again.

Watch for psychologically negative experiences, then provide consistent, positive examples to help shift people's attitudes about your organization, product or idea.

*Are you aggressively investing in making remarkable moments that move customers?*

OCTOBER 16

## **Resist compartmentalizing people.**

Personality type assessments annoy me.

Especially the ones that assign you into convenient little personality boxes and oversimplified categories.

Sure, it's helpful in office situations and team projects. But the minute you reduce a human being to a label named ENFJ, you lose.

People want to be called by their name – not their number.

People want to be treated as human beings – not statistics, not acronyms and not categories.

Of course, this all depends on what you see when you see people.

*Do you see them as individuals to be cared for and enjoyed or objects to be manipulated and controlled?*

OCTOBER 17

## Respect people's right to be.

Smart leaders know that they can't stop people from being themselves.

Instead, they capture heartshare by applauding the gifts of everyone.

If you want to personify that level of approachability in your own work, honestly ask yourself if you're confident enough in who you are to:

*Not care if other people aren't like you?*

*Not whine if certain people don't like you?*

*Not fuss if other people disagree with you?*

*Not explode if not everybody likes what you like?*

*Not mind if other people choose differently than you?*

*Not complain if people don't do things the way you would do them?*

I hope so. Because insecurity isn't just counterproductive – it also stains every component of the communication process. And being around people who aren't okay with themselves isn't just a pain in the ass – it's a pain in the heart.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stand at the edge of yourself and salute others without the desire to change, fix or improve them – and without the fear that they are going to change you.

Practice that, and you'll never fail to give people the dignity of self-definition.

Ignore that, and people's hearts will have no problem beating for someone else.

*Are you demanding that the people who love you change their essential nature so you feel more comfortable?*

OCTOBER 18

## **Respect the human need first.**

"Front desk, may I help you?"

*"Eek! There's an aggressive cobra in my bathtub!"*

"I'm sorry sir, but our hotel policy is not to negotiate with reptiles.  
Have a nice day."

*Whoops. Wrong need.*

Before policies, before protocols, before anything, isolate the  
universal human need and use that as your baseline point of  
response.

Everything else can wait.

*Are you treating the problem or the person?*

OCTOBER 19

## **Respond to people's emotions first.**

Acknowledgement is a universal human need.

Listening is about laying a foundation of affirmation.

Before launching into your solutions, try priming your responses with *Phrases That Payses* like, "Wow, that's a tough situation you must be going through," and "You must be so frustrated."

Or, if words aren't going to get the job done, do what I do: Just give her a hug and stop trying to explain the meaning of the universe.

*Are you fundamentally affirmative?*

OCTOBER 20

## Respond to the idiosyncratic needs of each user.

If you force everyone to conform to the same style, you run the risk of losing people.

Instead, position your offerings in ways that make it easy for all types to access you.

For example, I recently made two changes to my accessibility options by offering users a menu of mediums. First, I changed my cell phone voicemail to say:

*"Here are the three ways to get in touch with me the quickest: Leave a message, send a text to this number, or email me."*

The second change was made to the contact page of my website, which reads,

*"Everybody communicates differently. I am available and at your service and via whatever channel you prefer to use the most: Phone. Text. Email. Instant Message. Skype. Twitter. Facebook. Face to face."*

**REMEMBER:** It's not that users don't like you – it's that you're not speaking on their frequency.

If you want your message to be heard in a friendlier way, you have to also consider how people hear.

*Are you customizable?*

OCTOBER 21

## Retain a strong emotional connection.

Marketshare is useless. Mindshare is overrated.

Heartshare – that is, the level of emotional responsiveness your work commands – is what matters.

Your goal is to give people an emotion, a handle, to latch onto. That's what enables their work to come to life.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Actually consider your people's lives when you make decisions. Don't start with the customer in mind – just start with the customer.

As I learned from the aforementioned Jeanne Bliss:

*"We become emotionally attached to companies who consider our lives when they make decisions."*

Ultimately, companies that uphold the human spirit in all they do are more engageable, more approachable and more profitable. And organizations that create what their people will love – not just want – are the ones that stay alive.

What you're competing on is your sensibility.

What you're differentiating through is your humanity.

People can get your knowledge anywhere.

*What emotion are you selling?*

OCTOBER 22

## Retire your low profile.

Earlier this year, *Corporate Responsibility Magazine* released its first annual list of the thirty least transparent companies, exposing those organizations that choose to hide in the dark.

The list covers a variety of industries, ranging from Abercrombie & Fitch to Fidelity Investments to Weight Watchers. And interestingly, when asked what got these companies on the black list, author Jay Whitehead revealed the universal mistake:

*"Share no data beyond what is legally required."*

No wonder companies like Zappos embrace transparency to an astonishing degree. Tony Hsieh, billionaire founder of the company, pursues disclosure that most executives would consider freakish.

*"The more they know about us, the more they'll like us,"* he says.

**THAT'S THE SHIFT:** It's not how well you know your customer – it's how well your customers know you. Plus, how willing they are to share that knowledge with their friends.

What people remember about you is who you are.

*Which of your secrets are hemorrhaging organizational profits?*



OCTOBER 23

## Reverse the approach.

And now for a few ideas on avoiding conversational narcissism:

Don't unnaturally sneak your idea into every conversation.

Don't finagle a way to steer the conversation toward your agenda.

Don't telegraph an attitude of "finish up and finish telling me your problem so I can give you the solution I already thought of."

Be the opposite of every evangelist you've ever met. Practice nonprescriptiveness. Loosen your arrogance clamp.

After all, if your feet are too firmly planted, you won't be able to walk.

**LOOK:** Most people are tired of the "told, sold and scold" approach.

They prefer to be invited, inspired and included.

*Which path are your evangelism efforts taking?*

OCTOBER 24

## Reward people for making mistakes.

Errors happen.

Acknowledge them. Affirm them. Reward them. Correct them. And do it in a fun, brand-consistent, unexpected way. This humanizes people's mistakes and makes for a more user-friendly experience.

The error page on my website rocks. It's a picture of me with a giant, broken nametag crushed over my head. And the text reads:

*"Whoops. The page you were looking for no longer exists. Try searching Scott's brain using the form to your right!"*

It's playful and relaxing, makes the mundane memorable and rewards users with an exclusive message when they make a mistake.

Twitter popularized this same concept with their Fail Whale, which, in and of itself, became a powerful word of mouth marketing tool.

*When your users screw up, how do you positively respond?*

OCTOBER 25

## Risk being real.

Honesty is so rare – it's become remarkable. A

But I'm constantly amazed at how easy it is to have your voice heard, simply by telling your truth.

Notice I said *your* truth – not *thee* truth.

Huge difference. One is unarguable – the other is unprovable.

And I'm not talking about "authenticity," or whatever other twenty-five cent lifeless buzzword currently pollutes the professional development lexicon.

This is about keeping rein on your individuality, integrating all of your polarities into a unified whole, then sharing that music with the people who matter.

*How are you branding your honesty?*

OCTOBER 26

## Roll playback on unintentional music.

One of the coolest books I've ever read is *Unintentional Music*, by Lane Arye.

His philosophy is that the things we normally consider to be garbage can enrich us. And that when we choose to see disturbing or unwanted materials as potentially meaningful to our work, the final recordings of our life's music is that much more beautiful.

Next time you're with someone who does or says something accidentally awesome, don't overlook the value of her unintentional notes. Use *Phrases That Payses* like, "Say that again!" "Wait, what was that?" and "Did you hear what you just said?"

By forcing people to pause, rethink and repeat what slipped out, they might discover gold.

That's how most inventions, rock songs and art pieces were created anyway: By accident.

Learn to attend to people's words with a sense of deep democracy.

Because there's always something to treasure.

*Are you allowing, embracing and using people's verbal accidents?*

OCTOBER 27

## Root out any sense of entitlement.

Here's where big, unapproachable companies blow it:

They build impenetrable walls to separate the leaders from the people who matter most. And because they're caught up in rigid identifications at the expense of their humanity, employees rarely work their butts off – much less their hearts out.

Let's look at Zappos again. When you take the company tour at their Las Vegas campus, you'll notice a lack of off offices. As I learned in a brief conversation with president Tony Tshei:

*"We don't have an open door policy – we have a no door policy."*

Doesn't get more human than that. If you want to jolt people awake, try putting hierarchy to sleep. Instead of hologramming your humanity behind the mask of a title, put your person before your position. Values before vocation. Realness before role.

