

Courageous, provocative, and totally original,
Future Strong will lead you to a freer, more satisfying life
and to your best future!

— **Marshall Goldsmith**,
author of the NYTimes best seller, *Triggers*

FUTURE STRONG

HOW TO WORK UNLEASHED,
LEAD BOLDLY,
AND LIVE LIFE YOUR WAY

BILL JENSEN

FUTURE STRONG

How to Work Unleashed, Lead Boldly,
and Live Life Your Way

By Bill Jensen

Motivational PRESS®
LEADERS IN GLOBAL PUBLISHING

Published by Motivational Press, Inc.
1777 Aurora Road
Melbourne, Florida, 32935
www.MotivationalPress.com

Copyright 2015 © by Bill Jensen

All Rights Reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means: graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or by any information storage or retrieval system without permission, in writing, from the authors, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review, article, book, or academic paper. The authors and publisher of this book and the associated materials have used their best efforts in preparing this material. The authors and publisher make no representations or warranties with respect to accuracy, applicability, fitness or completeness of the contents of this material. They disclaim any warranties expressed or implied, merchantability, or fitness for any particular purpose. The authors and publisher shall in no event be held liable for any loss or other damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages. If you have any questions or concerns, the advice of a competent professional should be sought.

Manufactured in the United States of America.

ISBN: 978-1-62865-221-5

And so it begins.

Your future.

Unwritten, unknowable, unexplored.

Limitless possibilities.

Yours to shape.

You live in the most exciting time...

EVER!

You will experience it all.

Success and failure.

Love and fear.

Joy and sadness.

Harmony and discord.

Elation and frustration.

Serenity and turmoil.

Certainty and doubt.

Order and disruption.

And that's just in one day!

Before all that you will
know and feel,
do and create in that future...

Before all the amazing people
join you to achieve the impossible...

Before tomorrow becomes your legacy...

Come the choices you must make.

It's time to discuss...

What are the toughest choices you face
as you lead yourself and others
into the future?

Your choices are where your future begins.

And how you decide is as important
as what you decide.

THE FIVE FUTURE STRONG CHOICES

1. Inner Truths

Will I hear the heartbeat of my past choices?

2. Soul on Fire

Who will I choose to become?

3. Humble Self

How will I choose to be vulnerable?

4. Sacrifice

What are the best hardships for my best future?

5. Reliance

Who will I choose to have my back?

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	13
FUTURE STRONG	
WHAT IT IS, AND ISN'T	17
WHY IT MATTERS NOW, MORE THAN EVER	22
THE FIVE CHOICES	
MAPPING YOUR JOURNEY	33
THE THRESHOLD CHOICE	
1. INNER TRUTHS	
Will you hear the heartbeat of your past choices?	41
THE FOUR JOURNEY CHOICES	
2. SOUL ON FIRE	
Who will you choose to become?	75
3. HUMBLER SELF	
How will you choose to be vulnerable?	103
4. SACRIFICE	
What are the best hardships for your best future?	125
5. RELIANCE	
Who will you choose to have your back?	157
CODA.....	185
ABOUT THE TOOL.....	189
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	191
ENDNOTES	193
INDEX	197
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	204

INTRODUCTION

We begin with what is missing.

A deafening void in the conversation.

We live in the most exciting time...EVER! Exquisite minds, data wranglers, trend trackers, and pundits have already charted so much about the future of business, technology, and work. We are heading toward eight billion hyper-connected people. Amazing, right?!

Wait.

Let's put all that amazingness into highly predictable, manageable, structured boxes, flow charts, and hierarchies. Because... (cue a booming authority-figure voice) "Uncertainty is the enemy! It must be beaten into submission."

And so the future begins for so many of today's leaders and workplaces, teams and individuals. Pre-packaged to create illusions of certainty.

Shared goals and plans. Shared destiny. "This is how we do the future. We are one. Our future is yours. Except when it's not."

With little discussion about, or acknowledgment of, how every individual within the collective must create his or her *own* future.

With little discussion about, or understanding of, or inclusion of, the choices you must make to create *your* future.

This book's goal is to fill that void, to begin that conversation:

How you will create your future.
How you will create a strong future.
How you will contribute to a stronger world.

■ We begin with a question.

My research team and I asked thousands of people — CEOs and students, inventors and entrepreneurs, wunderkinds and worker bees, rigid managers and rebels, pioneers and cube-dwellers — from all across the globe...

What are the tough choices facing today's leaders as they lead their organizations into the future?

Before personal commitments and habits, and before excellence and mastery — come the choices you will make. Deeply personal choices.

For better and worse, your choices shape your future. They are tomorrow's genesis.

We interviewed and surveyed over seven thousand people from across the globe — asking them about the tough choices we need to make to jump into the future — then compared those results to our ongoing *Search for a Simpler Way* Study, which includes data from over one million interviews and surveys. This created two sets of valuable insights:

- » **The Five Choices** that make us Future Strong
- » **Future of Work Study**

Making the Future Work: 2015—2020

Throughout this book we will use the invaluable insights from this study: leadership's role in creating the future, and how many leaders are currently failing us; how the employer-employee

relationship must be radically reimagined; and how every individual will need to reexamine his or her own choices.

Rather than add to all the hyperventilating about the coming disruptions that will radically change the future of work and business... We studied **what it will take to make those disruptions work**. (Download the study at www.simplerwork.com.)

To understand what makes you
Future Strong,
and what being strong means,
is to understand how and why
you make choices.

Every choice is a deeply personal act. Something — even if you travel with amazing teammates — you alone must own.

■ So we then asked another question.

What makes you, you?

*What tough choices have you made in your past,
that now guide or influence future choices?*

Because all of us carry with us into the future unconscious biases, stories, values and moments that forge who we are.¹ Some of that will help you in the future. Some of it will hurt you. Being Future Strong requires figuring out which is which.

“I was 12 years old, standing on the bank of a swirling river...”

*“I chose what was right for me, not what others thought
was right for me...”*

“It wasn’t until I wrote my obituary that I realized...”

When we connected the dots between those tough choices, we found that...

Those who are Future Strong —
those who are best equipped
to unlock and embrace
every future they can imagine —
made five foundational choices.

This is a book that...

- » Maps those choices
- » Brings them to life with powerful stories by those who lived them
- » Turns the map over to you

Our research has shown that certain choices will make you stronger than others. I will make that case, give you tips and checklists, and then...leave it up to you.

Tui futurum, tua elections.... Your future, your choices.

And so it begins.

Bill Jensen

bill@simplerwork.com

FUTURE STRONG

WHAT IT IS, AND ISN'T

**Future Strong is adventurous self-mastery.
Simplified and amplified.**

Adventurous

Answer the call to discover what's beyond the horizon, what's next.
Be driven to push, create, dream, and continually ask "What if..."

Self-Mastered

Focus on the only thing — past, present and future —
within your control.

Simplified

Be like water:
A powerful and flowing force that achieves its purpose and destiny by
surrendering all rigidity. Fully adaptive.

Amplified

Create an environment that unleashes human potential,
where ALL can be Future Strong.

WHAT IT ISN'T

How most businesses are structured and run today.

How most work gets done today.

To arrive at adventurous self-mastery, you will need to make five deeply personal choices.

Before moving onto each of those choices, let's further clarify what Future Strong is and isn't...

Future Strong is filled with disruptive heroes. Individuals and teams who are passionate about pushing the boundaries of what is known and done.

WHAT IT ISN'T

Shackling innovation and change by managing it to maximize the minimizing of uncertainty.

Future Strong is creating tomorrow's capacities today.

WHAT IT ISN'T

Primarily driven by the short-term, next 30, 60, 90 days.

Future Strong is being focused enough and mindful enough and courageous enough to search for patterns and order when all others see chaos and noise.

WHAT IT ISN'T

Scenario planning, data crunching, predictive modeling.

You may use those tools, but your vision, wisdom and courage are what make those tools powerful...or not.

Future Strong is letting go of what no longer serves you. Quickly.

WHAT IT ISN'T

Sacrificing others — layoffs, cost-cutting, restructuring — before making a personal sacrifice yourself. Ask not of others what you haven't sacrificed first.

Future Strong is as focused on the success of every individual as it is on organizational success — creating an environment where people can achieve their dreams and full potential.

WHAT IT ISN'T

Sacrificing personal dreams and goals and success for the company's dreams and goals and success.

Future Strong takes guts and hard work.

WHAT IT ISN'T

Future Easy.

Future Strong builds actions upon reflection, questions, curiosity, seeking to understand root causes and systemic connections.

WHAT IT ISN'T

No time for understanding, exploring, questioning, reflecting...
Do, do, do.

Future Strong strives for simplicity for all: Least amount of individual effort, energy, and time to create maximum impact by each person.

WHAT IT ISN'T

Primarily focused on organizational productivity: simplicity and

efficiency by offloading corporate-centered changes, structures, and designs onto individuals.

Future Strong is about paying it forward. Creating a new and exciting and better tomorrow for the next generations, through intense focus.

Limitless Future Strong loyalty is reserved for an idea or ideal, a set of values, a project, relationships, or for a leap of imagination.

Future Strong is relationship-driven and joyful. Its best bet is on people. Its outcomes create joy for others and ourselves.

Future Strong is shared courage, in the face of personal fear.

Future Strong is grace, kindness, gratitude and personal accountability — within a pressure cooker.

While there are already many Future Strong leaders among us today, and more Future Strong companies emerge every day...

Overall... Unfortunately...

Mostly what we have today is **Future Shackled:**

Where tomorrow is anchored and boxed and managed to maximize the minimizing of uncertainty.

Many organizations fly the flag of Agility or Resiliency or Pivoting or Change or Flexibility or Speed or (fill in the blank) *without* building the capacity for deeply personal, individual change.

Organizations are the sum of every individual's choices and behaviors.

Not making the five key choices weakens your future-driven strengths. Without every individual making those choices, then no

matter what flag the company flies, and no matter what plans and structures it puts in place, some portion of the organization will stay shackled to yesterday.

It's time to finally build Future Strong capacity, starting with you.

It's time to get real about building a stronger, better, more wondrous future that's better for all, not just some.

Be like water.

~ Bruce Lee

FUTURE STRONG

WHY IT MATTERS NOW, MORE THAN EVER

Oh, what an amazing and tumultuous tomorrow awaits us!

Eight billion hyper-connected people.² A trillion-sensor economy.³ Tech startups and data giants will completely disrupt healthcare.⁴ Dangerous divides between *haves* and *have nots* will grow ever more harmful and violent.⁵ And while the sharing economy is freeing human capacity and creating amazing new opportunities, it will also create just as many new ways for people to struggle and lose.^{6, 7}

The quest for clean water and clean energy, as well as the quest for a better-educated workforce, will both save us and throw us into greater turmoil.^{8, 9, 10} By 2030, twenty-five major economies around the world will face massive labor shortfalls.¹¹ Artificial intelligence, analytics, and robotics will forever alter how we think about labor, skills, and the future of jobs.¹² Due to all that computing power, many in the middle class will become the working poor.^{13, 14} But, hey... At least your car will drive itself!¹⁵

We need disruptive heroes.

We need everyday superheroes.

Lots. Everywhere.

Heroes with the will and courage
to challenge and change the way
most everything has been done.

Because how it has been done
is not strong enough for tomorrow.

There is no middle-grounding your future.

So we structured our Future of Work study to learn how lots more
of us could be those everyday heroes, how more of us could be Future
Strong. And how leaders could help everyone have stronger tomorrows.

From that study, here are **the top reasons why being Future Strong
matters now more than ever...**

> We must stop destroying human capacity. Now.

Too many of today's leaders
are holding back the future
because it comes wrapped in risks.

Free your people: The number one change needed to be future
ready: 86 percent of respondents said that it's freeing people to succeed.
Empowerment is still in the Dark Ages. We are empowering people
within hierarchies and structures that were not designed for the 21st
century. That's dysfunctional and destroys massive amounts of human
capacity.

Even as we enter one of the most disruptive eras in human history, one of the biggest challenges we face is that today's systems and structures still live on, past their expiration dates: How we organize people in companies; How we create and manage budgets; How we train and develop and coach and mentor people; and more. We are locked into 20th century approaches that are holding back the next big fundamental shifts in human capacity.

The story of the Glacier and the Hare: Respondents were clearly frustrated by what has been reinvented and what hasn't.

They told us that, for the past few decades, business has been hyperfast at redesigning cost and efficiency systems, but glacially slow at redesigning all people systems. Investment and innovation in how people are structured, managed, trained and developed is still painfully slow, paltry, and insufficient.

Glacially slow while billions of people are creating the future faster than their employers: Everywhere *outside* of most workplaces, we are experiencing a massive shift in the human capacity. Disruptive technologies are freeing people to be their best, create, achieve and collaborate in ways never before possible.

Exactly as it was forecast in 1999 in *The Cluetrain Manifesto*:¹⁶ “Networked markets are beginning to self-organize faster than companies that have traditionally served them. Thanks to the web, markets are becoming better informed, smarter, and more demanding of qualities missing from most business organizations.... Markets are conversations.... Hyperlinks subvert hierarchy.... We are waking up and linking to each other. We are watching. But we are not waiting.”

Respondents told us that too many leaders are greatly out of sync with the needs of the workforce, because embracing the future of work means structuring and supporting people very differently than they do now.

Postcards from the future: One new approach is Zappos's grand experiment with holocracy¹⁷ — self-organized teams within a mainstream company. (With much heated debate about how that will turn out.) The loosest model is that of wirearchies¹⁸ in the sharing economy — eBay, Linux, Airbnb, TaskRabbit, etc. — where individuals leverage the power of user-centered technologies to achieve their own dreams and goals. There's also the Hollywood model,¹⁹ where teams temporarily come together, organized around specific projects, and then disband once the project is over.

We're also starting to see cracks in the Wall of Corporate Stupidity. For decades, it would be hard to find a single person on the planet who thought performance management reviews actually worked. Yet most every large company still kept them alive and wastefully kickin'. In September 2015, one of the largest companies in the world, Accenture, finally trashed its yearly review process.²⁰ 330,000 people — free at last, free at last.

Announcing the change, Accenture CEO Pierre Nanterme said, “The art of leadership is not to spend your time measuring, evaluating. It's all about selecting the person. And if you believe you selected the right person, then you give that person the freedom, the authority, the delegation to innovate and to lead with some very simple measures.”

Yes! Maybe there is room for common sense in our future after all!

We need to start leading organizations in ways that realize that human capacity — unlike all other corporate resources — is *limitless*. If... *If* we organize around the human spirit and imagination (instead of

around who reports to whom). We could then unleash that capacity... We could live in workworlds of abundance!

While best approaches have yet to emerge across all industries — (it is the *future*, after all!) — respondents told us that specific designs and approaches were not as important as one key leadership trait.

The biggest missing element holding us back...

The one thing, more than any other, that's needed to launch the next big fundamental shift in capacity...

Courage.

Leadership courage.

Lead from where you are courage.

We desperately need Future Strong leaders, managers and individual contributors with the courage to jump into uncertainty and explore it, instead of spending so much time and energy trying to beat it into submission.

> You want us to join you?

Rewrite the relationship agreement.

Engagement — and how we approach employees' relationship with a company — is so horribly incomplete, that it's dangerous to everyone's future.

Global respondents told us that **tomorrow's workforce is flopping the relationship lens**: they see companies as **vehicles to achieve**

their goals and dreams — vehicles that can amplify their passions, achievements, and community relationships beyond what they could have done on their own or elsewhere. Companies that they will join are seen as communities that explore, resource, and fund doing good in the world in ways that align with their personal approach and values.

That completely rewrites how we think about engaging, motivating, retaining and rewarding tomorrow's workforce. It turns *engagement* upside down. The new Galilean Truth: The company is no longer the center of the relationship.

When we heard how the lens was changing, we then asked people: *Can you achieve your dreams where you currently work?*

Twenty-nine percent said: "Yes, I can." Less than one third. Not great.

But wait, it gets worse.

Deeper dive: When we set aside senior exec and entrepreneur responses and responses from those in extremely entrepreneurial environments (e.g. Silicon Valley firms, startups), **only 9.8% said they can achieve their dreams and goals.**

Less than 10% of the mainstream workforce can achieve their dreams and goals where they currently work. That does not bode well for *any* future.

We need leaders who are personally strong and courageous enough to reimagine the relationship agreement. Now! With a sense of urgency!

We need leaders who will build companies where each individual's dreams and goals and success matter as much as corporate dreams, goals, and success. Who understand that unless that happens, they will not

be able to attract and retain the people they need to achieve corporate successes. We need leaders who *get* that — within the pits of their stomachs and the depths of their souls.

Now, toss in a postcard from the digital future: Mid-2015, IBM CEO Ginni Rometty made “a bold prediction: In the future, every decision that mankind makes is going to be informed by a cognitive system like Watson, and our lives will be better for it.”²¹ Between billions of hyperconnected people and the Internet of Things, data and artificial intelligence will begin driving most every interaction we have at work. Some futurists see that most middle managers will be replaced by machines and analytics.²²

Which, loops us back to: **It’s the people, stupid! Our digital future makes this even more crucial.** As managers disappear and the data load goes into warp drive, we’ll need to see far greater investments in coaching, mentoring, communication, training, and development, as well as a lot more user-centered IT designs.

According to a recent study by Microsoft, thanks to smartphones, social media, and other technologies, we humans now have shorter attention spans than a goldfish.²³

Shorter attention spans than a goldfish! Yeah, that bodes well for a data-driven future.

The hardest work in our future will be meaning-making — making sense of, and sorting through, all the data, noise, and eye candy that demands our attention and runs our lives. Quickly. Easily. Decisively. As a global society, we are woefully unprepared for that hard work.

To be Future Strong, we need leaders who understand that our increasingly intense relationship with data will also profoundly impact the workforce-company relationship.