That's how smart, approachable leaders relax into humility: By releasing their posture of pretense and by staying brave enough to tell people they don't know everything.

*How will you keep humility intact?*

OCTOBER 28

## Run a joinability audit.

Most marketing is wallpaper.

It's invisible, inaudible and inconsumable.

It's doing nothing but polluting the public space.

It's appallingly uninteresting, instantly forgettable.

If you want to avoid that reality, ask yourself five crucial questions.

Does your brand interrupt people or involve them?

Does your brand ask people to care, or invite people to participate?

Does your brand demand and disturb people's attention, or respect and reward it?

Does your brand offer purpose-driven human uniqueness or a patchwork of weirdness?

Does your brand offer real, human, experiential value at the point of consumption, or just dispense a message?

And these questions aren't just questions: They're catapults. And they can be used in a few ways: As strategic planning tools to benchmarks to build the joinability of your brand; as benchmarks to sustain the joinability of your brand; and as filters to research the joinability of other company's brands.

**THE BEST PART IS:** If you ask questions enough, you'll internalize them. And soon joinability will become second nature.

You can't bother people into buying from you. All you can do is invite them to join you by expressing yourself fully and freely.

*Do the benefits of your brand transcend the transactional?*

OCTOBER 29

## **Satisfaction is useless and loyalty is overrated.**

Your people need to be insistent.

Otherwise they're out the door.

But don't let the buzzwords sting you. It's not about communicating an employee value proposition. It's not about encompassing a comprehensive set of change management tools. It's not about sweetening people up so they don't run away after the recession is over.

If you want insistence – that is, people who bleed your company colors – you're going to need daily, consistent actions of approachability.

If you want your people to stick around – and stay engaged while they're around – forget about satisfaction.

Aim for insistence.

They'll forget the door is even there.

*Would you want your spouse to be satisfied with you, or insistent upon you?*

OCTOBER 30

## Scalability is overrated.

If size mattered, dinosaurs would still be around.

Getting as big as possible, as fast as possible, is not the only goal that matters. Small is an acceptable destination. In fact, it's not just acceptable – it's admirable, manageable, flexible, approachable and, most importantly, profitable.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Reject the pressure of endless growth and embrace the possibility of staying small.

You don't always have to take it to the moon. Resist the pressure to expand.

If you want to be approachable, be less.

*Are you still convinced that the motion in the ocean doesn't matter?*



OCTOBER 31

# Secrecy is an endangered species.

There's a reason younger generations willingly forgo their online anonymity.

*They don't know any better.*

As digital natives, privacy was never an option. From profiles to preferences to pictures, from status updates to streaming videos to geographic locations – radical transparency was something they did because it was something everybody did. It became the norm.

**THE DANGER IS:** If you choose not to reveal yourself, you instantly become untrustable. You're like the guy in the parade who refuses to wear the ribbon.

**ADMIT IT:** They're going to figure you out eventually. May as well strip your truth bare for the entire world to see.

**TRY THIS:** Broadcast past screw-ups. Publicize your current failings. Set up an online water cooler to blog publicly and freely about your new projects. Install company wikis where people can complain about problems and suggest solutions. Make your content searchable.

Any of these strategies will enable you to enlist the help of your global braintrust.

**LOOK:** You're already naked. Might as well start dancing and see who joins you.

*Are willing to conduct business in the buff?*

**Care about people's  
experience when  
they're around you.**



**How could you  
speak to your  
market in a way  
they're never  
been spoken  
to before?**

**Expect less from  
technology and  
more from  
each other.**



**Where are  
you sacrificing  
experiences for  
expenses?**

NOVEMBER

# See people beyond their emotional baggage and into their hearts.

I once wrote a love song to a girl with whom  
I was incurably smitten that said:

"I want to learn what your flaws are just so I can tell you that  
I love you anyway ... I want to learn what all your little quirks  
are just so I can say I don't care."

**THAT'S THE THING:** Love is a package deal.  
Everybody's got baggage.

The question is whether or not you're human enough to  
let the people you love carry their bags onto your plane  
and fly with you anyway.

*Do you love people along with all the baggage they check?*



NOVEMBER 1

## Self-questioning keeps you accountable to your audience.

I deliver about fifty speeches a year.

When preparing my slides for a presentation – which I commit to making forty percent different for each talk – I continually ask myself a few key questions.

**HERE'S THE BIG OPEN:** What image could I use to reinforce my message – that would make people laugh out loud?

I do this for a number of reasons: Pacing, pattern breaking, humor, memorability, breathability, digestibility; but mainly because of what George Carlin wrote in *Last Words*:

“People are never more themselves than when they laugh.”

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The images that accompany your messages need to tug at people's funny bones.

*How funny are you remembered as?*

NOVEMBER 2

## **Serve people as if they were already paying clients.**

You don't need to give away the farm.

But by helping at a high level early, you help people find a way to pay you later.

It's all in the mindset you maintain.

If you walk in the door thinking, "It's just a free gig. I can half ass it. I'll bring my B-game and save the good stuff for people who actually pay," your performance will suffer as a result. Not to the extent that the client will really notice the difference – but to the extent that the client will assume that's all you've got.

On the other hand, if you walk in the door thinking, "I know they're not paying me, but I'm still going to rock their faces off. I'm going to make them laugh, make them understand and make them marvel. And I'm going to engage them emotionally with an unbroken series of value-driven actions, an extraordinarily pure heart and an indispensable presence," people will be so blown away that they'll have no choice but to start paying you.

That's what happens when you throw your full attention to the world of the client: They throw their full budget to the world of your bank account.

*How are you making it clear that your focus is on helping and not charging?*

NOVEMBER 3

## Set the stage for commitment.

I recently struck up a conversation with an Apple employee in the food court at the mall. He was clearly on lunch break, but didn't mind talking shop.

"Actually, I wear my blue Apple shirt even when I'm off the clock," he said.

*That's rare. Usually employees throw on a jacket the minute they step out of the store to avoid any work-related conversation during break time.*

Not this guy. Matt told me that strangers still came up to him all the time with their computer questions, even when he wasn't in the store.

"Doesn't that get annoying?"

"Nah, I love it. And I'm happy to answer customer questions because this stuff is my life. That's the best part about working for Apple: They make me feel like a walking genius bar all the time!"

*Are your people that committed?*

Forget about Apple. If you want to set the stage for commitment at your organization, start treating it as a lifestyle – not a policy.

Maybe then your employees won't mind answering customer questions when they're off the clock.

*Who commits to you?*

NOVEMBER 4

## Set your own stage first.

If you truly want commitment to cascade down from the top, you have to be over the top yourself.

We're talking pathologically and unquestionable committed. As in, "I have the company logo tattooed on my ass" committed. That's what shows people you truly believe what you say, and that's what inspires people to rethink their own commitment.

**THE COOL PART IS:** The moment you definitely commit yourself with both feet – and, more importantly, communicate that you're fully committed – the people who matter most follow suit.

It all depends on whether you're courageous enough to wear your instrument of commitment proudly.

Because what you are communicating everything people need to know.

*What do they think when they hear your life speak?*



NOVEMBER 5

## Shed your armor.

In *Creating True Prosperity*, Shakti Gawain writes that vulnerability means allowing yourself to be affected by the word around you.

This is a terrifying prospect for many leaders because you're risking your truth. You're risking being rejected. And you're risking being stared at or talked about.

**BUT HERE'S THE SECRET:** The more often you stick yourself out there, the more comfortable and confident you become with who you are. And when you're comfortable and confident with who you are, your truthful self-expression inspires and gives other people permission to do and be the same.

That's when we begin to listen to each other from a truer place, share with each other from a stronger place and communicate with each other from a more genuine place.

**TRUTH IS:** You display your love for people by letting those people get to know you.

Doesn't get more approachable than that.

*How much longer do you want to deprive yourself of breaking out in order to protect others from who you really are?*

NOVEMBER 6

## **Show people they've already achieved victory.**

Whenever new students come to practice at my yoga studio, I always make it a point to congratulate them in the locker room for sticking it out the whole ninety minutes.

*"At least you stayed in the room the whole time. I've been here for years and not all first timers do. Consider that a victory."*

Every time I've said this, new students never fail to become energized.

And many of them have come back.

*What could you say to someone to reinforce her self-belief that she's progressed significantly more than most people her exact same situation?*

NOVEMBER 7

## Show-up is the new sign-on.

When I first arrived at my professional association, the president took me aside and unexpectedly told me *not* to join.

*"Just show up, hang out and ask questions. Worry about joining later. Cool?"*

I took Richard's advice. And it turned out to be a much smarter investment of my time, money and energy. Plus I didn't have to deal with the pressures of membership, dues, committees and the like.

**THE COOL PART IS:** After two years of casually showing up, I eventually did join. Then became a board member. Then became chapter president.

**GREAT LESSON:** Sometimes the best way to become more joinable is to tell people that it's okay not to join.

What do you have to lose? Why not look them in the eye say, "Look, we I have no petitions for you to sign, no recruitment drives for you to mount, and no expectations for you to fulfill. Just relax, and enjoy hanging out with the one club that requires absolutely nothing of you. Cool?"

Who knows? They might come back with their friends.

*Are you blinded by the illusion that everyone in the world needs what your organization offers?*

NOVEMBER 8

## Shoes make the man – and the brand.

My family's business, *Closeouts With Class*, has been a major player in the wholesale industry since the early seventies.

But here's what most customers don't know: Frank, my grandpa and the founder of the company, never asked his successors to fill his shoes. Instead, he fabricated the foundation. The soul. And from that foundation, he gave each of his future leaders permission to make their *own* shoes.

**THAT'S HOW YOU WIN:** By giving people permission to wear their own shoes, wear them loud and wear them proud.

After all, people engage when expression isn't restricted and their dearly held sense of individualism is honored.

If you want to deliver a dose of soul, stop forcing employees to play cover songs. Petition them to deploy the best, highest version of themselves.

It's not only branding – it's being a human being.

*Is your brand an echo of someone else's?*

NOVEMBER 9

## **Show them you can bend.**

Mental flexibility will take you far.

As I learned from the book *Flow*:

*"A psychologically androgynous person in effect doubles her repertoire of responses and can interact with the world in terms of a much richer and varied spectrum."*

It's about striking a balance between resolute persistence and commitment, yet remaining flexible enough to bend without compromising foundation or sacrificing respect.

It's about keeping yourself amenable to change of mind instead of allowing the arrogance clamp of terminal certainty to suffocate your brain's elasticity.

Companies who get this get heard.

*Do you retain ongoing openness to your misguided perceptions?*

NOVEMBER 10

## Show up when you're scared.

This proves to people that you're a human being.

That you're willing occupy your vulnerability. And that your desire to care overrides your need to be confident.

If someone you love is going through a tough time that you can't relate to or empathize with, show up anyway. In your cozies at two in the morning if you have to.

Then, practice breathing through that fear. Listen loudly. Take notes. Reflect their reality back to them. And remember that it's okay to say, "I don't know what to say."

**REMEMBER:** Presence trumps eloquence.

The height of caring is the intersection of vulnerability and naked honesty.

*Are you willing to sacrifice comfort for caring?*

NOVEMBER 11

## Sit people down.

The best way to find out what people want is to ask them.

As the president of my local association, I've spent the last year doing just that: Collecting data. Asking questions. Having lunches. Kissing babies. Whatever it takes.

And during one-on-one meeting with members, past members or potential members, I've been asking the following questions:

*What would bring you back?*

*When you used to come to meetings, what, specifically, were we providing you that we've lost touch of?*

**HERE'S THE REALITY:** Regardless of current attendance or membership, there was a moment when people did care, and did come. As their leader, you have the power to create that again.

Pick up the phone, set up a lunch, sit down with someone, honestly ask for their help, staple your tongue to the roof of your mouth and take copious notes.

People want to be in the mix with something meaningful.

Offer that, and you will drive faces back.

*How many lunches have you had this month with current, past or prospective members?*

NOVEMBER 12

## Small drops make big splashes.

I'm not on social media as much as people think.

Just enough to fulfill several key intentions:

First, to publicly thank people who inspire my work. And I do so across all platforms on a daily basis. *How are you paying homage to the voices that shape you?*

Second, to hear what my readers are saying. Then, use my listening platform to convert their feedback into inspiration. *Are you using social media as a selling tool or a hearing aid?*

Third, to send personal, private and direct messages to people who follow my work. This combination of gratitude and engagement keeps me connected to the people who matter most. *Does your autoresponder make people feel invisible?*

**THE POINT IS:** This level of engagement doesn't require an inordinate amount of time. It's not like I'm tweeting every spare minute of my day. Or spending family time glued to my smartphone. Or getting sucked into the digital vortex by responding to every magnet for my attention when I should be paying attention to the person across the dinner table.

It's simply a matter of bothering to bother.

*Are you taking time to show people they're worth the effort?*



NOVEMBER 13

## **Small is approachable.**

The corporate veil of bigness and anonymity no longer appeals to customers.

That's what sucks about being a behemoth: When you make mistakes everybody notices.

A small company, on the other hand, can make mistakes quickly, quietly – even largely – and hide the ashes before the fire engines come.

Plus, the less you own, the greater your mobility. And the less you have, the less you have to worry about.

Hooray for being human!

*Are you ruthlessly small?*

NOVEMBER 14

## Smarter means surrendering.

In Michael Moore's documentary, *Sicko*, he travels to France.

Interviewing several doctors and professors, he discovers that the French government provides the following: Social services health care, public education, vacation, day care – all for one dollar an hour – and neonatal support that includes cooking, cleaning, and laundry services for new mothers.

But here's the part that blew me away. One professor explained:

*"When you have a population of people that are healthy, educated and unafraid, it's impossible to control them."*

No wonder corporations and organizations are afraid of educating their people: They don't want to lose control.

Interestingly, I also watched a vintage interview with global innovator, Buckminster Fuller, who echoed the same sentiment. He helped me realize why it's so hard for some businesses to risk making their customers smarter:

*"Governments, religions and businesses would find it devastating to their activity to have humanity a success. They are predicated on you being an inherent failure."*

**THE GOOD NEWS IS:** Surrendering control doesn't mean losing it.

Let go. Make your people smarter. You'll be fine.

*How are you leveraging your vulnerability to make your customers smarter?*

NOVEMBER 15

## Smoke what you're selling.

I don't do drugs because I don't need to.

But if I did, I would make damn sure that my dealer was someone who regularly used – and enjoyed – the same drugs he sold to me.

Wouldn't you prefer to buy crack from someone who's tried it before?

And I understand that you're not a drug dealer. Anymore. But you *are* a leader. And as Pastor Rob Bell suggested:

*"I cannot lead people somewhere I am not trying to go myself. I don't need to have arrived, I don't have to be perfect, but I do need to be on the path."*

Now there's a guy I'd buy drugs from.

*Is the message you're preaching the dominant reality of your life?*

NOVEMBER 16

## **Solicit commitment actively but carefully.**

People work best when they know that others are depending on them.

Don't be afraid to ask for specific, small participation. Even if you think you're being too pushy when you ask people to join or participate.

Consider the fact that some people are just waiting for you to invite them.

On the other hand, keep time demands reasonable. Assure people that exploring options isn't committing to them.

*Are you asking for too much too quickly from someone who isn't too interested in being too committed?*

NOVEMBER 17

## Speed is your friend.

Marshall McLuhan was right: The medium is the message.

And when you hold a leadership position, that idea seeps its way into everything you do.

*Good, fast and cheap* has been replaced by *perfect, now and free*.

Here's how to adapt to that:

*First, with questions.* Because it's not only about being askable – it's about how quickly you let people know that you're searching for an answer.

*Second, give responses.* Because it's not only what you say – it's about how long you make people wait before they hear it.

*Third, voice troubles.* Because it's not only about fixing the problem – it's about how well you communicate to people as you fix it.

Without that kind of speed sensibility, your people end up suffering in silence.

And instead feeling essential, they feel evaded.

*Do you return calls faster than your competitors?*

NOVEMBER 18

## Stamp out anonymity.

Everything matters, everybody's watching and everything's a performance.

The difference is, when you're small – when you're approachable – you can hang out in the lobby after the show and shake people's hands.

But when you're a hulking beast of a company, it becomes increasingly difficult to get out of the bubble and get into the grind.