One of the primary responsibilities of that relationship will be its ability to create faster and better sense-making and meaning-making. We need leaders who understand that this happens one person at a time, and can't be forced, mandated or spun. Sense-making and meaning-making happen only from within.

Faster and better sense-making will only occur if the relationship is as focused on individual needs as it is on corporate needs. Concern for every individual; trust and community; deep conversations, deep diversity, and shared values; and safe spaces to explore and experiment and fail will all be more important than ever. All must be part of the radically rewritten relationship.

> The future of work is personal.

Embracing personal vulnerability is required if you wish to work, play, and succeed in the future.

Sorry to have to tell you this.

We have met your future's enemy...and it is you.

Personal vulnerability — living on the edge of risk — is when you truly start to become Future Strong.

Odds are, you still are not pushing far enough outside of your comfort zone. And odds are, most of your teammates also aren't pushing themselves far enough past their comfort zones.

Your willingness to be vulnerable is one of the biggest contributors to when and how the future arrives for you.

What's stopping most of us from going there? Fear. Insecurity. The need to be right. Risk-aversion. The way it's been always done. Etc.

There are good fears: being gored by a charging bull, not getting proper healthcare, not having enough savings for a rainy day... Then there are today's wasteful workplace fears: fear of failing, fear of what others might think of us, fear of not keeping up, fear of trying. And the mother of all business angst: fear of uncertainty.

As you will soon discover, one of the five choices to become Future Strong is deciding how you will choose to be vulnerable. Not if... How.

First, you. Then, others.

Your job in the future is to create a space where others feel safe being vulnerable. Where fears and failures are openly discussed and used as lessons for moving forward.

Not safe from uncertainty. (That's part of today's Future Shackled problem. There's way too much risk-managing to beat back uncertainty.)

A safe place to take personal risks. (That's nurturing, support, bonding, community, trust, and dare I say it... love.)

Choose: Your comfort zone. Or... Where magic happens. Two locations in the future that are a great distance from each other.

> So What? Now What?

Future Shackled is not an option.

Future Strong is the path forward.

Everyone is far more amazing
than we are allowing ourselves to be.

If we wish to be Future Strong, we must find better ways to tap into the workforce's brilliance, passion, resourcefulness, and imagination.

It's clearly there, as evidenced by the creative explosions in today's digital tools and media that foster individual freedom and experimentation. Surprise, surprise: Rapid technological change is cited by Fortune 500 companies as their number one threat. And the competitors they fear the most are tech startups, not other behemoths.²⁴

Business must find better ways to embrace that freedom, disruption, and experimentation within their walls, not just gird against it. So much human capacity is untapped right now.

We can, and must, turn that upside down. For the economy's future, for the sake of your business and career, and for the good of all, we must unleash the next capacity revolution.

As a leader, we need you to: Change the way you leverage limitless human capacity; Change the relationship between companies and individuals; Embrace personal vulnerability in the way you lead.

First step: It begins with you. This revolution begins one person at a time.

To be ready for each and every tomorrow, you need to build adventurous self-mastery — which goes far beyond resiliency.

We need you to be Future Strong, now.

For you. For your family and teammates and community. For all of us.

Your choices can change your future, and your future can change the future.

Time to choose.

What will you do?

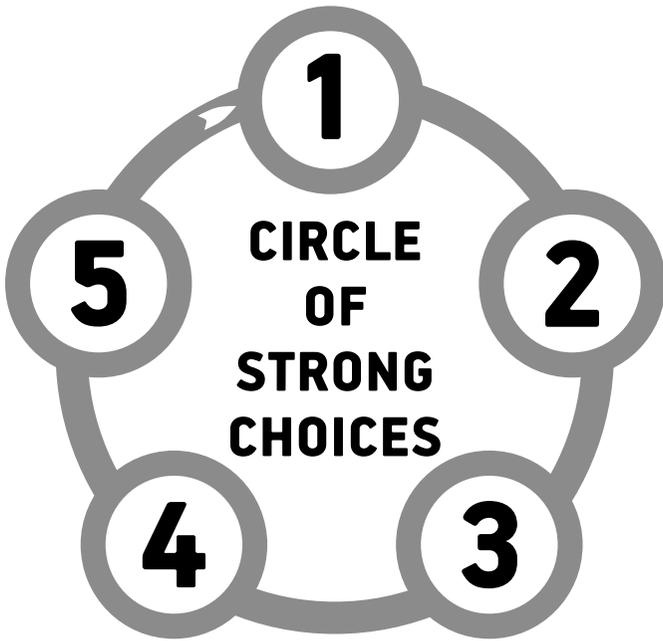
THE FIVE CHOICES

MAPPING YOUR JOURNEY

**Future Strong is
adventurous self-mastery.**

Unlocking your future
by running toward the unknown,
with the wondrous soul of a child
and the drive of a force
that will not be stopped.

By making five deeply personal choices
that determine your relationship
with the future.



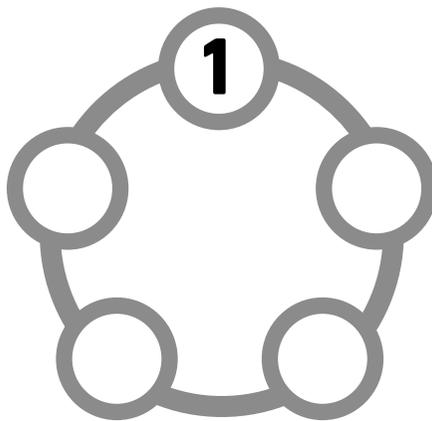
1. INNER TRUTHS

Will you hear the heartbeat of your past choices?

I am a tool from your past
you can use to leap into your future.

I am the crucible moments of your life —
experiences that forged or tested how
you view the world.

Will you choose to pause long enough
to truly hear what makes you, you?

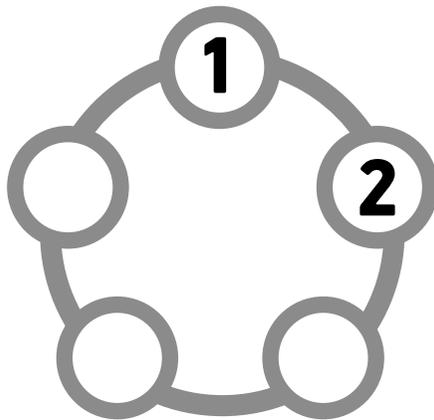


2. SOUL ON FIRE

**Who will you choose
to become?**

I am your strong future.

Does the fire within you burn so hot,
is your drive so focused,
is your call to adventure so powerful,
that who you have chosen to become
will not be denied?



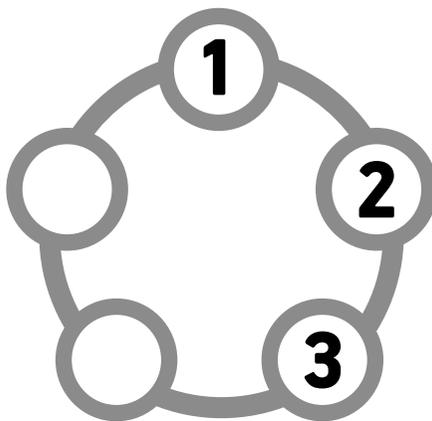
3. HUMBLE SELF

How will you choose to be vulnerable?

I am your strong future.

Choosing me means death and rebirth —
a transformational moment of letting go
of the way things are supposed to be,
and leaping into what could be.

True strength means disrupting yourself
before the outside world does it for you.



4. SACRIFICE

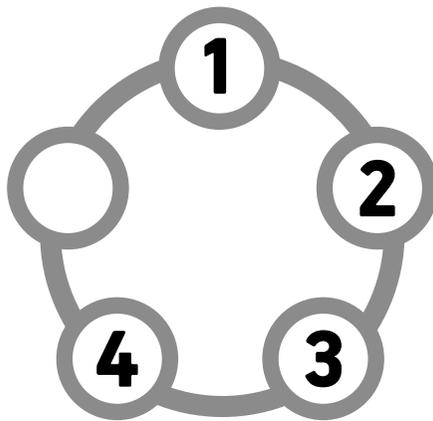
What are the best hardships for your best future?

I am your strong future.

I cannot exist without sacrifice, hardship,
failure, even pain.

But many of the sacrifices and hardships
being thrust upon you
will shackle your future, not strengthen it.

Choose hardships with intention
and consistency with the future you want.



5. RELIANCE

Who will you choose to have your back?

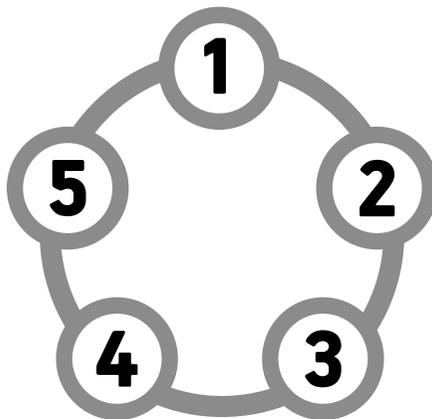
I am your strong future.

I don't care how driven you are.

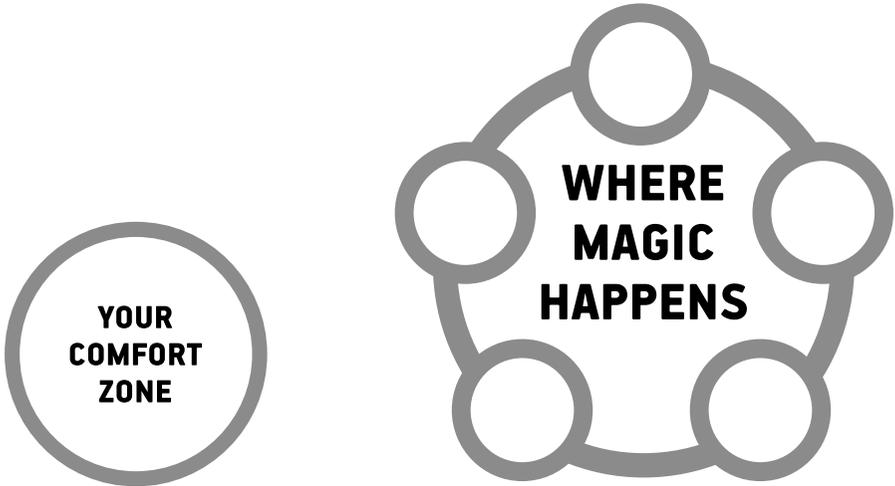
You don't get here without others.

Who will you choose to have your back
when you struggle or fall?

Who will help hold you accountable
to your dreams and goals?



FIVE STRONG CHOICES, SIMPLIFIED



**TWO LOCATIONS IN THE FUTURE,
A GREAT DISTANCE FROM EACH OTHER**

Track your progress on the five choices;
If each choice is within your comfort zone,
you haven't pushed far enough.

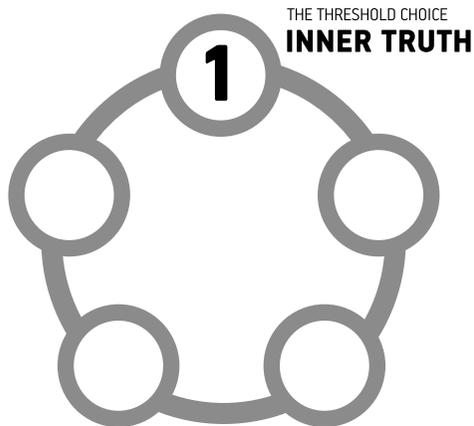
If each choice requires a leap of faith,
beyond your comfort zone:

Welcome to tomorrow.

CHOICE 1

INNER TRUTHS

**Will you hear the heartbeat
of your past choices?**



“It was Christmas eve. I was 12 years old, standing on the bank of a swirling river, alone without my family. They were 1,800 miles behind me. And somehow, I had to find the courage to cross that river without them.”

“What makes you, you?” I asked Felix Maradiaga. He is a Yale World Fellow, managing director of investment firm Pioneer Capital Partners, and one of the World Economic Forum’s Young Global Leaders. Amazing guy! Capable of creating any future he chooses. So surely he would talk about his mastery of economics and global markets or his global connectedness? Nope.

Felix Maradiaga was standing alone on the edge of the Rio Grande, entering the United States as a political refugee, fleeing the Contra War in Nicaragua. Friends who stayed behind — 12, 13 and 14 years old — were conscripted into military service.

“My mom had her grocery seized,” Felix continues, “and she witnessed many human rights violations by both sides in the war. So she made the toughest decision any mom could make. She sent me away. Insisting that my future was on the other side of that river.”

He was given asylum in the United States, and returned home 18 months later, as soon as the Contra War was over.

But his *toughest* choice would come two decades later, in his role with the Nicaraguan government.

During a pitch meeting in which a business was looking to him for funding, Felix discovered that the people in front of him were *the very same people* who persecuted and imprisoned his family 20 years earlier! What an opportunity for...

Wait. Let's pause Felix's story...

Put yourself in his shoes. Assume that the business deal looks good — it's a reasonable investment and fits within your strategy. Now, what would you do? What choice would you make that would impact the future of the firm seeking capital, and all their customers and employees? How would that choice reflect who you have chosen to be?

There is a Future Strong secret within Felix's story. A secret that applies to each and every one of us...

What an opportunity for sweet, sweet revenge? Not for Felix.

He called upon the kindness he received from strangers decades earlier. He not only *gave* them the money they needed, but he also *forgave* them.

“My own story is one of people investing in me when I was most vulnerable, so I am now a fierce advocate for galvanizing people — economically, socially, politically — to build hope and opportunity within their own communities,” he says.

Release Your Inner Mandela

Felix insists that to live the best future possible, we each must “discover our Inner Mandela” — referring to the course Nelson Mandela chose when released from prison after serving 27 years for conspiring against a government that enforced apartheid.

When Mandela was elected president of South Africa, he refused to persecute those who persecuted him. He would declare, “To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” And “If you want peace with

your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.”

Felix’s story is all our stories. Be honest. Fully honest. How often does what makes you, you — for better *and* worse — drive business and work decisions?

Exactly.

Despite several millennia of building best business practices, despite all the analysis and planning and forced discipline and structure, what makes us human will *never* be cleaved from how work gets done.

So if you are to be Future Strong, you must begin with what makes you, you. So that you can learn how to best leverage that. And also learn how to stop shooting yourself in the foot.

That’s what makes this the threshold choice to your future. Truly knowing what makes you, you will reveal amazing possibilities. And not knowing that or fooling yourself (see 80/20 sidebar) will keep you forever Future Shackled.

Leading With Love

What makes Felix, Felix is that he was born to make a difference in the world by living a life of love.

“If I was not leading from love,” he says, “my perspective and history might get in the way of my ability to build consensus and to help others.

“This has a powerful implication for every industry. If we try to lead thinking that everything is a fierce competition and we have to destroy our competitors, that can hurt our creativity. When you are in a state of emotional flow — when you feel comfortable with your emotions —

you are more creative. When your ability to inspire others is based on love, your power grows.”

Felix concludes, “In my leadership training for activists, I teach authentic leadership. When you try to learn from others and understand their perspective, then you become a more diverse, flexible and authentic leader. You need to tap into the power of your emotions to make decisions. Unfortunately, the way we’ve been trained in business school is that leadership is a set of attributes in which compassion, love and the search for truth are not that relevant.”

A Future Strong Secret

Love. Inclusivity. Empathy. That is Felix’s inner truth. That is what makes him a powerful force around the world in post-conflict reconstruction, a highly successful social entrepreneur, and a much-sought-after leadership coach.

And while *love* is a pretty darn good secret for all of life, including all leadership and this entire book, there is yet another secret within Felix’s story: the crucible moment that shaped who he is.

Crucible Moment:

A deeply personal experience that forged or tested how you view the world.

Future Strong Assessment Tool: Inner Truths

We have designed a **free, online self-assessment tool** for you to explore your relationship with all five choices. Go to **www.futurestrong.me** to learn: **have I mastered knowing my inner truths?** There’s also a deeper-dive tool for teams and companies: use Code STRONGER for discounts. See page 189 for more about the tool.

In 2002, leadership guru Warren Bennis put forth the idea that what makes great leaders great can be traced back to crucible moments in their lives — transformative experiences that forced them to change or make difficult personal decisions.²⁵ The leadership qualities of Mandela, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Churchill, JFK, Bill Gates, and others were all tracked back to crucible experiences during their lives.

Felix's crucible moment lasted 18 months. His underground railroad journey across five countries, to a foster family, and back into the arms of his own family, forged an inner strength and helped him discover his Future Strong power — love.

Felix's experience, while more intense than many of us will experience, is universal — tied to who we are as humans.

Nearly 15 years before Bennis's take on crucible moments, Joseph Campbell wrote about them in *The Power of Myth*. Campbell explained how, throughout history, all societies and religions have used the same framework to tell the stories of their people: *the hero's journey*. In every journey there is a moment where the hero is tested — a crucible experience — where he or she is transformed, reborn with new insights, courage, and powers.

George Lucas drew upon Campbell's work in creating the first installment of *Star Wars*. Luke Skywalker traveled an archetype hero's journey. And like Dorothy in *Oz*, Alice in *Wonderland*, Frodo in *Lord of the Rings* and most every hero in every movie, Luke discovered the

Inner Truths: Share Your Ahas

For posting: What will you write between the hashtags?

#InnerTruth ... #IAmFutureStrong

#MyCrucibleMoment ... #IAmFutureStrong

courage and power he needed was always there...within. He just needed to listen closely as he passed through his transformative experience.

That applies to you too. The courage and power you need for any possible future was always there. Within you.

You are the hero of your own story.

To be Future Strong,
you must understand your own
hero's journey.

When we asked thousands of people across the world, "What makes you, you?" we were standing on the shoulders of Bennis, Campbell, and all of human history. We explored how people drew upon past crucible moments to leap into the unknown and embrace uncertainty.

If you listen carefully... If you are willing to hear the heartbeat of your own choices from years or decades earlier...

Your past is handing you a tool
you can use to leap into your future:
the crucible moments
from your own life.

The power you need is in
looking back to look forward.

Everyone who hits adulthood has already experienced one, two or more powerful crucible moments. Sometimes they're traumatic and life shattering, like a death in the family, surviving cancer or losing a job.

But they can also be the unexpected kindness of a stranger, a victory or loss in sports, or a spiritual awakening that completely changed how you see things.

During those moments, you mustered what you needed to get through them or figured out the lesson to be learned from them.

Those experiences are a crucial part of what makes you, you. They are **the heartbeat of your own choices, always beating inside of you,** waiting to ignite your own courage, determination, and passion anytime that's needed.

That is true for all of us.

For me, it was the night my mom died. After her massive stroke, when we were told there was nothing more that could be done, the emergency room doctors sent all of us to the intensive care unit to wait for her, where we could be with her until she died. But no one from the ICU came to get her. She was dying alone for 40 minutes. *Alone.* No one was there to hold her hand or let her know how much she was loved.

For more than 20 years, I have been drawing on that deeply personal crucible moment to help teach leaders something so important about their people and culture. That everything they do... (Correction: I need to be inclusive here...) Everything *we* do — you, me, everybody — uses a portion of someone else's life.

Everything you do uses a portion of someone else's life.

Mom's legacy is to help me teach others how precious life is. That's how I've chosen to hear and carry the heartbeat of that moment.

Beating within you is some equally powerful experience.

Your future is personal.

Always.

Your future reveals itself *only*
after you have made a deeply
personal choice about
how you will embrace it.

People are Remarkable! When We Allow Them to Be

“When you’re given a leadership role, you have a tremendous responsibility. And your responsibility is not just about being good technically at your job. It’s about helping other people be the best they can be. My job is to remove barriers so people can be brilliant.”

That’s Ben Lightfoot, CEO of Publicis Groupe Indonesia, a global leader in advertising, marketing, communication, and business transformation.

“I’m often asked about the hard choices I need to make around managing the P&L,” he continues. “I think the real discussion is about inspiring and growing people: what are we doing on the soft side that is building better people to lead better people to grow better people? Human beings are just remarkable when we’re allowed to be!”

“There are two types of people in the world: the ones with their arms wide open and those with their arms closed. When given the chance, the people with their arms open wide will have a go at anything — they’ll look at every opportunity and just try. They’ll occasionally fail, but they’re fully open what the world brings us.”

Clearly, Ben is a leader who is focused on unleashing human capacity, and wants more of us to approach work and life with arms wide open. But where and how was that passion born? It was on a skateboard at 14 years old. A moment that would shape the rest of his life.

“Growing up in New Zealand,” he continues, “my sister and I were raised to believe we could do anything we put our hearts and minds to. That’s the beginning of what makes me, me.

“I was a semi-professional skateboarder in my teenage years. I had a really bad accident and almost lost my arm. At 14, the idea of not skateboarding was far worse than whether or not my arm was amputated. Whatever I do, I’m very passionate about it!

“Through New Zealand’s Accident Compensation Program — [Workers’ Comp] — I was awarded a lot of money. My parents were divorced and Mom was not doing well financially. So I helped pay for the purchase of a house. At 15 I had a mortgage. I felt a huge

80/20 Truths

80/20 Rule of Inner Knowingness

Scientific studies have found that most of us know ourselves far less than we think we do.^{37, 38, 39, 40} After comparing all that data with my interactions with hundreds of thousands of employees over the years, I arrived at this simplified 80/20 rule of how well we know ourselves:

- **20%** of us truly know who we are, and why, and how to leverage that.
- **80%** of us *believe* we know who we are but, in reality, we have done only 20% of the work necessary to truly know ourselves.

80/20 Rule of Values, Passions, and Habits

Again, a simplified 80/20 rule that parallels major studies:

- **20%** of us can easily call upon our passions, values and personal missions to stay focused on what truly matters.

sense of responsibility. Too much so. I became extremely depressed and withdrawn. I don't think I was suicidal, but my father was part of Youthline, a youth suicide prevention group, and he suggested that I join them. Almost immediately, someone in the group said she was worried about me, and started checking in on me.

“That was a turning point,” Ben shares. “I’ve carried that with me my whole life: you don’t have to know someone to watch out for them.”

Ben spent four years with Youthline, manning the phones to help those in need, learning communication and leadership skills.

“Who I am as a leader was also forged at that youth group,” Ben continues. “I set up a leaderless group. It was an experiment that worked very well. It helped many of them to thrive. But I also learned there are some people who need someone to lead them and others who are natural born leaders, and both of those types of people struggled with the leaderless idea. In that group, I learned a lot about adapting to each individual’s needs.”

- **80%** of us struggle with that. Most of us fall prey to daily distractions, and competing priorities. (When two important values compete — e.g., *Family matters most* and *Doing my best and being responsible* — the one that appears most urgent that minute gets done and the other gets sacrificed.)

Magical 80/20 Rule of Crucible Moments

When people truly connect with the crucible moments of their lives, something magical happens! Those numbers invert themselves. Those who *leverage their crucible moments as a tool* to keep their values and passions urgent and driving their daily routines find that:

- **80%** of the time they are relentless in staying focused on what truly matters.
- **20%** of the time they struggle too. (Everybody’s human!)

This is why your crucible moments are so crucial: the heartbeat of those moments never fades, is never drowned out.^{41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46}

All that, set in motion by one gnarly trick on a board pushed too far. Ben's accident, and everything that followed, including who he would become, is his big crucible moment.

And his adventurous self-mastery is capped by his continued dedication to extreme sports. "Skateboarding down a hill or biking down a mountain teaches you a lot about making fast, risk-heavy decisions. If you don't make that turn you're going to hit that tree," he concludes with a laugh.

Someone else's crucible moment
has the power to move
your heart, mind, and soul.

But nothing drives you to *act*
like embracing your own
crucible moment.

Without Inner Truths, There is No Future Strong

The only things we can be certain about as we look into the future: the amount of disruption, change and need-for-speed that you are feeling right now is the *least* it will ever be.

Five years from now, it will likely be five times as much. Ten years... ten times. And so on. Under those circumstances, even evolution feels like revolution. And: those disruptions will create as many brutally tough losses and difficulties for some as they create wondrous opportunities for others.

Business jargon for this — VUCA: volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity — sanitizes and sidesteps the impact on everyday people.

Tomorrow will be the best of times *and* the worst of times.

Riffing off of William Gibson's famous quote — “The future is already here, it's just not very evenly distributed.” — the joys and hardships of tomorrow will not be evenly disrupted. Some of us will fall neatly into one camp or the other: benefiting from the tech revolution, or being completely displaced by it; benefiting from changes in how we learn, or struggling to learn fast enough and adapt fast enough; benefiting economically, or struggling to make ends meet.

But what my team and I found in interviewing and surveying thousands of people for this book: most of us in the industrialized world will fall into *both* camps at the *same time*. Victor and vanquished. Delivered and displaced.

Not on a yearly basis. Not monthly or weekly.

Daily.

Daily swings between “No sweat. I'm on top of this” and “Oh shit, how the hell do I...?” Most every day will involve personal transformation. Monday's hero's journey. Tuesday's. Wednesday's. Day in, day out. Every day.

Which brings us back to the importance of your first choice — the power of your Inner Truths, and choosing to continuously listen for the heartbeat of what makes you, you.

There is no habit, no best practice that will keep you on top of all of that daily whipsawing between the *Known&Doable* and the *Unknowable&Uncharted*. The ability to do that must come from inside.

Even resiliency — one's ability to keep bouncing back...to be like water — originates from within.

■ The Magical 80/20 Rule

There is nothing new about the importance of inner knowingness. Since the dawn of civilization, philosophy and religion, we have learned that transformation in the world begins with transformation from within.

However, as noted in the 80/20 sidebar, my teammates and I have found that the intensity of the daily whipsawing makes it difficult for most of us to keep drawing on values and passions for everything we must get done every day. About 20% of us can do that regularly and consistently. About 80% of us can't.

But something magical happened with people who constantly draw upon crucible moments from their lives — those numbers invert themselves! About 80% of the time, they are able to weave personal values, passions, priorities and what truly matters into mundane, overloaded, crazed and disrupted daily activities.

Joseph Campbell (*Follow Your Bliss*) and countless others have advised us: *Know your why. Live your purpose. Pursue your life's work. Live your values. Do what you love*, etc.

But Bennis's and Campbell's idea of crucible moments goes one step further, giving you a very personal tool for a VUCA world.

The crucible moments of your life attach very concrete memories and experiences to your values and passions. What the air smelled like the first time you stood up for what was right. How the light streamed into the room when you chose family over the Tyranny of the Urgent. How all the background noise fell away when you helped someone in need.

Those extremely visceral experiences and feelings are seared into what makes you, you.

Something like that has already happened to you. Maybe it's a team victory where you banded together to do the impossible. Maybe it's spiritual moment or a state of grace. Maybe it's the time you created something wondrous or had a life-altering Aha. (See sidebar, Exploring Your Crucible Moments.)

You have already experienced some crucible moment(s) in your life that will keep you focused on what truly matters — day in, day out — no matter how whipsawed your days get.

Calling upon our crucible moments
allows us to transcend
our own limitations.
Those moments create
completely new possibilities
within each of us.

Innovation and Engagement Begin with Play

Benay Dara-Abrams is chief technology officer at BrainJolt, applying collaborative technologies to e-learning, digital health, and wellness.

“What makes you, you?” I asked, when it is her turn. Benay was one of 25 tech pioneers participating in a Future of Work salon in San Francisco as part of the research for this book.

She hesitates at first. This is a story she rarely shared.

She spent her childhood in the 1950s in Princeton, New Jersey. One of her best memories is walking down the street, cutting through her grandparents' yard and knocking on Uncle Al's door.

He'd welcome her with a big smile and pull out puzzles that they'd work on together. (Benay clarifies: they weren't related. "I was taught to address adults who were family friends as 'Uncle' or 'Aunt' — acknowledging their closeness, while still being respectful.")

"While I enjoyed the puzzles," she shares, "what made my experiences so special was the atmosphere Uncle Al created. He encouraged experimentation and wasn't critical of wrong turns. In fact, he didn't consider any of the paths we tried to be wrong. That was a major difference between my experiences with Uncle Al and many other adults. There were no right or wrong answers, there were just experiments, with curiosity leading the way, and that was the way I learned how to learn."

Sometime later, after her friend had died, and she learned more about him, she ran to her father: "Dad, why didn't you tell me that Uncle Al was Albert Einstein?!"

Everyone's face in the room lit up with the same shocked expression, as if to say, "Albert Einstein was *your friend!*!"

Benay continues, "My dad responded that Einstein wouldn't have wanted me to act any differently based on knowing who he was. I was appropriately respectful to a nice man, but didn't bow down or change who I was. Later I found a quote of his: 'Everyone should be respected as an individual, but no one idolized.' That definitely applied to the way he expected to be treated and the way he treated others.

"In addition to his encouragement and acceptance, Einstein created a

light, playful atmosphere, fueling my engagement and resulting in what I would later come to recognize as a state of flow, as defined by Mihaly Csíkszentmihályi. I experienced a particular kind of focus, that came about naturally, and that I could sustain for a long time.”

Benay concludes, “I now help others create this state of flow. These high-performing organizational cultures encourage experimentation, collaboration, and creativity in an open, accepting environment. Learning and play are completely integrated. This leads to an increase in innovation and engagement, both of which are desperately needed to solve the challenging and pressing problems that organizations face today.”²⁶

Benay’s experience is a great example of **joyous and blissful crucible moments**. A family friend helped her find her state of flow and she now helps others do the same.

Future Strong means
being able to jumpstart
your creative state on demand.

Jumpstarting flow within organizations is a two-part responsibility.

As an individual, you, like Benay, are responsible for tapping into that one intense moment — maybe it was in school or among a group of volunteers — where you first realized the joy and power of *being in the zone*. Calling upon that moment again and again will help you create flow state habits, making it easier to jumpstart flow on demand.

And, as a leader, you are Albert Einstein! You are responsible for creating the *conditions* where people can quickly and naturally jump into *their zone*. That includes, but is not limited to, people feeling they have personal control over an outcome, activities that are intrinsically

rewarding. Providing immediate feedback, and creating the space and time for people to be intensely focused on the task at hand.

For decades we have known that every organization needs to be a learning organization, and yet we are still left wanting for leaders who focus more on creating energized learning environments than on *do, do, do, dammit!*

Cooler Love, Cooler Entrepreneurship, Cooler Art

Serial entrepreneur Jerome Jarre wants to “shake things up and would like to change what’s not working in society. I have big dreams.” He is riding the mobile and social media revolutions into the future. His first building block for this change: six-second Vine videos.

Jerome was a business student in university in France and not doing well. He told his teachers, parents and classmates that he was going to drop out. They all warned him that if he did, he would live a failed life. To get away from all that negativity, he created his own crucible moment.

Like many soon-to-be digital entrepreneurs, his first step was to disrupt himself. Jerome threw an imaginary dart at a map, and took off for China.

He taught himself Mandarin by speaking to people in the street. He learned English by reading a book his roommate gave him: *Crush It* by Gary Vaynerchuk, who would later become his business partner. Their mobile-first marketing agency and production house, GrapeStory, pairs the brightest stars on Vine, Instagram and Snapchat with brands to create powerful and new ways to engage consumers.

“When we launched GrapeStory, we were called the ‘stupidest’ and ‘saddest startup idea.’ We’re now generating over \$4 million a year in revenue for our talent,” he says.

But Jerome's biggest goal has nothing to do with monetary success. "My dream is a society where everyone is dancing and singing in the street. Love became boring because of religion. In France, you can't clap your hands in church. Why not?!? I want love to be cool again!" (He walks his talk. Jerome signs every email "I love you." And he was invited to appear on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* because his Vine messages are so filled with love and joy.)

He continues, "The educational system has done a poor job in making entrepreneurship cool. We don't need to be so afraid of failing. Try something and if doesn't work, try something else. And art... it's already cool, but it's almost too cool. Art is in every component of society. We all need to enjoy coming up with things that have never been created before. Art is love. You need love to create art."

Finally, Jerome speaks of ridding yourself of whatever is in the way of leaping into the unknown, and finding the courage to just *go for it*: "The way to have the least fear as possible is to constantly go after it. Take a pen and paper and list your fears, then just tackle them one at a time.

"Write your own script. Don't let society write your script. Don't just take the script from your parents and what your teachers and friends tell you. The good news is that you can rewrite it anytime. So have fun with your script, and play it well!"

Jerome Jarre's life's work — a quest to fill the world with cooler love, cooler entrepreneurship and cooler art — and the successful businesses he has launched, and the lives he has touched, all track back to that one crucible moment. The moment he listened to his own heartbeat, disrupted himself, and created a new story for himself, on the other side of the world, with nothing more than his passion for life and joyous curiosity.

Jerome has created a daily ritual to remind himself to never get too complacent, to keep shaking things up. He hated cold showers. Too jarring. Now, he embraces them. Every day he takes a cold shower.

Future Strong is *adventurous*
self-mastery.

That means seeing each new day
as an adventure!

■ Exploring Your Crucible Moments

Part 1, Gather your stories: Examine three major areas of your life: Early Years, Life Outside of Work, Work Life.

Ask yourself three questions:

1. What moments in those areas created my biggest Ahas?
2. What moments most tested my resolve, my faith, my courage, or my ability to learn and grow?
3. What moments created the most intense joy or serenity for me?

Create three to five pages of notes

Part 2, Share your stories: Share your stories with at least three people who know you very well. Ask their insights about each story, specifically: "Which of these gets closest to what makes me, me?"

Create one to two pages of simplified, focused notes

Part 3, Refine by sharing and paying attention: Using your notes as a starting point, tell your what-makes-me-me story to 5, 10, 25 people. Strangers, co-workers, family. Pay attention to what energizes you most as you share your story. Pay attention to what most engages others as you share your story.

Part 4, Keep sharing and paying attention: That's a great way to keep your passion fresh and your focus sharp.

Parts 1—4 above incorporate Simon Sinek's work and ideas in *Start with Why*⁴⁷

New worlds to explore!

New challenges to face!

The Young Woman and the Sea

“At first, I was very materialistic. I went into management consulting in an era when greed was good and lunch was for wimps. I thought that was what I wanted, that that would make me happy.”

So begins Roz Savage, ocean rower. Roz is the first woman to row solo across three oceans — the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian. Her journey from highly-paid consultant, to being homeless, to realizing her dream, one oar stroke at a time, began with her crucible moment — the moment she truly faced what made Roz, Roz.

“What really made me realize that I wasn’t on the right path,” she continues, “was when I wrote two versions of my own obituary. At 33, I imagined I was at the end of my life, looking back. The first version was the one that I wanted and the second one was where I was headed for.

“I wanted a life of meaning and adventure and personal challenge, but what I was headed for was a life of quiet desperation. Secure, but being stifled by that security.

“The hard decision was giving up all that had meant so much to me. Little by little I began to realign my life, to put myself on track for the obituary I really wanted. I learned that living life according to my values made me happier than a big income and lots of possessions. I stopped being a compulsive planner and started taking a more flexible approach to life. I stopped caring so much about what other people thought of me, and started caring more about what I thought of myself.”

Roz continues, “I realized that it matters less whether something is a success or a failure, and matters more what I learn from the experience. It became clear to me, intellectually and emotionally and intuitively, that we have to look after our planet if we want it to look after us. And so I decided to row the Atlantic to raise environmental awareness.”

Few of us will ever push ourselves, physically or into truly risky situations — as far as Savage has. None of us are likely to row across an ocean.

And yet her story is universal.