**WHAT COMPANIES NEED TO LEARN IS:** Success comes when you're willing to be bold, to be seen, and to try things.

Stop hiding behind the mask of a role or title. And for the love of God, stop sending surrogates. Because if you have to resort to some gimmick to let people know you're there, you're not really there.

Big provides people with convenient places to cower. Small means exposing the place where you really live and being brave enough to tell people you don't know everything.

*Are you small enough to surrender your emotional hiding places?*

NOVEMBER 19

## Squash complacency.

Relationships work when you work at them.

Otherwise they degrade into predictable, boring and complacent stalemates. And that's when people start to feel invisible.

**LET ME ASK YA THIS:** How do you recognize longtime partners in a unique, memorable and spreadable way?

And I'm not talking about thoughtless, uninspiring holiday cards that get trashed instantly. Or impersonal, emotionless autoresponders reminding people how important their business is to you. This is about creating an emotional connection that deepens over time. Gifting – not just giving – meaningful rewards that recognize outstanding contributions to your organization.

That's why my company manufactures Brandtags. These customized limited edition art pieces, or "identity collages," completely erase the memory of any other gift your clients have ever received.

With a Brandtag, you make people feel essential. With a Brandtag, you make gratitude palpable and recurrent. And with a Brandtag, you prove that recognition isn't some corporate initiative – it's a constitutional ingredient.

Ingratitude is the gateway drug to complacency. And complacency is the merit badge you get for winning a marathon in your comfort zone.

*How do you thank the people who matter?*

NOVEMBER 20

## Start at the top.

The reason commitment is improperly installed in most organizations is because it's treated as policy, not a lifestyle.

But that's not the way commitment works.

It's not something you do – it's something you embody. And unless it's a robust strand of the leader's genetic makeup, people won't be inspired to follow suit.

That's what I've learned after a decade of wearing a nametag: Commitment is the offspring of values.

You really think I'd still be wearing this goddamn sticker every day if it weren't directly glued to my personal constitution? *Hell no.*

But that's the whole point: When it's your heart, you don't need to prove to anyone that you can't live without it. They simply take the cue from your life. And if you want to inspire commitment, begin by expressing your own. Find your commitment device. And wear it proudly for all to see.

Otherwise you're just winking in the dark.

*How are you cascading your commitment through every level of the organization?*



NOVEMBER 21

## Start with a firmer step.

A few sad realities:

*The world is not waiting breathlessly to hear what you have to say. The blogosphere is not standing on the edge of their seats eagerly anticipating your next post. The people on Twitter are not waking up an hour earlier just to read the hilarious update about your Beagle's latest genital licking adventure.*

Instead, consider these firmer-step suggestions:

**FIRST:** Align your petitions with the self-interest of your audience. *Find out what their success seeds are.*

**SECOND:** Give clear direction of what you want people to follow. *Make the audience your accomplice.*

**THIRD:** Build a listening platform. *Demonstrate to the people you want to hear that they have been heard first.*

**FOURTH:** Create a dialogue that draws people into the cause. *Say things you haven't said elsewhere.*

**FINALLY:** Invite layers of interpretation around your message. *Allow people to add multiple dimensions to your ideas.*

Follow this process, and your voice will be heard.

*Do you hit the ground running or hit the ground stroking?*

N O V E M B E R 22

## Start with yourself.

Think of the last three organizations, clubs or groups you joined.

How easy were they to join?

What was the deciding factor?

What reservations did you have about joining?

Sit down with your board. Make a chart. Write the answers out. Look for commonalities. Then brainstorm three action items for each attribute of joinable organizations.

Begin executing them today.

*Why do you join?*

NOVEMBER 23

## Step back from center stage.

At your next meeting, practice a little restraint.

Your hand doesn't have to shoot up every time.

Instead, staple your tongue to the roof of your mouth and let other people shine. Keep your eyes out for people who haven't contributed in a while. Then, when the time feels right, say:

*"Hey Tony? Didn't you have a great method for handling that problem?"*

Not answering doesn't make you less smart – it makes you more generous.

*Who was the last person you turned into a Christmas tree?*

NOVEMBER 24

## Stop asking people to edit themselves.

It's one thing to edit a term paper – it's another to edit a person.

Editing means correcting the core of something. And the moment you allow that to happen – to the work or to the person who authors it – is the moment of betrayal.

What's more, editing renders creativity timid and impotent, and it's not fair to people to let that happen.

**WRITE THIS DOWN:** Ensure that people's true identity is allowed to emerge. Enable regular expressions of eccentricity. And petition people to inject their personality into everything they do.

Otherwise their truth will feel jailed. And nothing disengages people quicker than interfering with the expression of their individuality.

The Nametag Principle is about allowing people to walk their truth, breathe their brand and stay loyal to themselves.

Retire your red pen.

*Whom are you asking to edit themselves?*

NOVEMBER 25

## Stop falling in love with your own marketing.

You are not your customer.

It doesn't matter if you like it – it matters if people get it right away.

It doesn't matter if you think it's cool – it matters if people enjoy using it.

It doesn't matter if you get excited about it – it matters if people tell their friends about their positive, friendly experience of using it.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop superimposing onto people what you think they should want and start asking people what they need.

"Help me help you," as Jerry Maguire said.

Without that solicitation of user feedback, you end up sitting in an office having a love affair with your own marketing.

And the intangible asset known as your brand decreases in equity with every transaction.

*How have you made it easier for people to interact with you?*

NOVEMBER 26

## Story isn't enough.

Here's the problem with concept movies: They're rich with funny moments and interesting characters, but when screenwriters haphazardly insert mediocre stories the audience doesn't care about, box office numbers tank.

On the other hand, smart movies do it right. Think about *The Blues Brothers*: That film never would have become a classic if it was just about Dan and John. There was something bigger at stake: *They were on a mission from God.*

And they engaged the audience in their goal, frightened people with their obstacles, and ultimately made you want them to succeed in the end. *That's a story with soul.* And if you want to build soul capital for your organization, here's my suggestion:

*You can't just tell the story – you've got to stick the landing.*

You've got to attach meaningful concrete immediacy to your story; otherwise nobody is going to repeat it.

**REMEMBER:** Story is a soul medium. But only if you tell one people care about.

*How many people in your audience are checking their email?*

NOVEMBER 27

## Strengthen your gentleness.

Love is a respiratory requirement.

It's the oxygen that keeps people alive.

That's why wearing your humanity on your sleeve is so essential: It helps people develop an affectionate regard toward each other.

Like my friend Robbin Phillips of Brains on Fire says, "Love is a circular transaction."

When you treat people like people, they become infected with respectful awe.

When you treat people like sounding boards for your own ego needs, they grudgingly concede.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Regularly restock your inventory of human emotion.

Demonstrate magnanimity of the soul.

*Which type of people would you rather share an office with?*

N O V E M B E R 28

## **Surprise people with your impeccable word.**

Reliability is like honesty: It's so rare – it's become remarkable.

Fortunately, you're the kind of person who actually delivers.

*Good.* Because that's all people ask for. Especially the ones who put themselves on the line for you.

They don't want to look stupid.

They don't want to lose their job.

They don't want to be the first person to trust you.

They just want you to come through like you said you would.  
*Imagine that.*

The secret is to set expectational clarity. To be more strategic about your intent. To know who you are and who you aren't; what you'll stand for and what you won't stand for.

Even if you have to hold a meeting for no reason other than to clarify mutual misapprehension.

These are the contributing forces to building consistent reliability.

*Are you prolific in communicating expectations?*



NOVEMBER 29

## Surrender your role.

In a recent issue of *BusinessWeek*, Keith Ayers, President of Sydney's Integro Leadership Institute, explained that when we get into playing roles, we stop being real.

*"If I believe I have to act like a manager, then I focus on myself, my roles, what I'm doing and what I'm saying – instead of focusing on the person I am with. This diminishes trust with employees and decreases their engagement, commitment, and productivity."*

We see evidence of this is trend everywhere:

Customer service agents start puking their scripts over the phone before listening to your actual problem. Salespeople dive into obvious closing techniques before you're ready to buy. And parents treat you like a child long after you've become an adult.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Interact with people as a person, not as a role. That way, when you see yourself as a person dealing with another person – no matter what your roles – you can focus on the needs of others and on creating value.