Too many of us wake up at 23, or 33, or 43, or 53 and realize *This is not my life. This is not the life I wanted.* “There’s a growing awareness that the things that we thought represented security and happiness, do not,” Roz says.

That inner knowingness comes from her crucible moment. Roz disrupted herself by writing two obituaries. (See the next chapter to do this exercise yourself. If you don’t like the comparison...change! Now!)

Future Strong leaders are
driven by a core question:
What do I want my legacy to be?

That requires a lot of searching
one’s inner truths,
and being brutally honest
about how that compares
to one’s daily actions.

Roz concludes, “Becoming secure with insecurity is the best security that you can have. If you don’t keep pushing the boundaries, expanding your comfort zone, that zone actually gets smaller and smaller, until you’re shrink-wrapped in such a tiny space you can’t move, you can’t achieve anything, you can’t grow. And so I keep pushing, keep developing, keep evolving. I keep showing what an ordinary person can do when they put their hearts and minds and souls into it.”²⁷

Expanding your comfort zone, becoming comfortable with what feels extremely uncomfortable, happens much more quickly and easily when you grab the tool your past is handing you — earlier crucible moments in your own life.

Again, creating this within organizations is a two-part responsibility. Both revolve around tapping into those crucible moments for the courage you will need to venture into the unknown.

First: As an individual, like Roz, you are responsible for disrupting yourself — opening yourself up to the possibility that many of the things you do to feel secure are holding you back. Leaping into the unknown will take new acts of courage, new ways of being.

Second, if you lead others, you are responsible for moving your team or organization fully into the 21st century. That means letting go of your beliefs that today’s hierarchies, planning, and structures are working. They are not. They are wasting far too much human capacity.

Organizations have already maxed out today’s capacity within 20th century hierarchical rules and boundaries.^{28, 29, 30, 31}

The next explosion in human capacity has begun, *outside* of those rules — reimagining how we organize work, people, resources and capital.^{32, 33} In seven years Airbnb grew to a higher valuation Marriott International³⁴ and offers more rooms than most every major hotel

chain! 3-D printing is projected to be a \$21 billion industry by 2020.³⁵ GoFundMe raised almost \$2 million for #SavingEliza and the Coolest Cooler raised over \$13 million on Kickstarter.

There are amazing opportunities ahead if we reimagine how we organize and connect people, ideas, and capital!

Leading Others from Your Inner Truths:

Getting Started

1. Listen twice as much as you do today. Others are dying to share with you their inner truths and to live them at work.

2. Be you, only more so. Lead by authentic example. Laugh more. Reflect more. Pay it forward more. Live your values more. Tell the story of your journey. Make it a crucial part of how you lead.

3. Mentor, coach and guide others to disrupt their work and focus their inner truths on innovation, breaking rules and changing how work gets done. Forty percent of today's Fortune 500 companies will not exist in ten years.⁴⁸ You need everyone's help in addressing that kind of volatility and change.

4. Mentor, coach and guide others to disrupt themselves and focus their inner truths on reimagining your culture and how people work together. No matter how people-focused you are now, over the next ten years, you'll need to be ten times better. (See 40% above.)

5. Use your inner truths to sponsor a Wicked Problem

Moonshot. Surely there is a wicked problem — education, health and well-being, poverty, clean energy, or water, affordable housing — that sits among your personal passions and impacts your customers or employees. Apply what Google calls Moonshot Thinking to that problem. (Based on JFK's 1961 call to do what was then impossible — send a man to the moon and return him safely by the end of that decade.) Sponsor a team to solve it at 10x levels (10x cheaper, 10x faster, 10x cooler, making 10x more of a difference). Regardless of the outcome, you will have used your inner truths to make a difference in the world.

Every month, ask yourself: What do I want my legacy to be?

Every month, check your calendared activities against that goal.

Then there's the dark side, which will force us to rethink how we do things.... By 2025, two-thirds of all jobs in the U.S. will require education beyond high school and, *at the same time*, America will face a shortfall of 11 million skilled workers with the education they need.³⁶

And those are just the tip of the New Rules iceberg. The futures of work, leadership, and companies are going through radical transformations. The courage and willingness to embrace the challenges and risks ahead will not come from any management practice or leadership program.

It will come from within. This is why this first choice — Inner Truths — is so important.

*If you want to awaken all of humanity,
then awaken all of yourself.
Truly the greatest gift you have to give is that
of your own self transformation.
~ Lao Tzu*

Timeless wisdom from people from Lao Tzu to Roz Savage, a couple millennia later, and everyone in between: whatever you need to leap into the future will come from within.

If you want a strong future:
Becoming secure with insecurity
is the best security you can have.

If you want to lead others into
a strong future:

You need to be keenly aware
of how your own inner truths —
biases, fears, courage, values
and dreams — do or do not
impact the daily work of others.

Put People First, Dream Big, Take Risks

Vivek Bapat is senior vice president, global head of marketing strategy for SAP, whose software runs the operations and finances for so many companies that the livelihoods of close to a billion people are impacted every day by their ecosystem. That's a big responsibility that SAP takes very seriously.

Still, his own crucible moment taught him to push beyond the status quo: “For me,” shares Vivek, “each person’s defining moment is about the choices you make when faced with obstacles. It’s about dreaming big, taking risks, being passionate and persistent at the same time, and it’s also about not changing your values.”

Vivek was fresh out of a premier engineering university in India, but could not find a job in his field because India’s economic conditions were dire at the time. He eventually found work as a factory trainee, carting raw materials from inventory to the plant floor.

He quickly realized he was wasting his talents. With no prospects for a career in India, he applied to universities in the U.S. to continue his education. Friends and family pooled their resources — just enough for one semester’s tuition and living expenses. Vivek headed to the U.S. with not much more than his hopes and dreams. He downplays the hardships that followed though, “Every one of us has faced obstacles.”

And that's the point! You have already faced some obstacle that will help you with your next jump into uncertainty. With every obstacle, comes opportunity.

Vivek describes the next leap-into-the-future for us all: "We're in the midst of a great decoupling," he says. "Technology is sending productivity soaring and, overall, driving wages downward. That decoupling of productivity and wages is creating a major dissatisfaction gap." People can now do lots more work. And, due to those increased efficiencies, employers don't have to offer more money for more work. Many are offering less. Sometimes lots less.

Vivek spends a lot of time thinking about this gap, as his role at SAP includes focusing on the future of work: "We need to put people first. We have to stop thinking about fitting people into jobs and start looking at people and creating jobs around them. We need to do more to nurture and develop people and then try to build something around them."

He continues, "I've found that the best-performing teams are based on great people who band together around a common vision, and they essentially create their own jobs and solve problems along the way. This is the model that leaders need to follow in the future. Start with the passion within people, and then create a system around them that encourages them to succeed. The very notion of what an organization is must change to fit this idea."

All of this, Vivek insists, comes back to our first choice of Inner Truths: "The leaders who will accomplish these changes, who will reimagine our workplaces and the very future of work, will be driven to do so by their own moral compass. They will find the courage to make the necessary changes from within themselves," he concludes.

Finally, several of Vivek's teammates taught me new ways to think about the future and our role in creating it. Anka Wittenberg is SAP's chief diversity officer. She shares that one of SAP's goals, through its Autism at Work program, is for one percent of its workforce to be those who are certified as autistic. "Any company that values diversity," she says, "must make greater efforts to reflect all of society's diversity. Many who are autistic have difficulty getting jobs because they struggle with communication and social skills. But they have so much to contribute to society and business because many also have an acute attention to detail and a great ability to see patterns in information."

Jose Velasco, who has two autistic children of his own, and heads Autism at Work for SAP adds, "When we started emphasizing the importance of communication clarity and empathy to the teams hosting employees in the autism spectrum, we realized how much more effective we can all be through unambiguous communication, and how much more we could all learn about ourselves by putting ourselves in another person's shoes."

So I asked Patrick Viesti, one of SAP's employees hired through the program, what all of us who work could learn from him and everyone with autism. He says, "How to be your own best advocate. How to speak your mind. Most systems in society are not designed to help us succeed or to meet our needs. One of the things I've learned from my parents, and healthcare workers, and now SAP, is how to ask for what I need."

How to be your own best advocate.

A perfect summary of why this first choice — how we understand our Inner Truths — is so important for everyone, not just leaders.

Will your dreams and needs be built into tomorrow's systems, structures, tools, and new ways of working? The only way to ensure that they are is to be your own best advocate.

And the only way to be your own best advocate is to truly hear the heartbeat of what makes you, you.

The Danger of Hiding Who You Are

Morgana Bailey is an HR vice president for State Street Bank, and she recently used a State Street TED talk to come out to her colleagues.

Listening In to Lean In

In 2013, Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook's COO, released her best-seller, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. Then, tragically, only two years later, she would experience one of the worst crucible moments anyone can: the death of a loved one. She lost her husband, Dave Goldberg, CEO of SurveyMonkey.

After 30 days — the completion of *sheloshim*, Judaism's private mourning period — Sandberg posted about her feelings and experience on Facebook. Some excerpts from her post:

"When tragedy occurs, it presents a choice. You can give in to the void...or you can try to find meaning...."

"I have lived thirty years in these thirty days. I am thirty years sadder. I feel like I am thirty years wiser."

"I have learned that resilience can be learned.... I have learned gratitude. Real gratitude for the things I took for granted before—like life...."

"I want Dave. I want option A. [A friend] put his arm around me and said, 'Option A is not available. So let's just kick the shit out of option B.'"

"Dave, to honor your memory and raise your children as they deserve to be raised, I promise to do all I can to kick the shit out of option B."

In writing her book as well as her post after her husband's death, Sandberg taught us all so much: to lean into whatever challenges we face. To look inward, to hear the heartbeat of what makes us who we are. To realize that that heartbeat, and the love of others, gives us the power we need to be resilient, the courage we need to face any future.

We all have the power and courage to kick the shit out of any future.

“I am gay,” she told her teammates for the first time. Since then, her talk has been viewed two million times. I interviewed her afterwards to learn more about how she hacked her own thinking and decided to change her future.

“I see myself as an ethical, moral, rules-driven person,” she begins, “which comes from my family and my typical Midwest values. I began to realize that I was doing the opposite by withholding and hiding who I am. When I was in college, I realized I wasn’t straight. And when I left college, I took the road *more* traveled. [Not coming out publicly.] That road was easier, more familiar, and less scary. I essentially shut down who I was for 17 years.”

Her company’s affiliation with TED created an opportunity to change the story she told the world, to break the cycle of half-truths or outright lies. “I’ve always been a fan of TED talks,” she continues, “and I think they offer remarkable opportunities to share ideas. When State Street partnered with TED, I thought ‘What could I talk about to be one of the speakers?’”

For almost 20 years, Morgana struggled with how and when to change her story, and the TED talk finally presented the perfect opportunity. “I’ve danced around this for so many years. I think I deserved to come out with a splash! Beyond how coming out has changed my life — what it’s made me think about now, at work, is how I go about making choices if I see something that’s not quite right.

“Now I’m more apt to be a ‘whistleblower.’ In the past I was spending so much energy hiding myself, that I probably let some things others were doing go by [because hiding things was OK].”

It wasn’t until after her talk that Morgana realized how powerful it

can be to just be who you are. “The reaction to the talk has told me that it’s very relevant. It’s helping so many people, even younger people — I [incorrectly] assumed that coming out wouldn’t be such a big issue for them as it was for me and my generation.

“Vulnerability, living on that edge of risk, is when you truly start living!” she shares. “And I wasn’t living.”

Morgana concludes, “I’m a people-pleaser kind of person, always wanting to be the friendliest manager one could be. This experience has helped me be bolder in some of my decisions. In the past, that’s been a challenge for me — dealing with the fact that my decisions may have downstream negative impacts on some people that I’m accountable for. But I now feel more alive than I ever have before!

“Is it scary every day? Yes. But it’s better than the protected and numb way I was living before.”

Vulnerability, living on the edge of risk, is when you truly start living! It’s better than the protected and numb ways of living that many of us choose.

We’ll talk more about vulnerability in the third choice: Humble Self. But Morgana’s story shows us that being true to oneself begins here, with truly knowing what makes you, you.

Morgana’s example is far more universal than one person’s tale about sexuality; each of us has many personal stories we tell ourselves about what matters and about how we need to live. Sometimes those stories serve us well. Often, in a rapidly changing world, they do not.

Those stories could revolve around your need for financial security, or your need to be liked or appreciated, or your need to fit in, or your need to hide a personal weakness, or, or, or...

We are not our story. We choose our stories to fit how we see ourselves, and we can change those stories as our view changes.

If you want a strong future:
You need to get past the stories
that you have told yourself
and others. You need to hear the heartbeat
that's the real you.

Future Strong is Adventurous Self-Mastery

It's unlocking your future by running toward the unknown with the wondrous soul of a child and the drive of a force that will not be stopped.

Whether or not you choose to explore your Inner Truths through your crucible moments is up to you. If you have found another path to get you there, go for it! Regardless of how you get there...

If you wish to be Future Strong,
you must choose
to pause long enough
to truly hear the heartbeat
that makes you, you.

Constantly staying connected to that heartbeat is the tool you will need to withstand the daily whipsawing between the unknown and known, between the certain and uncertain.

If you are a leader, remember: strong me comes before strong we.

You need to become Future Strong before you can help others do the same. Only after we discover our own truths can we then ask, “How can I maximize my personal contribution to others and to the organization?”

Before all other choices comes this one.

Choosing to know yourself deeply hands you the torch to see beyond yourself, into the future. Into a strong future.

Inner Truths: One-Line Summaries

The Choice: Choosing to deeply understand and leverage the crucible moments that make me, me.

Questions to ask to make that choice...

Adventurous: What's the biggest risk I've taken that paid off big?

Self-Mastered: How often do I think about what makes me, me?

Simplified: What one sentence captures most of what I'm about?

Amplified: If I lived what makes me, me...more often and more out loud...what positive impact would that have on others?

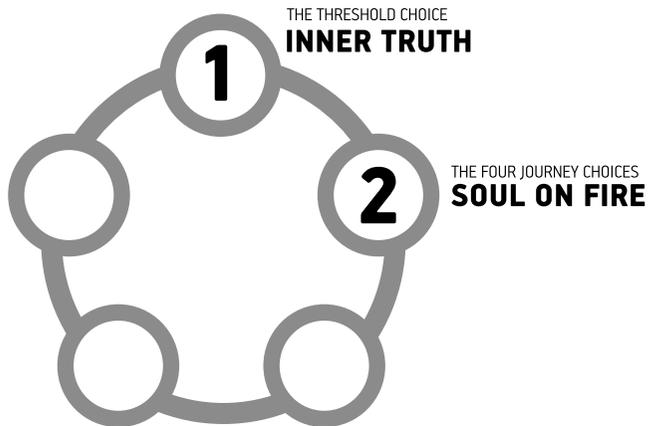
CHOICE 2

SOUL ON FIRE

Who will you choose to become?

What's your call to adventure?

What's your one thing?



“The world could have looked at me and said I was successful. I had positional authority. Lots of stock options. A good company. There was only one thing significantly missing. And that was *here...*” (Placing his hands over his entire chest, to include not just his heart, but the very essence of who he is.)

“I felt trapped. I was yearning for a better work-life. Not just for me. I was struggling with what it meant to be a leader. Did I miss out on some holy grail of management? Maybe I’m not cut out for this? Maybe it’s just me?”

So began this leader’s journey that led to what burned, joyously, inside of him.

“I was taking the longest drive to work so I could arrive as late as possible without being noticed. Then, one day, my boss called me into his office. I thought he finally caught me. Instead he said, ‘Rich, you’re a great leader. I’m going to promote you.’”

Not caught. Now what? “I told him I had no interest whatsoever. And he was pissed!

“But that night I thought about everything I wanted in my life. I was confronted by all my dreams since I was 20. I realized I had given up on myself, on my ability to make my dreams happen. That new job *could* be part of my dreams. *If* I was willing to change how I approached being a leader.

“So the next morning I told my boss I’d sign up for what he wanted me to do. He was shocked as I did a 180° turnaround. But I had one condition. I told him: ‘I’m gonna build the best damn software team this town has ever seen and I need your support to do it.’”

That’s Rich Sheridan. The best-damn work he did for his boss would eventually lead him to launch Menlo Innovations, a Michigan-based software firm that is reimagining what it means to work and lead in the 21st century.

Menlo’s mission: to end human suffering in the world as it relates to technology. Their core corporate value: joy.

Clearly, Rich’s goal is to provide a lot more than just software solutions to clients. He is determined to change the world through Menlo’s work, and to teach others how to do what he and his team have done. He wrote the book on joy at work, *Joy, Inc.*, and his teams teach courses on their work design innovations. Among them:

- » Pairing: No one works alone. All work is done in pairs
- » Co-location: All project teams sit together
- » Doing the simplest thing that could possibly work
- » No one at Menlo works more than 40 hours a week
- » Green-Dotting: All work is quickly reviewed by peers from other teams

Soul on Fire: Share Your Ahas

For posting: What will you write between the hashtags?

#SoulOnFire ... #IAmFutureStrong

#SoulOnFire ... #MyOneThing

Founded in 2001, Menlo Innovations was named after Thomas Edison's Menlo Park, New Jersey invention factory. By 2007, Menlo had become one of Inc. 500's fastest growing privately held firms.

Rich's story is a great example of the first two Future Strong choices in tandem. And a cautionary tale: how long will you wait before you channel what makes you, you, into action?

Your first choice to be Future Strong is hearing, admitting and clarifying what makes you, you. Owning the heartbeat of your own choices. Then...

Your second choice to be Future Strong begins when your call to adventure, whatever that may be, is so powerful that it will not be denied.

Rich had a vision for what would become Menlo Innovations in his early 20s, and then he sat on it for a couple decades, almost losing it forever.

Earlier, we learned of the 80/20 rule of inner knowingness. That, unfortunately, about eight in ten of us *believe* we know who we are but — *in reality* — we have done only 20% of the work to truly know ourselves. If you wish to be Future Strong, you need to be the exception, not the rule. Know thyself, fully.

Doing so sets in motion the pendulum of additional Future Strong choices. Next comes **choosing to act**, choosing to dance to the heartbeat inside of you.

The pendulum of choice began its dance.

Just put your paws up,

'cause you were born this way, baby.

Oh there ain't no other way,

you were born this way, baby.

~ Lady Gaga

Being Future Strong is not about research, or scenario planning, or anticipating the next big thing, or creating the next big thing. Those may happen *as part of* your journey, but they're not what make you Future Strong.

Being Future Strong is being the you that you have chosen to become — today and every day.

For Rich, that was about forming a group of amazing people who could accomplish amazing things through the pursuit of joy.

“Creating Menlo was not easy, and was scary,” Rich continues. “I was worried what pursuing my passion would do to my time with my three kids. But I realized it’s one thing to occasionally take time away from your kids. It’s another thing to sell your soul short, and to have your kids see that every day.

“I believe I am chasing the thing that I was made by God to do. I’ve learned, as many of us do when the wisdom gears start kicking in, to pay more attention to my heart than my brain,” he declares.

Rich then shares how these kind of personal choices translate into leadership choices — how to help every teammate be Future Strong. “One of the toughest choices we make as a leader and as any company,” he begins, “is how are you going to present yourself to the world? What’s

your beacon message? We chose joy as that message. It had always been there. But we never led with it.

“The very first day I led with that message was a very vulnerable moment. People were like, ‘Why are you talking about joy? We want to hear about software development and about your innovations in teamwork.’ Very quickly I had to figure out: do I really want to place a bet on something that seems so squishy and namby-pamby? The first person I had to sell on this message was me.

“I felt vulnerable — but also freed,” Rich concludes. “Choosing the pursuit of joy allowed my team to hold me accountable to that value. It’s a great sorting path for everything we do: what decisions did we make today that fit within joy?”

Being Future Strong is living at the
intersection of today and tomorrow:
where living in the moment
and who you have chosen to become
dance together as one.

Rich Sheridan’s call to adventure, for himself, his family and his firm, is the pursuit of joy. As with every example in this book, that may match who you have chosen to become...or it may not. Maybe his choice does feel too squishy and namby-pamby to you. That doesn’t matter. I present these heroes’ journeys not as examples for you to emulate, but as exploration starters for your own journey.

What is *your* call to adventure?

That’s your second Future Strong choice.

My Soul Burns for...

“I hope to be a contributing and effective part of a solution for some large-scale, global issue. I say *effective* because so many people dive into work that they think will make a difference, but haven’t taken the time to learn about themselves or to gain the skills they need to make that difference.”

That is Shilpi Roongta’s response when I asked her about her dreams for the future. Shilpi is a twenty-something product manager for Compass, Inc., a real estate tech platform whose goal is to revolutionize the buying, selling and renting of homes. We met at her previous job as a Manhattan-based consultant for Accenture, focused on their global health and non-profit clients.

She is a real-world, real-deal blend of two stereotypes often tossed at millennials... Dreamy: Focused on making a difference in the world... Digital Native: Reimagining how to solve wicked problems in completely new ways.

“I hope for a future,” she continues, “where executives and everybody in every organization are making decisions that are mindful of the world, our community and our neighbors — and not separating social responsibilities from profitable business decisions. Because they go hand-in-hand. Without a positive world in which to sell your products or services, your business is not going to last.”

Future Strong Assessment Tool:

Soul on Fire

Use our **free, online self-assessment tool** to explore key dimensions of what **sets your soul on fire**. Go to **www.futurestrong.me**. There’s also a deeper-dive tool for teams and companies: use Code STRONGER for discounts.

Shilpi's soul burns to make a difference in the world. Yet she's young enough and mature enough to leave that loosely defined — for now. *Effectively solving a global issue* is her call to adventure, and skill-building is her daily goal. "I'm doing everything I can to keep that fire alive and make a difference, and every day I'm building the skills to do that better."

What fire burns inside you that is so powerful, you could call it your one thing?

Curly: *You know what the secret to life is?...*
Just one thing. You stick to that and
everything else don't mean shit.

Mitch: *That's great. But what's the one thing?*

Curly: *That's what you gotta figure out.*

- City Slickers

For some, like Rich Sheridan or Lady Gaga, that one thing was always there, deep inside. A creative force that will not be denied. They were just born that way and a crucible moment in their lives shook it loose.

For others, it may take a crucible moment to create that one thing, to create that burning passion....

Wow. What Am I Doing?

"I was in my early 30s, and had an incredible and well-paid job as a commodities trader. Everybody envied me," says Swiss-born Patrick Struebi.

"Then one day, I was in Peru on a business trip, meeting miners who

had lost their jobs, and I saw how little money they made and how much money went back to our home office. I thought, ‘Wow, what am I doing?’ I realized I was making the rich richer and the poor poorer. It was an epiphany that really turned my life upside down. That was the moment I changed my life completely. I took a sabbatical to figure out what I wanted to do.”

Patrick continues, “When I decided to leave that job, the world was against me. My parents and friends kept asking me if I was crazy. ‘How can you do that?’ they asked.

“I moved to Mexico, where I didn’t even speak the language. To find what I was meant to do I needed to be someplace I’d never been and had to leave everything behind. I never could have started my new business if I was among my own people. I needed to go into isolation. Even then, I was filled with second thoughts: ‘Am I crazy?’ I came to realize that life tests you to see if you are really up to the challenge. The minute I declared what was inside of me — the moment I said, ‘This is right.’ — things fell into place.”

From that Aha moment, Patrick would go on to become the founder and CEO of Fairtrasa, a group of 15 companies in 12 countries whose mission is to empower small-scale marginalized farmers across the globe, helping them lift themselves out of poverty. His new life’s adventure: to change the world, one fair trade banana at a time. He was named the 2014 Social Entrepreneur of the Year by the Schwab Foundation, which celebrates sustainable models of social innovation. That’s his fourth Social Entrepreneur of the Year nod, over several years from multiple organizations.

Building a fair trade ecosystem means a lot more than selling bananas. Fairtrasa has created a local clinic that services almost 6,500

people every year, built a large-scale water purification system, rebuilt roads to be more flood-resistant, and put computers in several schools.

Translating his Aha into Fairtrasa took a lot more than following his passion. “I realized I was given certain talents,” Patrick continues. “And I wasn’t living up to them. I needed to find something where I could use those talents to give back. The amount of talent you get equals the amount of responsibilities you take. And I wasn’t living up to my responsibilities.

“It’s been an amazing journey. Lots of trial and error, but ultimately, very enriching. The biggest challenges were cultural differences. Imagine,” says Patrick, “here comes the Swiss perfectionist! That didn’t work with farmers stuck in poverty. I had to learn to adapt what I knew to who they were and to their cultures. Our supply chain was also built with trial and error. Some foods we selected just weren’t right for fair trade delivery. With each failure, I had to go back inside me, to recall what I was passionate about, before I could refocus Fairtrasa and our team.

“My advice to every leader,” Patrick concludes, “is to always go back to the beginning — to your very personal reasons for doing something. Then reconnect with your highest responsibilities as a person. Make sure those are woven into every project, every business plan.”

Your Future Strong journey
begins with your one thing —
your burning reason for
taking that first step
and every step thereafter.

That one thing will keep you strong and focused when you falter, as you surely will; and moving forward when fear and doubt hit, as they surely will.

Could it be more than one thing? Yes. Two, yup. Three, maybe... but only if you're super-disciplined. More than three? Nuh uh. The complexity of the world *out there* demands that we be simpler and more focused in how we bring it all inside ourselves.

■ You Must Simplify Tomorrow's Complexities

The time to simplify tomorrow is now, today, from within.

If you wait until tomorrow, *after* all the disruptions, chaos, and noise hit, it will be too late.

The interwoven cacophony of choices, distractions, possibilities, and competing priorities coming at you — all of which needed to be acted upon long before you learned of them — will often be too difficult to unravel.

Attention and Focus: Admit it... You are probably among the seven in ten people just skimming this text as well as multitasking at this very moment! Studies show that you're not alone...

- » Your attention span, as well your teammates', is about the same as a goldfish's.⁴⁹
- » Three of the top five time wasters in your day and top sources of complexity all relate to communication.⁵⁰
- » Information inside your company is doubling every 500 days.⁵¹
- » You are losing two to four hours per day just trying to

make sense of everything coming at you.⁵²

- » Up to nine percent of you are trying to have sex and read this at the same time⁵³ (Multitasking practiced as an extreme sport, mostly by millennials.)
- » Everything above is going to get far worse once the Internet of Things is fully implemented...
- » Today's data/info overload will feel like a calming trickle compared to tomorrow's tsunami.

Now let's layer on top of that the **skillsets you'll need for tomorrow**. The following list is the combined wisdom of several futurists and learning experts.^{54, 55, 56, 57} By 2020, most everyone who works must be *at least proficient* in all of these skills and be *a master* of as many as possible:

Why Your One Thing Matters to Your Career

Forbes columnist Rawn Shah recently gave a TED talk on the future of work.⁶⁰ He described how it's time to stop thinking about jobs, employment, and companies and start thinking about selecting platforms to deliver your services to market. While traditional employment will still exist, almost all work and services will also be provided through platforms like Airbnb, Angie's List, TaskRabbit, Etsy, FlexJobs, Shapeways and GigMasters. To excel in leveraging platforms, you must know your one thing with exacting clarity in order to market yourself and compete. For example, Rawn's one thing: help others achieve collaboration mastery.

From there you'll need to articulate several variations of your one thing that give your life meaning. Among Rawn's: advising on team and organizational design, sword fighting sensei. These will direct you to the platforms best-suited for your services.

But to survive, compete and get noticed in a platform world, everything must track back to your one thing.

- » Sense-Making
- » Novel and Adaptive Thinking
- » Social Intelligence (EQ on steroids: Online, face2face, global)
- » New Media Literacy
- » Computational Thinking
- » Cognitive Load Management (see list above)
- » Design Mindset
- » Cross-Cultural Competency
- » Virtual Collaboration
- » Extremely Self-Directed
- » Mindful Action (Inner knowingness plus mastering conflict)
- » Triage (Ability to do hyperfast root cause analysis)
- » Simplification (Both in thinking and in communicating)
- » Deep Critical Thinking (Logic, Argumentation, Psychology)
- » Trans-Disciplinary (Ability to connect all these skills)
- » Clear, Concise Communication across all of the above

And that's the short list!

By now, it should be abundantly clea...

Hey, goldfish!...

Enough sex...

Eyes and mind back here...

...clear that retaining daily focus *and* remaining Future Strong will be next to impossible. Unless...

Unless you come to tomorrow armed with your one thing.

I am your strong future. What's your *one thing*?

An organization's mission, vision, values and culture are good and important, but not good enough. Not for the crazed tomorrow that's ahead. For each individual, the skills and attention lists above, plus your own values and personal priorities, all need to be nested within one simple thing. (Like a Russian nesting doll, one doll inside the next, inside the next: the smallest one being the heart and soul of everything that is layered on top.)

Your life's mantra.

How will you live your dream, every day?

Your call to adventure.

How will your dreams create tomorrow's epic exploits?

Here's a sampling of *one things* from the first two sections of this book...

- » Lead from love
- » Live simplicity; life is too precious for anything else
- » Go full speed with arms wide open
- » Create joy and flow for others
- » Live at the edge of risk
- » Pursue joy

Notice what happened when you read those. Because they are someone else's, some of the magic and intrigue may have disappeared. *Other people's* one things may feel like platitudes. Banal bromides. That's because you didn't live Felix Maradiaga's life, or Roz Savage's or Rich Sheridan's lives.

What makes *your* one thing uniquely powerful is how visceral it is *for you*.

When you pause long enough to hear its heartbeat, your one thing will take your breath away. When you pause long enough to feel it, your will eyes tear up or you won't be able to stop smiling, dancing and having a blast!

Think about these universal examples...

If you're a parent, what sight or sound or smell will instantly make you remember that your child is what matters most to you? (Even if whatever is happening at that moment has absolutely nothing to do with your kid.) What one thing has the power to instantly pull you away from your workplace's Tyranny of the Urgent and refocus you on family?

Or if you're an American 25 years old or older, what one thing will always bring you back to September 11, 2001? What sight or sound or smell, that may have nothing to do with what why that day is meaningful, will instantly take you back to that moment?

Or what one rock/pop/hip-hop anthem from your teenage years instantly transports you to another emotional place?

(Examples from my life: *Stairway to Heaven*, Zep's first-ever New York performance. Goosebumps! A feeling of *Anything is possible!* Also: Swimming in a chlorine pool. I still cannot go for a swim without feeling a rush of emotions that date back to a crisp late afternoon, November 22, 1963. Before sending me to the bus that would take me to swim practice, Miss Otis tearfully told our third grade class that our president had died. Ever since, every sudden burst of chlorine scent brings me to a deeply emotional place, if only for a second or two. And,

yes, I know: I also just outed myself as an aging Boomer.)

Those examples may or may not relate to your call to adventure, but they powerfully illustrate how one thing from your life can instantly refocus your heart, mind, body and soul. Being Future Strong requires that kind of instant refocus, continuously.

I am your strong future. If it's tied to one of your life's crucible moments, your call to adventure will keep you forever Future Strong. It will ensure that who you have chosen to become will not be denied.

The biggest, toughest competition
in the future will be the battle
for your time and attention.
Your one thing —
your call to adventure —
is your best tool in that battle.

■ The Eyes of the Future Are Looking Back at Us...

Being Future Strong isn't just about you or your team. We need *every* leader to be stronger. And we need *everyone* helping *everyone* to be stronger — every citizen, every worker, every teacher and every student.

Every system that existed before the turn of the century is either majorly broken, completely outdated, in the midst of being totally transformed, or soon will be totally disrupted.

Bridges and transportation infrastructure: falling down, falling down. Education, healthcare, manufacturing, and business structures: both badly broken and being reimagined. Arts, entertainment,

fundraising, collaboration, and social structures: being democratized and revolutionized. Every physical thing: about to be digitally connected to every other thing. Politics and government...don't get me started!

In every area of society, we need disruptive heroes. Individuals who are strong enough and passionate enough to build new systems and structures that will create better futures.

Stephen Ritz is one of those heroes. “The eyes of the future are looking back at us and demand that we get it right. What we do today is creating our children’s future. We have moved through decades of lost opportunities and we are perilously close to the decade of last opportunity,” says this Global Teacher Prize finalist.

Stephen is a bow-tied, joyful optimist who so cherishes our children’s future that he’s dedicated his life to ensuring we get it right: “The biggest influence in my life was the civil rights movement. I am an equity warrior — I am looking to flip the script on traditional outcomes for those in need. We have the ability to change lives and we have an obligation to do so. I urge all of us to work together so we can grow something greater.”

Stephen is a life-long educator and founder of Green Bronx Machine, who observed that as his students’ waistlines expanded, engagement and opportunities in school decreased, school performance suffered, and hope and ambition became minimized.

He chose to tackle the interwoven systems of children’s health and education.

Originally an after-school program for Bronx, New York high schoolers, Green Bronx Machine has evolved into a K-12, fully-integrated, core curriculum. Students grow food in school that ends up in their tummies. They read about and blog about what they’re growing.

They learn the science of food, soil and the environment. They discover what healthy food is and why it matters.

Stephen believes healthy kids are at the heart of healthy schools and healthy schools are at the heart of healthy communities. He passionately declares, “Green Bronx Machine is a 21st century *solutionary*. My favorite crop is organically-grown citizens! Graduates. Members of the middle class who are going to college. We are growing the new economy.”

Stephen’s daily rallying cry: *Sí, se puede!* Originally declared by Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers to inspire dreams of new possibilities during insurmountable situations: Yes, you can! Yes, we can!

■ Living Your One Thing: Three Ways to Begin

1. Begin With the End in Mind

Obituary Exercise: So sad. Sorry to see you go. Time to write your three-paragraph obit. Twice...

My Obit If I Died Today

The Obit I Want

Compare the two. What’s different? That difference is the essence of your one Future Strong thing. To refine it, take it to your friends and family and ask for their insights. They know what your soul craves. They’ll help guide you toward the eulogy you deserve.

2. Begin With Your Crucible Moments

Follow the exercise on page 60 from Inner Truths.

3. Begin Practicing

All this “doesn’t mean shit” if you don’t act on it, if you don’t live it. Here are some ways to get started — from the pragmatic to the disruptive.

Tiny Transformation: Every journey begins with just one step. Pick one small thing that would move you toward your one thing and just do it. Relish the moment! Repeat.

Temporal Transformation: Select a temporary timeframe — an hour, a day, or a week — in which you fully commit to yourself to living by your

Behind this systemic change is one man's, then a team's, then a school's, then a community's burning passion — a vision that will not be stopped. Stephen is leading a movement.

He starts small to grow big: “The Golden Rules really go a long way: Come early, stay late; say ‘Please’ and ‘Thank you’ and ‘I’m sorry, you were right.’ When we embrace our better nature, we learn to nurture, and when we learn to nurture, we all embrace a better future. That’s what it’s all about.

“As humans we have compassion, and if we learn to move to a mindset where together we can all prosper — compassion for all — that is the kind of coalition and collaboration that is going to move all of society forward,” Stephen concludes.⁵⁸

one thing. Listen from that perspective. Speak from that perspective. Make choices from that perspective. Act from that perspective. See what happens. Don't evaluate based on comfort or ease. Most likely, you will be living outside your comfort zone. Instead, evaluate by asking, “Did this feel like my call to adventure? Would dedicating myself to this excite me? Possibly for the rest of my life?”