*What unnecessary title is preventing people from getting to know the real you?*

NOVEMBER 30

## Suspend your need to dominate the conversation.

Listening is midwifing.

That means facilitating a natural process, guiding the speaker to make the best choices, nurturing the person's rhythm and steering people where they deem fit.

That also means not taking over. Not adding more value. Simply inviting others to listen within – then wait for their inner voice to respond.

Even if this process takes six painful months, it still shows people that they can trust their own resources and manage their own lives.

When you approach listening as a midwifing process, you leave people feeling heard. And the echoes of their voice reverberate against their own hearts, impelling them to take ownership and take action.

**REMEMBER:** The goal of listening is to provide assistance – not authority.

Don't take over people's problems for them. Grow bigger ears by helping the other person give birth to understanding.

No epidural needed.

*Are you respecting people's speed of self-discovery?*

**Soul informs brand,  
and brand informs  
your bank account.**



**Are you injecting it  
into everything?**

DECEMBER

# Sweat the small stuff.

Don't sacrifice experience for expense.

If you're small enough to care, you can make a conscious decision to put the experience above all else.

You can move beyond the mechanical and transactional and into the emotional and transformational.

That's what customers are coming back for anyway.

How interacting with you makes them feel.

*What small action might make a big difference?*



D E C E M B E R 1

## Take it one step further.

Three awesome examples of The Nametag Principle in action:

*Twenty years ago, Progressive made insurance history.* They started giving their customers access to the competition by offering comparison quotes from other providers.

*Three years ago, General Motors made automotive history.* They started asking Saturn dealers to provide one or more of the competing models in the showroom. That way, customers could look at it, sit in it, drive it and realize how much better Saturn was.

*Last year, Patagonia made green history.* They launched "The Footprint Chronicles." It's an interactive mini-site that allows customers to track the impact of five Patagonia products from design to delivery.

I wonder what step your organization could take to knock the socks of the untrusting masses.

It's not like it has to be a big step. All you have to do is quit something average.

Get gutsy or get gone.

*Are you allowing people to examine your organization's life habits?*

D E C E M B E R 2

## Take people back in time.

Have you ever watched a concert that made you forget you were in the audience?

It's a beautiful thing. And it happens for one reason: *The performers knew how to disappear from the stage.* They know how to let the music become bigger than the musicians.

That's what transports the audience to another realm of experience.

Every time I attend a Dave Matthews concert, I travel back in time. After listening to their music for almost twenty years, every song is attached to an emotional experience. Or an old girlfriend. Or a particular period of my life.

Your challenge is to do the same: To take people back in time.

Ask yourself: "*What is the emotion you are selling?*"

When you know your emotion, you engage people with your brand because they have something to latch onto.

Then you can let the emotion do the heavy lifting for you.

*What emotion will you use to disappear and take people back in time?*

DECEMBER 3

## **Take people to the depths they desperately need to explore.**

Even if that means going to a completely unexpected place.

Meet people where they are. Sit there with them for as long as they need. Then, challenge them to go somewhere even better.

They'll walk away from you as an upgraded version of themselves.

All because you steered the rudder as they paddled like hell.

*Are you an interpersonal archaeologist?*

D E C E M B E R 4

## Take the soul need seriously.

Giving people a free soda a day isn't enough.

You have to tap into the human longing for freedom. That's what people want: A yes answer to the question, "Can I live my truth here?"

People engage in their work when they have permission to express themselves without resorting to code. When they can take a piss without having to meet compliance. Otherwise the feeling of formality prevents them from communicating freely, and they end up injecting about as much soul as Colonel Gaddafi.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Lighten up on procedures and load up on philosophy.

Instead of initiating restrictive devices that keep people from doing things (policies), implement enabling devices that empower people to do something (philosophies.)

*Is your company's work experience mechanical and transactional or emotional and transformational?*



DECEMBER 5

## **Take your own hiding places away.**

I remember the first time I ate at a restaurant with an open kitchen.

I was twelve, I was somewhere in Florida and I thought it was the coolest thing ever.

When the chef delivered our food, I asked him why there were no walls. His answer was something I never forgot: "We've got nothing to hide."

*Where is your organization hiding?*

*What ideas do you have that you're afraid people will steal?*

Because I've got news for you: There is nowhere to hide.

Maybe your office needs more mirrors. Not literal mirrors, necessarily. Just something – or someone – to consistently offer a reflection your truth as the world sees it.

Mirrors lay it naked. They reveal the lies you tell yourself. They offer everything you hate about yourself, staring back at you.

Doesn't get more transparent than that.

*How self-confrontational are you willing to become?*

DECEMBER 6

## The convenience of connectedness comes at a high price.

When you divide your attention between the person in front of you and the people you're giving snippets of your digital attention to, it's disrespectful, annoying and makes people feel invisible.

*Are you really that important? Or are you putting yourself at the beck and call of people you barely even know just to feel needed?*

In the book *Crazybusy*, Dr. Edward Hallowell writes about this very topic. His research proves that each time you introduce a new object of attention into what you're doing, you dilute your attention on any one object.

"Multitasking is usually disrespectful to someone," he says.

Put down your phone. Honor the audience of one. Listen with your eyes. And when you're with people, really be with people. Instead of checking your email under the dinner table, make it clear that human beings are more important than technology. People will feel seen.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Just because you're instantly connected to the masses doesn't mean you're intimately connected to the people who matter.

*What do people get when they get you?*

DECEMBER 7

## **The enemy of being heard.**

It's not the noise. It's not the clutter. It's not the messenger.

Most messages – from personal emails, to annual presentations, to monthly internal marketing communications, to weekly promotional efforts, to daily blog posts, to hourly tweets – are depthless trivialities at best.

The real reason your message fails to break through, get heard by the people who matter, and move those people to take action, is because it fails to speak straight to the heart of human experience.

*Are you a robot?*

D E C E M B E R 8

## The heart has its own measuring scale.

If the audio track of your attitude is that you're nothing but a big bucket of suck, you will stall, choke it all back, and contribute nothing.

But, if you truly believe – at a cellular level – that you're throbbing with treasure, what you give away will matter.

**TRY THIS:** Instead of enrolling yourself in stagnation, instead of dwindling indecisively for an eternity, try saying, "Here." Try sharing what you love. You'll find that the reservoir of giving comes from the heart, not the wallet.

And the best part is: It never runs dry. As Lewis Hyde wrote in *The Gift*, "Your gift is not fully yours until it is given away."

**REMEMBER:** It's impossible to give yourself away if you don't believe that you are a gift to be given.

Remove the bars to your heart. And deliver the package of you to the world.

*What are the mental obstacles to believing that giving yourself away is valuable to people?*

DECEMBER 9

## The Internet rewards transparency.

People aren't reading the *Wall Street Journal* to learn who you are.

They're searching blogs, social media feeds, discussion boards and online community threads. And if you're not a player in that world, you'll be left behind with the rest of the dinosaurs.

Clive Thompson nailed this issue in a recent issue of *Wired*:

*"The reputation economy creates an incentive to be more open, not less. And since Internet commentary is inescapable, the only way to influence it is to be part of it. Being transparent, opening up, posting interesting material frequently and often is the only way to amass positive links to yourself and thus to directly influence your reputation."*

Customers and employees are poking around anyway. How could you make that work for your organization? How could you turn everyone into a partner in the process?

Because if you don't make transparency your natural tendency, people will start to wonder why you're not open like everyone else. It's that same jerk at the parade who wasn't wearing the ribbon.

**LOOK:** The time has come to peel away the pretense and serve up a bolder truth. Don't worry. You can still show yourself to the world without getting arrested for indecent exposure. At least that's what my parole officer told me.

*Are you free enough to risk being seen by people?*

DECEMBER 10

## The onus to initiate is on you.

In a recent article from *The New York Times*, the first rule of recruiting is that the best people already have positions they like.

**IN SHORT:** You have to find them – they’re not going to find you.

It’s highly unlikely you’ll receive random email tomorrow morning from a complete stranger saying:

*“Scott, I have the single most fulfilling job in the history of the planet. But do you by any chance have any openings in the mailroom at your organization?”*

My mentor is a preacher. And every time I attend his church, he reminds the congregation: “You can’t be a Christian in a corner.”

Even if you’re not a Christian. It’s not about religion – it’s about reaching out.

Approachability is a two-way street. Be willing to take that first step.