Tribal Transformation: Connect with your clan — co-workers or family members or a mentor — and ask for their support in trying out this new calling. That could include your team temporarily adjusting their schedule or to dos to incorporate your call to adventure. Or it could include adjusting family time or vacation plans to incorporate your newly discovered one thing. None of us do this alone. Seek your tribe's help and you'll be amazed at what happens next.

Total Transformation: For most people, even radical shifts are not implemented overnight. Consider this phased-in approach...

- **Immediate:** Change today's to dos to align with your call to adventure. Change daily communication/sharing to align with your call to adventure. If applicable, change attire, diet, or exercise.
- **First Six Months:** Research, build and share your plans for changing your financial, business, career, or life goals.
- **Six Months-Plus:** Start implementing phased-in changes.

The eyes of the future are looking back
at the choices you make today.

Will your children's children
remember that you were Future Strong
for them?

Asking you to choose the fire within you — to act on and lead from your call to adventure — isn't just a wistful cry for you to follow your bliss. It isn't just about you.

During the next couple decades, most every system we use must be rebuilt, rewired and reimagined. And, unfortunately, the top finding in our Future of Work study is that far too many of today's leaders are consciously *holding back the future*.⁵⁹ Because those systemic changes are wrapped in risks — present-day risks to them, personally. And their current strategy of inaction and kicking those risks down the road makes them someone else's problem.

That's not leadership. That's fear. That's shirking responsibility. That's CYA. That's Future Shackled.

So, it is up to us. All of us. Part of *everyone's* job is to raise our voices and help shape those systems and structures for our children's children.

What will the generations who follow you remember about the choices you made today?

■ **Dig Deep, Beyond the Obvious**

Janet Dalziell knows her burning passion well, and has pursued it most of her professional life. And yet our conversation shows the value of digging deeper.

Janet is director of global human resources and leadership development at Greenpeace International. She joined the organization over 25 years ago to save Antarctica. Greenpeace's values are hers — she's passionate about that and doesn't hold anything back. "My job is to ensure that this organization continues to be relevant, radical, confrontational, and daring to dream big in the 21st century. We need to continue to grow and change to keep fulfilling our mission of helping to create a green and peaceful future."

We discuss how our passions connect to our lives and to leadership: "If you know how to listen to yourself, you can be true to yourself, and that makes everything in life easier. People are happier when they are doing something they believe in, living honorable lives. As leaders, we need to help people dream bigger and create more conversations of hope and new possibilities."

But what surprises me is when I ask about what drove her burning passion she doesn't talk about being a lifelong treehugger. (I can use that term affectionately, as I raised one myself.)

Instead she shares, "When I was 14 or 15, I stepped in to stop a classmate from being bullied. I knew I was setting myself up as a target as well. But it was a decision to do the right thing, as opposed to the safe thing. That's what makes me, me...standing up for what's right, standing up for someone who can't help themselves."

And that's how Greenpeace sees its mission: standing up for a globe that can't stand up for itself.

Janet's alignment with Greenpeace goes beyond the corporate mission. It's on a more deep-seated, emotionally raw level. And that's something we all must understand and seek if we are to be Future Strong.

It's why the early Macintosh team rallied under a pirate's flag and not around Apple's logo. It's why Sam Adams's brewers and Virgin's teammates rally around their cultures. It's why leadership author Simon Sinek says: Start with Why.

Loyalty — deep, intense, devoted loyalty — to a leader or a culture, to any group, brand or idea, goes far beyond being engaged or having our needs met. We see our emotional selves in that connection. We see our future, our best selves and our better angels in that connection.

If you lead others, your one thing —
who you have chosen to become —
must be super clear and
hard-wired into everything you do.
That is your Future Strong attractor.

That's the emotional connection that will allow others to see themselves within whatever future you are creating.

Why is that so crucial? Because everybody around you is trying to be Future Strong themselves. And many of *their* future-driven priorities are *deeply emotional*...

- » “Do you care as much as I care?”
- » “Make me (help me) care about what you care about.”
- » “Know me before you ask me for something.”
- » “I don't do stupid. Don't make me.”
- » “Make it easier for me to be my best.”
- » “I know what matters. Do you? Show me.”

» “Here’s my one thing that makes me Future Strong.
Will you honor it? Cherish it? Support it? Let me be it?”

The future is personal. Deeply personal. Always.

The First Boundaries to Push Are Your Own

Chris Carmichael *is* energy. He gives every sentence and every idea his all. When we spoke, this twenty-something was on a New York City rooftop, constantly jabbing at the air and bouncing around. His head, wrapped in his trademark red bandana, was a constant blur.

At the time he was temporarily homeless, hanging at a friend’s. But that was a lifestyle choice, not an economic necessity. Shortly before we met, *Adweek* showcased him under the headline, *Rising Snapchat Stars Earn [Up to] \$100,000 per Week*. Chris creates life-lesson stories for teenagers in Snapchat, funded by brands like Universal Studios, Fox, Taco Bell and more.

“We are in the same position as people were in the Dark Ages before the Renaissance,” he begins. “Every person is an artist, every person is an entrepreneur, every person has unlimited potential. Freedom can actually be much bigger than we currently imagine. My job is to help everyone see that.”

Chris’s one thing is to be a liberator/educator. “The more you think you know, the more you realize you don’t know anything,” he shares in a Zen-like moment. “Every system in the universe has positive and negative feedback and the trick is that you can learn from either of those.”

His secret for being Future Strong: “I ask myself what I’m passionate about and then I reverse engineer it from there. When everyone is looking in one direction, I always look the other way to see what’s going

on. But to do that well, the first boundaries everyone needs to push are their own. Believe in your own unlimited potential!”

I mention that will take a lot of people out of their comfort zones. What about the risks? “The bigger risk,” he cautions, “is in not taking a risk.”

Surrender to Your State of Grace

What if your call to adventure is not so much a bold and daring act, and is more an act of surrendering to who you were born to be? Surrendering to your natural state of grace. Letting go of how things are *supposed* to be, how success is *supposed* to be defined.

Consider...

1. Slow down. Stop long enough to hear your soul on fire.

2. Speak your truth. Grace is an act of owning your truths.

Once was blind, now I see.

3. You are far more amazing than you are allowing yourself to be.

Isn't it time to stop playing small?

4. It's not about the destination, it's about the direction.⁶¹

5. Give yourself permission... To change the rules, to ignore the rules, to let go of things, to say no, to make mistakes, to not give a fuck, to trust, to be vulnerable, to fall and get back up again. To explore who you were born to be.

6. Get busy livin' or get busy dyin'. ~Andy Dufresne

7. Don't fight stupid. Ever. Instead, take that energy and put it into making more awesome.

8. What will your legacy be? “Resumes are what you accomplished, eulogies are what you are remembered for. Don't confuse one for the other.” ~David Brooks

9. Heal others, live through compassion. One of the best ways to understand your own struggle is to help someone with theirs. It doesn't have to be anything related to your call to adventure. Just give, and the process will pay it forward to you.

10. Never ever give away your power.⁶² To live this way, you must first explore how you are *currently* surrendering your power to someone or something. Because, odds are, you are.

Always remember: **Your state of grace is power.**

That's the unifying theme we heard from everyone — radical disruptors and evolutionists alike...

When it comes to choosing
when and how to act on
your one thing... How to act on
your call to adventure:
The biggest risk is in
not taking the risk.

Freedom Begins with You

Marilyn Nagel and Sean Kim are on opposite coasts (kind of), are a generation-plus apart, and came up through the ranks very differently. Yet they share one common belief: your future strengths and freedoms depend upon you choosing to act on what burns inside of you.

Marilyn is cofounder of San Francisco-based NQuotient, an online women's networking tool, as well as CEO of Ready-Aim-Aspire, an executive coaching firm that helps leaders connect with what makes them unique and carry that into everything they do. Prior to launching her own firms, she was CEO of Watermark, a nonprofit organization helping women executives, and before that, Marilyn was chief diversity officer at Cisco.

She *gets* the corporate world and women's challenges within it.

Toronto-based Sean Kim is a serial entrepreneur, launching five ventures by the time he was 20 years old. In 2013, he was recognized as one of Canada's Next 26 entrepreneurs for his work in 3D modeling for design and manufacturing. Yet only a couple years earlier, he was broke,

miserable, and felt his life and his ventures were serving no purpose. He started writing a list of how he would overcome the fears and choices that were hold him back. He called it The Growth List. That list became his call to adventure.

Two passionate leaders: different, yet the same...

Marilyn Nagel: “Leadership is about understanding what people’s talents are, and creating a space to leverage those talents. The sweet spot for each individual is in having that Aha moment — when they see that what’s best for the company is freeing what’s inside themselves and freeing what’s inside their teammates.

“If we don’t do that,” she cautions, “we’ll see major drains from large companies. Many young men and women are becoming entrepreneurs not because it’s the only way to earn their living, but because they want

Yearly: Your One Thing in Three Words

How do you continually adjust and change during disruptive times *and* stay focused on your one thing? Simple. **Three words = Your yearly plan.**

Pioneered by social media guru Chris Brogan, this is a most elegant approach to personal planning. Every year reevaluate what needs to be done to keep you moving forward on your one thing. Then keep simplifying the list until everything is represented by just three words. For example:

- **Courage** could represent all the things you need to do in the coming year that are outside of your comfort zone.
- **Relationships** could represent the constant reminder that you’re not in this alone, and that you’ll need help to achieve this year’s goals and that you’ll need to be there for others.
- **Create** could represent all the innovations you will need to launch in order to be Future Strong next year.

As mentioned earlier, the magic is not in finding the perfect buzzwords. It is in finding three words that are so *deeply meaningful to you* that this simple three-word mantra will keep you thoroughly focused all year.

an environment that helps them achieve their dreams. All companies need to do more to deliver that.”

Still, Marilyn is extremely optimistic that today’s leaders will make that shift. “I have a great deal of hope about these shifts. Many leaders have already made them. I believe we are going to see lots of new options coming soon.”

Sean Kim: “People have unlimited capacity to create and succeed in today’s economy. It’s not necessarily the smartest or most talented people who will thrive, it’s the ones with the most inner drive, the most resiliency, the ones who believe in themselves the most. Those are the kinds of people who build teams that are resilient, who believe in each other and will go above and beyond anything that’s asked of them.”

Sean concludes, “My goals and the goals of most entrepreneurs are to do something that matters and to have the freedom to pursue our dreams. Anyone who builds from that inner drive can do the same.”

Your best future begins from within.

If you are a leader and you want
Future Strong people,
you’ve got to do more
to ignite people’s souls
and make your place the place
where they can fulfill their dreams.

So far, far too many 21st century
leaders absolutely suck at this.

And the first step is ensuring that you are Future Strong, before you make changes in your organization.

■ **Chose You, Choose Your Future**

No relationship — whether it be at work, with friends or with family — can be Future Strong, unless you are.

What is your call to adventure?

The defining characteristic of our species is curiosity. We need to know what's over the horizon. As a species, we are called to do so. But each individual has varying degrees of that calling. How strong is that force within you?

Most everyone is too busy being busy to focus on stronger futures. Then they wonder why they're Future Shackled. Don't be that person. Find your one thing. Articulate it. Pursue it with unending passion. Be Future Strong.

The time for your stronger future is now.

■ **Soul on Fire: One-Line Summaries**

The Choice: Choosing the one (or couple) things inside me that are so powerful that who I have chosen to become will not be denied.

Questions to ask to make that choice...

Adventurous: What is my call to adventure? My one thing?

Self-Mastered: What will I do today to practice my one thing?

Simplified: How will I adapt today to answer my call to adventure?

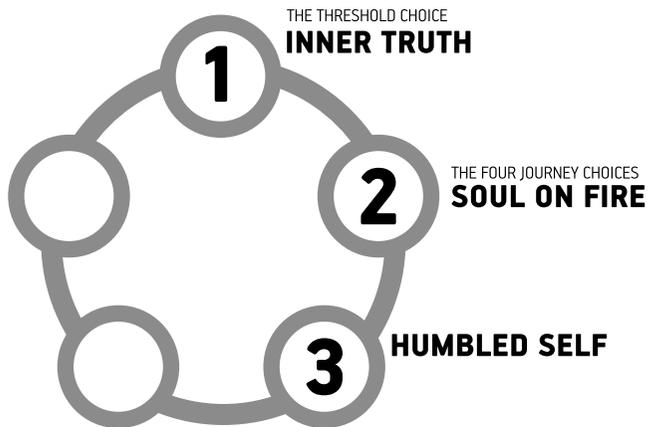
Amplified: What will I do today that ensures others can answer their call to adventure?

CHOICE 3

HUMBLE SELF

How will you choose to be vulnerable?

How will you disrupt yourself?



“At its deepest level...” she pauses with each carefully chosen phrase, as this is the first time she is openly sharing her journey, “I was wrestling with...being brave enough...to really understand what my truth is.

“I hated the word passion.... Recoiled when I was asked... because I didn’t know what mine was.... That night I realized that that wasn’t the problem....

“I had a fear of failure.

“I had woven a whole bunch of stories about myself — what kind of friend I am, what kind of family member I am, what I do for a living — and I had never stopped questioning what of that was real.”

Meet Ella Fletcher. Someone we can all learn from. A very special person who is still working on what impact she’ll have on the world. She’d be the first to tell you that. Hasn’t cured cancer or started a company or launched an idea that went viral. She’s just Ella. Same as most every very special Ella you’ll find in the middle of most any company in the world. Oh, she’s been more fortunate than most. Carefree childhood in the U.K. Went to Oxford University. Still, something wasn’t right.

“There was nothing in my past to set me up to make the choice that I made a year ago,” she continues. “In fact it took a huge leap of faith. In hindsight, I now realize that, for a long time, I was on a path that was giving me pain.

“Going to Oxford was the start of a tipping point — shifting from

always feeling confident in my own abilities to suddenly feeling out of my depth and unsure of who I was. I can see now that the way I was being taught at university did not allow for my way of expressing myself. I was feeling stifled, but I didn't understand it in that context and it pushed me into quite a dark place.”

Friends, family and Oxford had Ella convinced that her next step was to go for an MBA and then on to management consulting. And yet, somehow, that didn't feel right. She didn't feel she was steering her own ship. That's how many people at work feel today. They feel that vulnerability is being forced upon them without feeling that they are in charge of their own destiny.

“I realized I still had no idea about where I was going to go next or what I was going to do next,” she shares. “I think I needed to be at the lowest point of the U,” she paints that shape in the air, “to come back up again. I was a nightmare to live with.”

Did she find herself? Yes. With the help of her boyfriend she created a self-curated MBA — visiting several countries to take courses that would help her figure out what came next. Instead of a management consultant, she chose to be a yoga teacher and acupuncturist.

She continues, “I am very aware of my own story — that I ended up in a hippie world. The point isn't corporate versus alternative. It's

■ The Big V: Heroic vs. Wimpy

Vul·ner·able: Susceptible to harm; In need of care; Wimpy.

Em·brac·ing One's Vul·ner·abil·ity: Heroic; Leaping without fear; Letting go of what was; Creating space for the impossible to become possible; (Everybody sing...) *Let it go, let it go, Can't hold it back anymore, Let it go, let it go, Turn away and slam the door!* ~ Let It Go, Frozen

to be yourself. I don't believe that the world was set up for us to be in a continued state of dis-ease. And that's where I would have stayed if I hadn't made this change — in a permanent state of dis-ease. And continuing to be a nightmare to live with!

“How I felt vulnerable,” she concludes, “was mostly around making the decision to leap. I really feel so grateful, because I now know that within one year I can genuinely change my life. My wish for everyone is to know that they have that kind of power, if they choose to.”

Chosen Vulnerability vs. Thrust-Upon Vulnerability

Ella faced what we all must face — deeply personal transformation. The strong among us will be like her, where, through an Aha, we willingly choose to be vulnerable and take control of our transformation through a course of action of our choosing.

Do not wait for vulnerability to be thrust upon you. That is when you lose control of your own destiny — when you spend more energy reacting to everything beyond your control than focusing on the choices that are within your control.

You need to get Future Strong *now* because massive amounts of thrust-upon transformations are coming your way. They will be pushed at you from all directions on a daily basis.

Technological change is exponential...

*So we won't experience 100 years of progress in the 21st century —
it will be more like 20,000 years of progress.*

~ Ray Kurzweil

One example: The coming forced-change in one of your relationships...

Your Fitbit or Apple Watch is not just a cool device for your personal use. It's a gateway drug, loosening you up for the wearable tech revolution. This revolution will completely reinvent the relationship between employer and employee. Your body and your behaviors will soon become a cog in the Internet of Things analytics machine.⁶³ “Bob, today you spent 97 seconds more than yesterday in the bathroom. That is wasted company time! This must change! And Mary, your BMI (Body Mass Index) is 1.9 percent higher than our company average. You must pay more for healthcare.”

Think I exaggerate? A few years ago a father learned that his teenaged daughter was pregnant, not from her but from Target. That retailer's analytics are so good, that they figured out from his daughter's purchases — unscented lotion, mineral supplements, and cotton balls — that she, like other women who made those exact purchases, was most likely in the beginning of her second trimester. So they started sending her coupons at home for baby clothes and cribs. Target knew more about his daughter than he did!⁶⁴

Deep analytics are already reinventing the relationship between customers and companies. Do you really think that that will remain *outside* of the company, and *not* move to employees? If so, I've got an investor in South Africa who wants to give you money — all I need is your bank account password.

Do you really think that micromanaged behavioral interventions will stop at cashiers and call center operators? (Human drones, jacked into headsets, with sales figures monitored by the millisecond and customer influence techniques barked in their ears — algorithms driving it all.⁶⁵) Nay! We are at the dawn of the Age of ManipulatedYou, where built-in, thrust-upon vulnerability will be the soup of the day, every day.