*How many people did you go out of your way to avoid yesterday?*

D E C E M B E R 11

## The place where gratitude grows.

I came from a wealthy family.

But instead of being known as the affluent kids, my brother and I became known the appreciative kids.

Not because our parents told us to, but because our parents were people whose lives – at every level – gave evidence of gratitude. All we had to do was follow their lead.

*What example are you setting?*

Your employees, customers, kids and members: What behaviors (that you have already shown them to *be acceptable*) are they currently mirroring?

**THAT'S THE THING:** If gratitude isn't on that list, it's not their fault.

They were just following your lead.

*What do people think when they hear your life speak?*

DECEMBER 12

## The speed of the response is the response.

Be actively responsive to inquiries about membership.

Respond to member impatience with *Phrases That Payses* like “Right away,” “The best way to help you right now” and “How can I help you the most?”

This demonstrates urgency through your language and reinforces emotional reliability. Especially when people want answers now, or, in many cases, last Tuesday.

**REMEMBER:** When your words to promote insistence – but aren’t hurried – people become relaxed and ready to join.

*How quickly do you return calls?*



DECEMBER 13

## Touchy feely trumps avoidy ignory.

At a recent White House tribute concert, Smokey Robinson shared the following insight:

"There are no new words. There are no new chords. And there are no new ideas. In my music, I just try to say, 'I love you,' as differently as I can."

How does your brand say I love you?

And are you asking your customers to sing that song with you?

**THAT'S THE HUMAN REALITY:** Service, schmervice – people want to be in love.

You don't need a focus group to figure that out.

And if that's too touchy feely for you, too bad.

Companies who see love as a limited resource, as an endangered species, are never going to make it. But if you learn how to bring your heart to their ears, you'll be around for a long time.

*It's not who loves you – it's whose life is better because you love them.*

DECEMBER 14

# Treat people like people.

It's so easy to make people happy.

All you have to do is treat them like people.

Not as objects. Not as integers. Not as trophies. Not as machines.  
Not as categories. Not as dollar signs. Not as commodities. Not as  
abstract entities. Not as a means to an end. Not as bloodless  
statistical entities. Not as impersonal facets of production.

As people. That's my vision for the future.

A church where you're not a butt in a seat –  
*you're a person.*

A retail store where you're not a walking wallet –  
*you're a person.*

A dentist's office where you're not a mouth with teeth –  
*you're a person.*

A grocery store where you're not another inventory picker –  
*you're a person.*

A bank where you're not an account number on a spreadsheet –  
*you're a person.*

A hospital where you're not a collection of symptoms on a chart –  
*you're a person.*

A networking event where you're not just a pit stop in people's lives –  
*you're a person.*

A hair salon where you're not another name in the appointment book –  
*you're a person.*

I know it's a lot to ask. I know it's hard to be human. Especially  
when so much inhumanity surrounds us.

But when you treat people like people, they don't just listen to you –  
they work their hearts out for you.

*How do you treat people?*

D E C E M B E R 1 5

## Triple your transparency.

Rice paper amazes me.

Fresh out of the box, it looks like a paper plate. But dab a little water on it, wait about sixty seconds, and it morphs into a playful, clear and stretchy material that perfectly protects your delicious food.

And yet, it carries no shame about the contents within.

What's interesting is, rice paper is surprisingly strong. And durable. And it's seems that no matter how many vegetables you stuff inside of it, it never rips.

I never knew transparency could be so effective.

*Does your organization pass the rice paper test?*

If not, your bottom line can expect to suffer. Transparent companies are more trusted, according to a recent survey conducted by Brigham Young University's Department of Communication. Their research proves the link between corporate openness and employees' belief in the companies they work for.

The study, run by Dr. Brad Rawlins, asked employees across all parts of the business questions about trust and transparency. And their survey of over four hundred healthcare workers found statistical evidence for a link between how open companies are and how much their employees trust them.

That's what happens when your organization passes the rice paper test. And since trust is the only currency that counts, the lesson is simple:

When you open yourself to the world – the world will open its wallet to you.

*Does your organization pass the rice paper test?*

DECEMBER 16

## **Turn customers into working partners.**

Netflix offered one million dollars to anyone who could improve the accuracy of their movie recommendation algorithm by ten percent.

That took guts, vulnerability and humility. And that also took surrendering control. Enabling people to take an idea into their own hands and make it better. And openly embracing embrace a fan mentality and transferring ownership to the customer.

That's how transparency enables spreadability and spreadability grows into long-term viability

You've got to find people that have big mouths, share your world with them – give them megaphones – and then get the hell out of the way.

*Have you joined hands with the people who matter most?*

DECEMBER 17

## Turn your brand into a badge.

My marketing was backwards.

After wearing a nametag twenty-four seven for a decade, my badge became a brand.

*Cool.*

The only problem is, you don't wear a nametag. And you don't have ten years.

**BUT THE GOOD NEWS IS:** If your story can play an enduring role in people's lives, it's no longer a brand – it's a badge.

That means people need to wear it proudly.

That means people need to brag about it loudly.

*What will become possible when your brand becomes a badge?*

DECEMBER 18

## Uncover preexisting engagement tendencies.

I once read in *A Course In Miracles* that inner peace is not something that we create, but something that already exists within us as a part of our true identity.

Human engagement is the same way: It's not something you create – it's something you excavate. It's something you unearth.

If you want to do so with your people, you have to challenge them to matter. You have to help them get in touch with the purpose behind their work. Nothing is more engaging. And once you help people embed their flaming sense of purpose into everything they do, their daily work will be highly engaged.

People don't need another schema to conform to – they need permission to bring their uniqueness to the table. They need you to give them a voice that says, "It's okay and here's why..."

*Is your engagement strategy a rigid methodology that demands homogeneity of beliefs, or a playground that gives people the freedom to develop in their own unique way?*

DECEMBER 19

## Understand the evolving business landscape.

Now, customers have the power. Now, customers make the choices. Now, customers drive the engine of interaction. And now, customers decide how much attention to give you.

But if you cling to traditional ways of communicating, your brand will remain an unnoticeable blip on the radar.

You can see this principle in action in my daily fill in the blank exercise on Facebook. After running this mini experiment hundreds of times with thousands of people, I've discovered that it engages on several levels:

*It's fun. It's funny. It's organic. It taps into people's creative flair. It meets people where they are. It flips the spotlight. It opens a direct channel. It provides free research. It doesn't require much thought. It introduces an element of intrigue. It never has a right or wrong answer. It spices up people's daily journey. And it gives people space to express themselves on my platform.*

Customers don't want to constrict themselves into a predetermined mold; they want to create their own personal media landscape. Let them. Turn down your control freak knob and leave it up to them to close the loop.

After all, people buy what they have a role in creating. They're motivated by their own achievements, not your company's accomplishments.

Surrendering ownership doesn't impede profit – it invites commitment.

*How vulnerable are you willing to make yourself?*

D E C E M B E R 2 0

## Undress for success.

Your audience is everywhere, and they're growing more powerful by the day.

*Never underestimate them.* Because sooner or later, they're going to see the consequences of your actions. And living as if this is certain makes it far more likely that you'll find a happy ending.

A helpful question to reinforce this principle is:

*"Do I want to become known for what I'm about to do?"*

Try posting that in the break room. Try asking that before your next holiday party. Because if you run around expecting not to get caught, eventually, the world is going to bust you.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The past always reincarnates in one of two forms – either to pat you on the back or kick you in the ass.

I'm not saying you need to get naked – I'm saying you already *are* naked, and if you don't consider the implications of your truth, you lose.

*Are you in the buff?*



DECEMBER 21

## **Unexpected honesty is worth talking about.**

Honestly is attractive because it always has been.

It's a classical value. And few virtues have been around longer.

What's changed is, technology makes dishonesty easier to spot, quicker to spread and harder to disguise.

Every interaction that leaves a customer skeptical about your truthfulness, makes your company suck a little bit more.

If you want your interactions to matter, tell the truth when there's no reason to be honest.

Tell the truth when most people would say nothing.

*How are you branding your honesty?*

DECEMBER 22

## **Update your theory of motivation.**

People are bound by emotion to the things and behaviors they love.

As much as your ego wants to think otherwise, they're not showing up for you – they're showing up for themselves.

People comply with what you want; but they commit to what they want.

*How are you helping people fall in love with themselves?*

DECEMBER 23

## Use every available tool to nurture your relationships.

The advantage of technology is that it provides you with multiple points of contact. It allows you to meet people where they are and tune into their preferred frequency, instead of forcing them to conform to your communication style.

Some people prefer phone calls, some prefer email. Some prefer face-to-face meetings; some prefer text and instant messaging. And some people prefer Facebook, while others prefer Twitter.

*Fine.* Whatever it takes. Use everything. You're in a position where you can respond to the idiosyncratic needs of each person efficiently and expeditiously.

Keep tabs on which medium people prefer. That way you can always reach them the way they want to be reached. And let people know how you preferred to be reached. That way you remain accessible without violating your own boundaries.

As long as you stay organized, stay updated and stay connected, you'll be able to nurture your relationships through a variety of tools.

*What systems can you put in place to make sure everyone feels heard?*

D E C E M B E R 2 4

## Values aren't taught – they're caught.

My mother has been a fitness coach, personal trainer and aerobics instructor for over thirty years.

Naturally, the virtue of discipline is something that was embedded into my life since I was very young. And as a result, any time people compliment me on that, my response is always the same: *It's my mom's fault.*

That's the thing: She never told us to be disciplined. She never taught us to be disciplined. And she never spanked us when we weren't disciplined.

She just was disciplined. She embodied it. She lived it, every day. And as her son, that inspired me to motivate myself to do the same.

Why? *Because that's what kids do.* They don't respond to their parents' words – they repeat their parents' actions. And the same principle applies to employees; members, volunteers or whomever else comprises your constituency:

If you're their leader – and, hopefully, if they trust you – then they will mirror the behavior you've shown them *to be acceptable.*

*If everybody did exactly what you said, what would the world look like?*

DECEMBER 25

## **Visibility buys belief.**

Woody Allen is famous for saying that eighty percent of life is showing up.

I think it's higher.

More importantly, it's not just about showing up, it's about showing up when it's hard.

Showing up when you're tired, when you're scared, when you're not asked, when you're not prepared, when you're not expected, when you're not being paid, when you're not in the mood and especially when you're not on the clock.

That's the kind of visibility that matters. Both online and off.

If you can build it with the people who count, they will believe in you.

Because in their eyes, just showing is a synonym for going out on a limb.

*Do you have a marketing plan or a visibility plan?*

DECEMBER 26

## **Wear your humanity on your sleeve.**

All hope is not lost.

I think people are *finally* starting to realize they can't filter their life through pixels.

Not if they want their life to matter, that is.

Two things to keep in mind:

*People buy people first.* Being human is always good for business. And since humanity is a character trait that appears in everyone's feature set, I say strap it to your back and take it with you. Everywhere.

*Your humanity is your differentiator.* It's what engages people and it's what colors the quality of interactions with others. Wear it proud. It looks good on you.

And whatever you do – make it the work of your hand.

Because the hand is the agent of the heart.

*Are you wearing your humanity on your sleeve because it matters or because you'll get noticed?*

DECEMBER 27

## **What can't be measured, matters.**

There are three kinds of people in this world:

Those who make you less than you are.

Those who keep you where you are.

Those who push you to what you might become.

Which type of person are you?

Which type of person would your people say you are?

That's what smart companies know: *People want you to matter to them.*

It's time to give them what they want.

It's time to selflessly promote the growth of others.

It's time to stop playing by a bunch of unspoken, oppressive company rules – and risk your face for someone.

*Have you made the choice to matter?*

D E C E M B E R 28

## What do you see when you see people?

You're probably sick of this question by now.

But that's what The Nametag Principle hinges upon.

For example, last week I met a woman whose specialty was securing venture capital funding. *Neat lady*. She was sharp, aggressive and energizing.

But when she learned about my work, she confessed that her clients and colleagues historically perceived her as being unapproachable.

*"The problem is, only one out of a hundred people I meet are ideal clients. And my default programming is to uncover – as quickly as possible – whether or not they're one of the ninety-nine. Otherwise I lose interest."*

Which makes total sense. Especially from a sales point of view: You don't want to burn your time chasing non-economic buyers.

But while it's one thing to qualify, it's another things to compartmentalize.

Turns out, if you approach people as unique individuals – as human beings – they remember feeling essential. But if you exploit them as a means to an end – as integers – they remember feeling small.

*Are you memorable for the right reasons?*



D E C E M B E R 29

## Worthwhile trumps importance.

Any work can be important.

Think about the most meaningless job you ever had in your life – it was probably important to someone.

Worthwhile work, on the other hand, covers more emotional territory. It doesn't just hold importance – it's has impact. And the fruit of your worthwhile labor becomes a gift to people.

To achieve that kind of result in your organization, try this: *Give people work that demands the best, highest version of themselves.*

Tap into the wellspring of their unique capability. They'll have no choice but to thrust themselves into uncharted waters – remaining fully engaged the whole time.

Otherwise, the work you ask them to do becomes nothing more than another line item on their task list.

And I'm not suggesting your company tries to spin people's work experience into something it's not. Instead, I challenge you to excavate the worthwhileness of what your people do.

Because if you dig deep enough and come up with nothing but "important," then it's probably not work that matters in the first place.

*Do your people see their work as a daily grind to or daring gateway?*

D E C E M B E R 30

## You can't choreograph giving.

In Judaism, *tzedakah* is the commandment to give.

But it's not something you practice because you're asked. Or because you feel guilty. Or because it dissolves your earthly sins by the time you meet your maker. It's less of a thing you do and more of a thing you are.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Giving yourself away isn't a corporate initiative – it's a constitutional ingredient. It's something you do daily because you've made the decision that giving is important to you.

Try being less intentional about the process.

The people who truly embody *tzedakah* are the ones who give themselves away through loving impulses – not calculated actions. This assures that giving yourself away is the incidental consequence of an intentional commitment, and not something you do just because people are watching.

**REMEMBER:** The best way to give yourself away is to give up your addiction to controlling the giving process.

*What is your daily gift to the world?*

D E C E M B E R 31

## Your organization isn't a catchall.

As much as I've touted the benefits of yoga in this book, it's not for everybody.

Just ask my friend Rhonda. I invited her to class once. And after it was over, when I asked how she felt, her exact words were, "I hate you."

That's the thing about making an organization more approachable: What you're recruiting people for isn't necessarily for all people.

*Do you have the self-control to discontinue your recruiting efforts when it's clear that someone is not going to become part of your organization?*

Yes, be persistent. Yes, ask for the sale. But don't be pushy. Fulfilling a compelling need for your target market isn't the same thing as projecting onto that market what you think they should want. Sure, preaching to atheists is a nice challenge – but it tends to be a waste of time. Plus, the frustration that results only reinforces and strengthens the non-believer's position.

Some people are *never* going to join you. Ever. And you need to be okay with that. Maybe the best way to become more joinable is to tell people that it's okay not to join.

**BESIDES:** Who says you have to join to be a member?

*Are you blinded by the illusion that everyone in the world needs what your organization offers?*

**Love is a brand  
that is built  
by hand.**



**What unsolicited  
token could you  
give today?**

**Inspire is the  
new motivate.**



**Who are you  
inviting to  
do something  
great?**

## APPENDIX

# “Why do people engage?”

This is the question I've been answering – *with my life* – since I started wearing a nametag everyday.

And what I've discovered through a decade of spontaneous experimenting, non-scientific research, intense listening, strategic eavesdropping, world traveling, client work, audience interaction, reader feedback, volunteer leadership, disturbing hatemail and occasional death threats, is the following

*Human engagement happens when you give people freedom, growth, recognition and purpose.*

But.