Delft University and IBM are already partnering on research to “learn how technology can shape employees’ responses to their physical environment.”⁶⁶ While that effort is totally altruistic...gee, am I the only one seeing George Orwell’s *1984* in that one?

During the next couple of decades thrust-upon-you disruptions will be so massive that we must move beyond *Rah, rah, you can do this!* platitudes. We need to talk about the elephant in the room — the undiscussable.

It’s time to be honest with ourselves. As leaders. As individuals. As a society.

There is no Future Strong — there is no bright and awesome future...ever — without you willingly choosing to be deeply vulnerable *before* vulnerability gets thrust upon you.

Vulnerability is where the future begins.

Chosen vulnerability is that first step into the future with no safety net, without knowing what will happen next.

Choosing to be vulnerable
is the ultimate first step
into the future.

It means letting go of what was and what is, and committing to what could be, what will be.

It means letting a piece of you die so it can be reborn, reimagined.

True courage is being honest with yourself. Recognizing that, regardless of whether the culture or others are as nurturing and

supportive as you would like, it's time for you to choose to be vulnerable — to leap to a place filled with unknowns.

And yet, somehow, that's still an undiscussable. Oh, one amazing speaker and author recently catapulted vulnerability into mainstream conversations. But I'm talking about going beyond Brené Brown's message of empathy, belonging and love. And focusing on one line in her TED talk, "Vulnerability is our most accurate measure of courage."⁶⁷

Including vulnerability in daily conversations takes you beyond the 21st century change mantras — fail forward, fail fast, fail often; pivot fast; be resilient. Those catchphrases gloss over the human costs and turmoil caused by those pivots. Most leadership talking points sidestep the inconvenient truth that, to embrace the future, every one of us must choose to be personally vulnerable. Again and again. Constantly.

Being vulnerable is the essence of all transformational moments. Without it, there is no transformation, no real difference between today and tomorrow. (Think back to Joseph Campbell's hero's journey and Luke Skywalker and *every* movie hero. Luke keeps denying Obi-Wan's call to adventure until his aunt and uncle are killed. That's his moment of vulnerability where everything going forward has changed. Like Luke, to be the hero of your own journey, you must face your moments of vulnerability, whatever they are for you.)

Future Strong Assessment Tool:

Humble Self

Use our **free, online self-assessment tool** to explore key dimensions of **how your vulnerability makes you stronger**. Go to **www.futurestrong.me**.

There's also a deeper-dive tool for teams and companies: use Code STRONGER for discounts.

We need to start admitting that being vulnerable is integral to every change we design and every change that is thrust upon us.

During our Future of Work study, when we asked Ella Fletcher and thousands of others “What makes you, you?” a common theme emerged...

The one specific personal accountability that everyone will have in every decision about the future: **the willingness to embrace personal vulnerability.**

That takes a leap of humility. Enough humility to continuously disrupt yourself before the outside world does it for you.

What this means to **all of us**, no matter what role we serve or position we have...

There is no Future Strong
in your future
unless you are willing
to be vulnerable.
More so now than ever.

Sorry...needed to be said.

Same goes for **all senior executives...**

You only get an organization
that's Future Strong
with the consent of those being led.
They must, occasionally,

willingly choose to be vulnerable
under the course that you set.

That means all that soft stuff that many leaders have shortchanged in the past few decades — yeah, it matters. Big time. If you want a Future Strong organization, their faith and trust in you matters.

Because, if *they* are Future Strong, your employees are *choosing* to be vulnerable when you ask them to go into uncharted territory.

Captain's log from the 24th century...

Picard: *You are the finest crew in the fleet.*

I would trust each of you with my life.

So I am asking you for a leap of faith — and to trust me.

~ Star Trek, TNG

At that moment, Picard needs more than command-structure obedience. He asks his crew to willingly set aside their fears and, instead, choose to trust him.

No matter how noble the cause, no matter how strong the enterprise, to be Future Strong every individual must embrace their own vulnerability at the moment they make the leap.

We need more Jean-Luc Picards in this century — leaders who inspire us by being vulnerable in the moment.

Steve Jobs's 2005 Stanford commencement speech is a shining example.⁶⁸ While many who worked with him knew his dark side (controlling, self-centered, sometimes brutal⁶⁹), in that one moment, while reflecting on his cancer diagnosis, he spoke of finding himself, of death and dying, and of what truly matters. Jobs left us with some of the

most shared inspirational quotes ever. “...You have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever.” In that one moment, Jobs taught us so much by sharing his gut, his fears, his life.

In mid-2015, in the wake of horrific violence in a South Carolina church, Representative Jenny Horne also exemplified being strong by being vulnerable. A descendant of Civil War Confederate President Jefferson Davis, she made an impassioned plea declaring that it was time for the Confederate flag to come down — it was time to let go of all the divisive things it stood for.⁷⁰

But even more heroic and vulnerable were the victims. Wanda Simmons, granddaughter of one of the victims, declared, “Hate won’t win.”⁷¹ It was all the victims’ grace and love immediately following the tragedy that sparked long-overdue changes. Their grace is an amazing example of vulnerable leadership.

If the future is personal, we need more leaders who lead that way. Many more.

From Gear Head to 21st Century Strategist

“Most people are too unwilling to change their industry, which restricts their thinking and opportunities. But if they are willing, they can bring different perspectives to their new industry that are really valuable.”

That’s Spencer Wright, strategy director at Undercurrent, a 21st century management consultancy that helps companies reinvent themselves for the future. Their promo video joyously declares, “partnering with us means that life will be different” and “we help

ambitious teams discover the courage and capabilities to do the impossible.”

So what prepared Spencer, an award-winning whistler (really), for his current role? The willingness to be vulnerable and disrupt himself, which then allowed him to transfer skills from one industry to another.

“During college I ran the student run bike shop,” Spencer shares. “After college, I worked in construction management and got in over my head a lot, which taught me lots about crisis management and failure. Then I started a business building unique, custom \$10 thousand bicycles. I learned from and collaborated with lots of people within the maker supply chain. I then built robot doors for a windows and doors

Ten Questions to Help You Stay Vulnerable

Sometimes asking the right questions is all the help you need.

1. **How old** would you be if you didn't know how old you are?
2. **Which is worse**, failing or never trying?
3. **If the average human lifespan** was 40 years, how would you live your life differently?
4. **Are you more worried** about doing things right, or doing the right things?
5. **Has your greatest fear** ever come true?
6. **At what time in your recent past** have you felt most passionate and alive?
7. **When was the last time** you marched into the dark with only the soft glow of an idea you strongly believed in?
8. **Is it possible** to know the truth without challenging it first?
9. **Are you holding onto** something you need to let go of?
10. **Five years from now**, will you remember what you did or decided today?

*Simplified from Marc and Angel Hack Life's 50 Questions That Will Free Your Mind*⁷³

supplier, and started a Kickstarter campaign to fund my building of The Public Radio, a single-station FM radio inside a Mason jar.”

Not your typical management consulting background. When networking conversations led to him joining Undercurrent, both the firm and Wright had to come from a place of embracing possibilities and take a leap of faith with each other. Spencer had to be willing to let a small piece of the passionate dirty-fingernails maker inside him die, so he could be reborn in the form of a product-minded strategist.

That created the space for magic to happen! “Undercurrent is a unique kind of consultancy,” Spencer continues. “We’re all people with maker backgrounds. I know welding and supply chain management... other folks come from electronics and software development backgrounds. Our hands-on backgrounds give our team very unique perspectives in helping our clients.

“The willingness to change how you see and how you create value can end up having big benefits to you and your company,” he shares. And as Future Strong as Spencer is, he also confesses about the personal difficulties that remain: “I still struggle with defining and managing my long-term career goals in how my outside passions and my work at Undercurrent come together in a focused way.” Spencer’s strength is his willingness to live with that question — to not freak out, and to not force-fit a quick solution.

The willingness to change how you see is also crucial if your company is to deliver on today’s hottest priority: **innovation**.

Most every business on the planet is pushing for more innovation, and yet most water down *seeing differently* with “Let’s minimize all the downsides.” That doesn’t work! Seeing differently isn’t just product

innovation, it's also looking at risk-mitigation differently — being willing to truly fail forward.

Every individual and every organization needs to think about how Spencer's/Undercurrent's situation applies to them. It's something that goes beyond embracing change, beyond resiliency.

Your career will include
 thousands of opportunities
 to transform yourself.
 Many will disrupt
 all that you have built.
 Each is an opportunity
 to choose to be vulnerable,
 to let go, to be reborn.

All the statistics about **how many jobs you'll have over your lifetime...(15-20)⁷² and how many companies you'll work for...while true, completely miss the point!** From now on, treat those numbers as red herrings — crucial only to HR directors, leaders and companies who are stuck in the past.

How many jobs or employers or businesses you cycle through in your lifetime matters not. That's not what serial entrepreneurs or self-starters or Future Strong people care about or track.

Instead, what truly matters is the number of disruptions thrown at you, or that you choose to create, and how many of those are seized as opportunities to change a business and yourself.

While those numbers will be different for every individual and have

many *it depends* variables, from thousands of interviews across the globe I've witnessed a guiding principle: **The Rule of Disruptive Personal Transformation.**

Every year, you will experience about 100 significant transformative moments. Most will be thrust upon you by the disruptive churn of our times.

Driven, focused people know which 3—5 to seize each year as crucial to their future.

How? By using what they have mastered in Choice 1: To know themselves deeply and fully, and in Choice 2: To be driven by their one thing, their call to adventure.

Future Strong people know that successfully mastering those 3—5 transformational situations begins by choosing to be vulnerable — choosing to disrupt themselves.

Choosing to leap without yesterday's safety net. Choosing to trust their gut. Choosing a steep learning curve. Choosing to take risks they've never taken before.

*I am not what happened to me,
I am what I have chosen to become.*
~ Carl Jung

Future Strong Leadership Means Being the One Who Stands Up First

Often, the times we feel most vulnerable are when we stand alone, before others join us. When we choose to be the first voice echoing above the silence.

If you want to be Future Strong, that's your job. Your responsibility. Whether you have the positional authority to do so or not. Even if others will play whack-a-mole with your head. You owe it to your future and your teammates' futures to stand while others sit.

“There are times when the vision is so grand and so important, and contrary to the reality on the ground, that you just need to stand up and take that risk. It took one individual who was so inspired by, and believed in, what might be possible, and could not justify saying no in his own mind and by his own values.”

That is Gidon Bromberg, describing the birth of what would become EcoPeace, the only organization that is Palestinian, Jordanian, and Israeli together, working under a single roof. EcoPeace's mission is to preserve their shared water resources, the Jordan River Basin, as a means to both promote sustainable development and sustainable peace.

Their first meeting in 1993 began like a scene from the Tom Hanks movie *The Terminal* when his character was stuck in limbo at the airport. A neutral meeting place was selected: Taba, Egypt. But Egyptian security had never seen anyone cross from Israel into Egypt with a Jordanian passport. So everyone was stuck at the border until that could be sorted out.

The meeting on the first day was a disaster. Everyone was focused only on their self-serving interests. Then on the second day “one Arab individual,” (Gidon did not name him), “stood up and said “This is too important. We must do this.” Gidon says this was crucial because “the tribal divide in our part of the world is the mainstay, and we needed someone to stand up and act contrary to the tribal outlook.”

Even while those centuries-old conflicts still rage throughout the region, EcoPeace is making a difference one drop of water at a time. Among their projects: the beginning stages of the Jordan River Peace

How Successful Companies Use Vulnerability Well

It's got a very PC name and is a very hot topic. It's called **INNOVATION**.

Oh, it's way more structured and excessively over-managed than personal vulnerability, but the core principles and practices are the same:

- Dream big, far beyond today's boundaries
- Disrupt oneself before the market does
(AKA Innovator's Dilemma)
- Create an environment that encourages and nurtures creative risk-taking
- Maintain dedicated resources committed to creating the future
- Fan the flames. When the future sparks fly, ensure they burn bright and soar
- No matter how the innovation is prototyped and how plans are managed, at the end of the day great innovation is a leap into the unknown — a commitment to what is possible long before you know how it will turn out

The great news for innovative organizations is...

- Keep doing what you're doing, just expand it!
- Push your best innovation practices into HR, Training and Development, Leadership Development
- Also, apply your best innovation practices to any remaining 20th century structures like Performance Assessments, Hierarchies and Budgeting

Your end goal should be...

That every individual can pursue their dreams and happiness and keep pushing beyond their personal boundaries within your organization

Park, an ecotourism safe zone that will sponsor research, hiking, biking, and other activities; the Protecting Groundwater project, focused on pollution protection; and research and recommendations to protect shared groundwater reserves.

Choosing to be vulnerable sometimes means choosing to be the first to stand or the first to follow.

What's your water project? What will you stand for, even if, at first, you stand alone?

Be Happy! ...Just Know What It Takes

Most everyone we interviewed always included some variation of *Follow your bliss...* followed by *...and have the courage to make changes when you're not blissful.*

That, too, can be a deeply vulnerable moment.

Here, two leaders from opposite sides of the Atlantic describe their experiences...

“You have to be very clear with yourself, and accept that if that you are not able to make the changes in the organization that you believe are necessary, you have to leave.”

That's Sofía Frech, former chief of staff, Mexico Ministry of Education. “I was very much in love with my job,” she shares, “but we desperately need to change the way one and a half million teachers teach, and I was unable to get the resources I needed or to cut through the politics to make it happen.

“Our teachers are the same as teachers everywhere in the world — they want to keep improving themselves and they want to keep making

a difference in the lives of their children and in society. We needed a national training center and we needed to invest in them. But instead of focusing on them, we had to focus mostly on our bosses.

“Changing the system is a leader’s job, and I simply could not do that.” She concludes, “You have to be happy with what you’re doing; you can’t be a sad leader.”

If you ever experience that kind of sadness, disrupt yourself. Move on. Even if that puts you in a vulnerable spot temporarily.

Lucy Adams is managing director at Firehouse, a London-based communication firm that partners with Lucy’s agency, Disruptive HR, whose mission is to change HR practices. Before that she was HR director for the BBC.

“My key values are an earthiness and genuineness — being true to who I am,” Lucy begins. “I’ve built really great relationships with my peers, subordinates and superiors being the person I wanted to be.”

But this wasn’t always the case. She realized she had to take that vulnerable leap for happiness in the job prior to the BBC.

“I loved that job,” she shares. “Rapid promotions, a fantastic global role, really interesting work with great people, I was well paid, and it was a great experience for my CV. But I made the decision to leave because I found that the relationship with my boss had become quite dysfunctional.

“Once I started working for him directly, I witnessed certain behaviors that I didn’t see when there was a manager in between us. I saw power dynamics that felt too political, manipulative and fear-based to me. And I started allowing myself to get caught up in that. I became

more concerned with what he wanted and what would keep him happy than whatever was best in each situation.

“I left because I really didn’t like who I had become,” Lucy concludes. “I didn’t respect myself and I’ve never gone back to that kind of relationship since. At the point where you don’t feel you can be true to yourself because your power is sapped and you are second guessing yourself, that’s the time to move on.”

What makes Lucy’s story relevant to us all is that she realized this wasn’t about her boss’s behaviors — something that was beyond her control. It was about what was within her control — who she allowed herself to become under those circumstances. Facing that took a willingness to see the full truth...a willingness to be vulnerable long enough to figure out that she was the one who had to change.

Based on her Disruptive HR experiences, Lucy then spoke about how our discussion related to the future of leadership...

“We need leaders with greater humility and connectedness. There is so much distrust in most companies today because most leaders protect

Leaders: How Safe Is Your Yes?

Steve Jobs once famously said about being focused, “It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas.... I’m actually as proud of the things we haven’t done as the things I have done. Innovation is saying no to one thousand things.”

Hooray for No! Focus is a wonderful thing. And...what he famously *did* that most of today’s leaders *do not*: whatever he said yes to was about “putting a ding in the universe.”

Look at your portfolio of Yes decisions: How safe are they? If at least 25% of those Yeses aren’t Dare-to-Be-Great-Ding-the-Universe yeses, you are not Future Strong, you are Future Shackled. Daring to be vulnerable, in a great way, is crucial to your organization’s future.

how they are perceived rather than being real people. And protect results rather than protecting the people who create those results. Tomorrow's leaders need to recognize that humility and letting your guard down is not the weaker option, it's actually the stronger option.”

Future Strong leaders
must recognize that every individual's
pursuit of happiness and
pursuit of their dreams
is what makes them Future Strong.

Does your organization help
or hinder their pursuits?
How they would answer that question
is directly tied to whether your
organization is Future Strong
or Future Shackled.

**The Ultimate Future Strong Value:
Defining your success by ensuring OTHERS
are prepared to pay it forward**

Chike Ukaegbu knows this better than most. He is cofounder of Re:LIFE, an organization dedicated to helping New York City's at-risk youth realize their full potential. All their programs are built around Chike's HEROES model — Heritage, Education, Relationships, Opportunities, and Entrepreneurship. He's also established the Educational and Entrepreneurship Leadership Fund, which grants scholarships and seed capital investments to Africa's youth and startups.

“I came here from Nigeria,” he begins, “and had just completed my Biomed Engineering degree at The City College of New York. I applied for a Colin Powell Leadership Fellowship on public policy and leadership. I had no idea what public policy was! But it was a funded scholarship! Thankfully, I got it and that fellowship put me on the path for my life’s purpose — helping disconnected youth, 16 to 24, who can’t find work and need a better education.

“I’ve always believed in what Shakespeare said: ‘men are masters of their own fate.’ I believe in the power of driving yourself — shaping your own future. Once you can find peace within your decisions, then it is easier to act upon them. People around you may not see what you can see, but you should not settle based on their perceptions of what they think is best for you. It’s about you proving to everyone that for every decision that separates you from the crowd, you have a vision that drives you.”