Instead of slapping together some clever, scientific model that confuses the reader while making me appear a lot smarter than I really am, let me just tell you what I learned –



# **FREEDOM:**

*“Can I live my truth here?”*

**People engage when individual expression isn’t restricted.**

*How are you petitioning people to inject their personality into everything they do?*

**People engage when power decentralizes.** *Have you given them the ability to influence their work environment?*

**People engage when the babysitting and policing stops.**

*How are you allowing them to establish their own structures to maintain focus?*

**People engage when the feeling of formality doesn’t keep them from communicating freely.** *Do your employees come to work every day because they love it, or because you’ve degraded them into obedient soul-dead conformist worker bees?*

**People engage when their big ideas aren’t jailed.** *How is your corporate veil of bigness and anonymity thwarting creativity?*

**People engage when their dearly held sense of individualism is honored.** *Are you asking people to defend their specialness or inviting people to articulate their fabulousness?*

**People engage when their spark of motivation is self-inflicted.** *Are you still trying to charge people’s batteries for them?*

**People engage when they can dress how they want.** *Why is your organization still using dress code to convey class, hierarchy and status?*

**People engage when they can express themselves without resorting to code.** *At your organization, do ideas flow in an open and unstilted environment?*

# FREEDOM:

*"Can I live my truth here?"*

People engage when they don't have to meet compliance just to take a piss. *Are you empowering people to execute with all their might or restricting people to make excuse with all your policies?*

People engage when they don't need to ask permission to let their personal brand shine. *Do you work for a human organization or an indoctrination center that strips people of their individuality on a daily basis?*

People engage when they feel unrestricted. *Whose core are you correcting?*

People engage when they're given a safe place where individual personality and creativity can shine. *Who are you trying to make just like you?*

People engage when they're given wide discretion to spend company resources on the people who matter. *Where is your organization sacrificing customer experience for corporate expense?*

People engage when they're not bullied into delivering impersonal, emotionless non-service. *Is your work experience mechanical and transactional or emotional and transformational?*

People engage when they're not forced to adhere to rigid plans created through manipulation, punishment and coercion. *Are your people innately committed or fearfully complying?*

People engage when you stop asking them to edit themselves. *What system can you install to remove the restriction of individual expression?*



## GROWTH:

*“Can I nurture my gifts here?”*

People engage when the fruits of their engagement become transportable assets. *Can your people recoup their discretionary effort when they leave, or does all of their emotional energy become property of the organization?*

People engage when the organization makes it possible for them to become more valuable. *How are you making it hard for people to grow?*

People engage when the purpose of their engagement is to help them become better in all areas of their life. *Are you building people, or building your dream and exploiting people to do it?*

People engage when their development is supported. *How much will it cost if you choose not to develop your people?*

People engage when their job makes use of their talent. *What personal skills are you afraid to give people permission to tap into?*

## GROWTH:

*“Can I nurture my gifts here?”*

People engage when their work isn’t a set of tasks, but an opportunity to build a platform that pushes them to something bigger. *Have you confronted the fact that people are loaning their talents to you until something better comes along?*

People engage when they experience a real and regular connection between the duty of today and the dream of tomorrow. *Are you telling people what your demands are or asking people what their dreams are?*

People engage when they feel part of something that matters. *Do yours see their work as a grind or gateway to something bigger?*

People engage when they view their role as a stepping-stone, not a sinking ship. *How long ago did your team give up on the possibility of meaningful work?*

People engage when they’re consistently given the opportunity to do what they do best. *How are you embedding their passion into the pavement that leads the way to success?*

## RECOGNITION:

*"Can I hear my voice here?"*

People engage when gratitude is palpable and recurrent.

*Are you trying to make recognition a corporate initiative or a constitutional ingredient?*

People engage when their unique definition of

engagement is considered. *Have you asked your people what engagement feels like to them?*

People engage when they believe they can add value. *How*

*are you inspiring others with a vision of what they can contribute?*

People engage when they don't feel used. *Do you treat people*

*like people or like tools to transmit your directions?*

People engage when they feel essential. *Are you treating*

*them like vestigial parts, helpful additions or vital components?*

People engage when they feel gotten. *What do you do – every*

*single day – that makes people think, "They get me"?*

People engage when they feel seen and heard. *How does*

*your organization stay sensitive to the needs of the human spirit?*

## RECOGNITION:

*"Can I hear my voice here?"*

People engage when they know their opinions matter. *How are you making it easy for people to show up in full voice?*

People engage when they see themselves reflected. *How are you giving them a front row seat to their own brilliance?*

People engage when they're allowed to publicly display their successes. *Are you trying to be the life of the party or trying to bring people to life at the party?*

People engage when they're applauded for their strengths and not berated for their weaknesses. *Are you trying to make them fall in love with you, or helping them fall in love with themselves?*

People engage when they're treated as assets to be valued, not expenses to be managed. *What do you see when you see people?*

People engage when they're treated like human beings – not integers on the annual report. *Are you approaching them as unique individuals, or as a means to your organizational ends?*

## PURPOSE:

*"Can I preserve my values here?"*

People engage when the work they do gets under their fingernails. *How much of their labor has become part of their very being?*

People engage when the work they do makes a significant contribution to something they value. *Do you provide opportunities to do meaningful work that helps others?*

People engage when their commitments outside of the organization are respected. *Have you accepted the fact that work isn't the only determining factor in how your people live their lives?*

People engage when their internal compasses are honored. *How will you liberate them from being in conflict with their own values?*

People engage when their lives are participated in. *Are you fitting them into your nice little plan or celebrating how you fit into their lives?*

People engage when their work becomes a vehicle through which they are able to live what is important to them. *Are you contracting them to erect a building, or commissioning them architect a vital index of their values?*

People engage when they can invest in things they truly admire. *What if dollars aren't the defining factor of your people's commitment?*

People engage when they develop a deeper sense of why. *How do you challenge them to calculate their personal currency?*

## PURPOSE:

*“Can I preserve my values here?”*

People engage when they do work that unites with their own sense of life. *How does your organization serve as a mirror of your people’s core?*

People engage when they have something to believe in. *Are you giving them a compelling reason to follow you into the sunset?*

People engage when they’re allowed to lead the kind of life they want. *Do people view your company as an economic mechanism and little more?*

People engage when they’re given permission to pursue their dreams. *Are you still operating from the old paradigm that people come to work to make money?*

People engage when they’re motivated intrinsically. *How can you enable them to activate their own internal generators?*

People engage when they’re treated according to their own unique values. *Are you discerning and testing how each of your people want to be treated, or trying to save time by treating everybody the exact same way?*

People engage when they’ve been given permission to flex the muscle of why. *Do you give them room to express commitment in their own unique way?*

People engage when your words speak directly to what’s important to them. *Does their inbox need another boring, overextended piece of corporate communication that people delete immediately or – at best – peruse passively?*

**Conduct  
symphonies,  
not transactions.**



**What style of  
interaction  
is your brand  
known for?**

# Scott Ginsberg

## *That Guy with the Nametag*

**AUTHOR.** Scott's 13 books, including *HELLO, my name is Scott*, *The Power of Approachability*, *How to be That Guy*, *Make a Name for Yourself* and *Stick Yourself Out There/Get Them to Come to You*, have been featured on media outlets such as *20/20*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Fast Company*, *COSMO*, *Redbook*, *The Investor's Business Daily* and *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*.

**SPEAKER.** Scott delivers customized presentations, breakout sessions, keynote speeches and seminars to tens of thousands of people each year. He's worked with companies like STAPLES, Verizon Wireless, Manpower, Boeing, Canada Post and The Australian Institute of Management. Every program is about approachability, yet every program is different. Never the same speech twice.

**NAMETAGTV.** Scott's Online Training Network is an interactive Learning Environment that provides public AND premium customized learning modules for entrepreneurs, salespeople, frontline employees and marketers who want to leverage approachability into profitability.

**BLOGGER.** In 2007, Alexa and Technorati voted *HELLO, my name is Blog!* as a "Top 100 Business Blog on the Web." With 1,200+ blog posts, every day Scott's posts are shared and linked around the web, drawing millions of readers worldwide.

**COLUMNIST.** Since 2004, Scott has written over 1,000 articles and been a regular contributor to print publications like *The St. Louis Small Business Monthly*, *INSTORE Magazine*, *Employment Info*, *The Ladders* and dozens of online publications like *RainToday* and *ExpertVillage*.

**THOUGHT LEADER.** Dubbed "The Authority on Approachability," Scott is regularly featured in and interviewed by media outlets worldwide. He's been quoted and interviewed by MSNBC, CNN, *The Washington Post*, The Associated Press, *The Today Show* and *Paul Harvey*. He also wrote "The Quiz" on approachability for *COSMO* and, in 2008, *The St. Louis Small Business Monthly* voted Scott as one of the "Top Young Entrepreneurs of the Year."





**If they  
can't  
come up  
to you,  
how will  
they ever  
get behind  
you?**