Even though Chike’s programs teach very practical skills for learning and getting a job — like critical thinking and preparing for job interviews — he concludes, “One of the most important things is kindness. That means being compassionate, being patient, understanding with empathy, caring for yourself as well as others and being genuine in what you do — that feeds the soul and creates the whole person.

“Helping others is so important. Your own happiness and joy comes from that. I have realized that many times, down the line, when you don’t expect it, that same hand is able to reach back help you. That same hand is able to pay it forward.”

THAT is Future Strong. Ensuring that others can create stronger futures for others.

And that takes the ultimate personal vulnerability — embracing that we are all here in service of something higher/bigger than ourselves.

Beyond your call to adventure, what is your calling to serve? Will you disrupt yourself long enough to hear it?

Humble Self: One-Line Summaries

The Choice: Choosing to disrupt myself — and embracing the vulnerability that goes with that — before others do it for me.

Questions to ask to make that choice...

Adventurous: Am I willing to disrupt me out of my comfort zone?

Self-Mastered: Will I stay disciplined about being vulnerable?

Simplified: What one thing will I do every day to let go of what was?

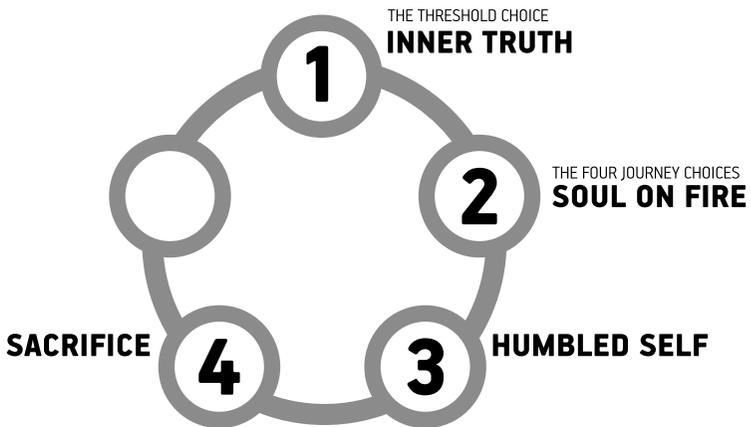
Amplified: How am I creating an environment where others can be vulnerable — where they can more easily disrupt themselves?

CHOICE 4

SACRIFICE

**What hardships will you
choose to endure?**

And which hardships will steal
your future from you?



“When Peggy was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, it made us think long and hard about what happens next. Thankfully, she’s doing real well now, and the bank has been absolutely great.

“Fortunately, I can do most of my work virtually. So we bought a house on the beach. That was always in the back of our minds, but suddenly it moved up on the priority list. Now after a rough day, the two of us can go for a walk on the beach.

I discovered it’s been great for me too!”

That’s Rick Bradley, a buddy I’ve worked with many times. As we’re both Trekkies our back’n’forth teasing usually starts there, and then Rick politely tolerates my ongoing request for him to get a shorter title. He’s Senior Vice President for Communications and People Strategy for Data Management and Information Strategy at Bank of America. (Really, Rick?)

He’s referring to what he and his wife went through. Thankfully, Peggy is better and their hardships turned out OK.

I selected a buddy to open this section because I knew he’d forgive me for the following...

**Rick’s Story Is a Cliché. So Is Mine.
So Are Many of Yours.**

So many of us waited years or decades, until life forced some wake-up call upon us, to do what we knew we should have been doing all along.

Why do so many of us live our lives that way? Shackling our futures because we didn't do what we know we should have.

Instead, we wait until a harder, worser hardship — cancer, downsizing, disruption — comes along. (And I'm not picking on Rick or anyone else. I'll be the first to plead guilty. Several times in my life — teenage stupidity, divorce, lupus diagnosis — I've made tough choices only after I was forced to.)

That stops here. Now. For all of us.

Time to wake yourself up! (Or, if you have already been woked-uped, share this section with someone you love who still doesn't get it.)

The fourth choice, if you wish to be Future Strong, is to consciously, intentionally, **choose which hardships you will endure** because they will lead you toward your best future and to **choose which ones will steal your future from you** and should be avoided.

Rick Bradley: "I have absolutely loved my entire career at this bank. I wouldn't trade it for anything. But Peggy's illness made me realize that climbing the corporate ladder wasn't as important as I once thought it was." For a couple decades, he chose the challenges of climbing that ladder as a way to achieve his life goals. Then, with his wife's illness, he came to realize that the upward climb wasn't as important as it once was.

He also quickly acknowledged the flipside of that choice — the

Future Strong Assessment Tool:

Sacrifice

Use our **free, online self-assessment tool** to explore which hardships are your **best hardships**. Go to **www.futurestrong.me**. There's also a deeper-dive tool for teams and companies: Use Code STRONGER for discounts.

freedom and benefits that the bank's corporate ladder afforded him: "During the initial diagnosis period, I spent a lot of time in doctors' office waiting rooms and emergency rooms. I heard a lot of other people on their phones facing their own family's health crisis. I often heard, 'But I can't be away from work. I'll get fired.' I saw a lot of people struggling to take just an hour off from work or worrying about multiple doctor's visits and how to pay for them.

"That made me very thankful for great insurance and having a great team I could rely on. When Peggy got sick, my boss was super supportive and I was able to tell the teammates I was working with in Singapore and China, 'You guys are going to have to take care of this. I know you can do it. I have no concerns.' And during the time I was unavailable to them, they did wonderfully!"

Rick's story reveals some of the difficulties we all have in making work/life choices. There will always be trade-offs. Even our best choices carry an upside and a downside.

To be Future Strong,
you will face difficult hardships.

Usually, there is no absolutely right
or absolutely wrong choice.

Most often, it's a situational balancing act. Sometimes you'll choose a certain hardship — like working two or more jobs so your kid can go to college — and other times the exact same hardship is just *too* much. Like becoming totally stressed out because you must endure a pain-in-the-ass boss at one of those jobs.

The key is to be intentional:
Choose the best hardships
for your best future.

Intentionally choose the *best* hardships...

That means there's a difference between the hardships and sacrifices that will help you on your journey to be Future Strong and those that are Trojan horses — positioned as good for you and good for the organization, but in reality are not.

Let's unpack that in three parts...

- » The Wake-Up Call
- » Leadership's Holy Grail Challenge
- » Getting Started

Attention All Goldfishies...

(If that makes no sense to you, reread page 85)...

...The next dozen or so pages are among the most detail-rich and prescriptive pages in the book, and a time-out from telling people's stories. That's because we need to discuss how many **completely unnecessary hardships** are baked into today's workplaces.

While there are lots of great exceptions...mostly...

The current relationship between
companies and the workforce
is like marrying into a
dysfunctional family...

Only you don't get to escape after
the holiday meal is over.

Fasten your seatbelts. For some — especially senior execs — it's
gonna be a bumpy ride.

1. The Wake-Up Call

If many more of us are to be Future Strong...

Our daily conversation about
hardships and sacrifice must change.

From weaponizing, victimizing,
and productizing...

...to our obligations to the group
as well as each individual's right
to a strong and independent future.

Do you recognize the dysfunctional organizational roles and
conversations that still exist within far too many companies?

- » Weaponizer: ShitRollsDownhill Shoveler
- » Victimizer: ShitCatcher
- » Productizer: ShitFixer or NewShitCreator

Once and for all, we need to change how we discuss hardships at
work. We need to be open about two differing sets of needs that must
coexist...

Our obligations to the group: All of us must take on some hardships for the common good. Sometimes, the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few...or the one. Sometimes company needs do outweigh each individual's and each team's needs.

But nowhere near as much as is currently shit-shoveled at most workers. Not even close.

We need to also sponsor, with equal emphasis, concern and assertiveness that...

Everyone has a right to a strong and independent future: All of us have the right, and personal obligation, to choose whether or not company-driven hardships and sacrifices, overall, are shackling or strengthening our future. And to keep that right, each of us must be our own best advocate.

Here's what that means to you...

If you are a senior executive, you need to embrace each individual's right to choose his or her own hardships — and you must talk about that openly, candidly.

*Wait... Did you hear that thunderous noise?
That's the sound of countless leaders across the globe
slamming this book shut at the audacity and
preposterousness of such a call to action
in a business book!*

Sacrifice: Share Your Ahas

For posting: What will you write between the hashtags?

#MyBestSacrifice ... #IAmFutureStrong

#MyBestHardship ... #IAmFutureStrong

To stuck-in-twentieth-century leaders, sponsoring conversations about each individual’s right to choose his or her hardships is akin to company-sponsored anarchy — like letting people opt out of work that needs to get done.

But future smart leaders will recognize that the workforce is *already* exercising these choices in *non-helpful ways*. It’s called *being disengaged*.

By publicly talking about each individual’s right *and obligation* to choose their best hardships, Future Strong leaders will increase their followership and decrease disengagement. (See 2, page 134, for more.)

If you are a member of the human race and work for a living:

Regardless of your position at work, you too have a role. Each of us must be part of the new conversation about hardships and sacrifice at work. For thirty-plus years, most everyone who works has been stuck in the wrong conversation!

Hardships and Sacrifices:

The 10/100/1000 Plan

PART 1

Draw three columns on a page...

**Hardship,
Sacrifice
I’m Facing**

**Thrust upon me
by others or by
circumstances**

**I chose this to
fulfill my dream
for my best future**

List at least five hardships/sacrifices you’re facing, in the first column, then put a check in the column that corresponds with **who drove this hardship or sacrifice**. Be honest. For most of us, precious few company-driven sacrifices belong in the right column!

Results...

Future Strong

By Others

50% or less

By Me

50% or more

Future Passive

60%

40%

Future Shackled

more than 60%

less than 40%

If you scored Passive or Shackled: reach out to a coach or mentor. Explore how

The implied employment contract was broken by business over 30 years ago,⁷⁴ yet we're still acting as if it's in place. Even though business removed job security and many of the rewards and benefits for climbing the corporate ladder, (the previous bond between employee and employer), most employees *still* act as if they are obligated to keep the other half of the contract — to take on wasteful and stupid organizational hardships. And that their only other choice is to quit.

All of us must do a better job in standing up for our right to choose which hardships will further *our* future, not just the company's. (See 3, page 141, for some practical first steps in standing up.)

If more of the billions of people who work are to be Future Strong, **we all have a responsibility** to raise our voices and change the global conversation.

For all of you active on social media, we need your help. Please raise your voice on this issue. Be an advocate. Tweet sections from the

much choice you truly had in taking on hardships driven by others. Most of us have more options in those hardships than we first consider.

PART 2

Now create a four-column checklist of at least five hardships/sacrifices that **you purposefully chose** to create your best future. Then put a check in the column that corresponds to **when you'll see a reward** for tackling that hardship.

Hardship, Sacrifice I'm Facing	10 hours to 10 days	100+ days	1000+ days
Results...	Approximately		
Future Strong	30%	50%	20%
Future Passive	50%	40%	10%
Future Shackled	60% or more	30% or less	less than 10%

If you scored Passive or Shackled: reach out to a coach or mentor. Explore how you might change your work portfolio to ensure more long-term rewards.

following pages. Voice your views on the following. Help ensure that when it comes to an individual's right to choose which hardships are best for his or her future, tomorrow is better than today.

This conversation also needs to seep into how parents talk about hardships with their children. And how teachers, mentors and coaches educate others about selecting among hardships and sacrifices.

We all must take part in changing the societal conversation about selecting the best hardships — among the many that will be thrust upon us on a daily basis — for our best future.

2. Leadership's Holy Grail Challenge: Embracing Each Individual's Right to Choose

Of the five choices in this book, this may be the toughest for most leaders to face. If we are all to be Future Strong, we must openly and fully discuss a very inconvenient truth.

Business's dirty secret: For all its talk about engagement, empowerment, and happiness in the workplace, business basically ignores the inalienable human right to choose. "If you work here, you will do whatever we tell you to do, whenever we say so. We will determine which hardships are fair and appropriate. But as a cover-up, our speeches will declare, "The marketplace made us do this to you. Ohhhh, it's so tough out there."

I'd be a gazillionaire if I had a dollar for every time I've heard "There is no WIIFM (what's in it for me) or upside for the employees to do this, but we still need them to be engaged and excited to do it."

And when the workforce feels that their personal sacrifices and hardships are rigged to mostly benefit the company, they are ostracized,

vilified, and shamed. “Change resister!” “Disagreeable disengager!” “Get on the bus or under it!” “You are not an A player!”

Dear Leader: Sure, if employees take your paycheck or if contingency workers charge you a fee, they *are* signing up to bust their asses for the organization — for you.

But NOT if your strategies and plans and culture shackle their future. NOT if your corporate-centered tools, processes and structures waste their personal time, their energy and their amazingness. NOT if they are asked to sacrifice their dreams for yours.

Only 10% of the workforce
can achieve their dreams where
they currently work.

As detailed earlier (page 27), our Future of Work study found that only one in ten people in mainstream companies (nearly one-third in entrepreneurial/startup firms) can achieve their personal dreams where they work.

If your organization is going to be Future Strong and you want the workforce to keep embracing *company* hardships as *their* hardships, you are going to have to do more to create a **50/50 partnership** — where both sides care about the other’s future.

Our study found that tomorrow’s workforce sees their relationship with your company very differently than the current relationship.

They see companies as **vehicles to help them achieve their dreams and goals** in ways that **amplify** their passions, achievements, and community relationships beyond what they could have done on their own or elsewhere.

This changes the relationship between companies, people and their work...

Working for a company
must help individuals
achieve their dreams and goals
more efficiently and effectively
than they could achieve them
elsewhere.

People should not have to sacrifice so much of their personal lives, hopes, dreams, and goals just to keep up with corporate pressured *morebetterfaster*. And tomorrow's workforce won't.

Earlier I mentioned how business broke the implied employment contract. Well, to most millennials and all of tomorrow's A-level players, this is the new contract: they will consider working for you if you are an efficient and effective platform for them to make a difference in the world and to help them achieve their dreams and goals.

Find Your Triggers

During your journey you will encounter triggers — where you will react one way or another to situations based on the biases and experiences you bring to that moment. Marshall Goldsmith's latest best seller, *Triggers*, is about facing those moments and making better choices. Here are Goldsmith's engaging questions to help you turn too-tough hardships into your best hardships...

- 1. Did I do my best** to set clear goals today?
- 2. Did I do my best** to make progress toward my goals today?
- 3. Did I do my best** to find meaning today?
- 4. Did I do my best** to be happy today?
- 5. Did I do my best** to build positive relationships today?
- 6. Did I do my best** to be fully engaged today?

This completely rewrites which hardships and sacrifices will be embraced (those that align with their personal passions, priorities, goals, and their definition of making a difference) **and which hardships and sacrifices will not be tolerated** (corporate priorities that drain their ability to do meaningful work — as they define meaningful — and hinder their ability to achieve their dreams and goals).

This greatly impacts **execution** — how everyone pulls together to accomplish what the senior team has planned. When you create a work environment that’s about meeting more of the workforce’s needs, they have more “skin in the game”...they are cocreating their future within your plans, not just the company’s future. Future Strong Me and Future Strong We are better aligned.

This will also change how Future Strong companies and employees measure and track their **relationship** with each other.

Engagement is so 1990s. Yes, being engaged will always be important. But today’s engagement measures are so horribly incomplete by Future Strong standards that they are actually dangerous to leaders who rely on them. The current lens is so corporate-centered that it blinds leaders to future of work realities.

For example, here are some relationship-tracking questions according to Future Strong criteria...

- » “I can achieve my personal five-year goals and dreams within this company.”
- » “Corporate-built tools and processes are as good or better than any app or tool I can buy or build for my own use.”
- » “The commitments that I am asked to make for the success

of the company are aligned with and support my personal passions and purpose.”

- » “My company is respectful of my time and attention, and is focused on using it wisely and effectively.”
- » “The way this company defines success is aligned with what I believe truly matters.”
- » “This company pays all full-time, part-time and vendor teammates a fair and living wage.”
- » “Learning and development within this company exceeds anything my social network or I could design.”

(For more examples, download full study)

I’ll leave it to social scientists to craft more perfectly worded Likert-style questions or better methodologies. But here’s what is built into those examples, and is crucial to all future of work measures...

If your organization wishes to be Future Strong, **at least 50 percent of the questions** you ask about the company-employee relationship must come from the perspective of **the company as a vehicle to fulfill each individual’s needs**, vs. the other way around. Note how several of the questions above were about whether company needs were aligned with the individual’s views, not just the other way around.

Many of those measures relate to which hardships/sacrifices are worthwhile and which ones are not. For example...

Most corporate infrastructures are massive time-wasters and demoralizing energy-suckers.⁷⁵ In the last five-plus years, the workforce has experienced the joy and power of user-centered design in their phones, tablets, apps, and social media. They’ve realized

that tools, processes, and systems *can* be tailored to meet *their* needs and not just the company's (corporate-centered). IT wonks call this the consumerization of IT.⁷⁶ And the approach to achieving user-centeredness in all things is called design thinking.⁷⁷

But it's not just a tech thing. It's a *Respect Me and Value Me* thing.

Corporate-centered designs =
Not Respecting Me, Not Valuing Me, which =
Hardships and sacrifices not worthy of my full commitment.

Also: **Most companies are not respectful of each individual's time.** Since 1992, The Jensen Group has surveyed over 350,000 individuals in more than 4,000 companies — asking variations of the survey question above: *My company is respectful of my time and attention and is focused on using it wisely.* Results to date: Only 12 percent favorable.⁷⁸ Meaning...

88 out of every 100 employees feel that
one of their most precious and irreplaceable assets —
their time — is being treated as the company's asset
to use and waste as it sees fit.

Entrepreneurial and startup cultures fare much better — between 35 percent to 85 percent favorable. (Because those employees who work 29 hours a day believe that the company is in alignment with *their* passions and *they have chosen* to take on those hardships. The company is also helping them further *their* personal goals and dreams.)

But across the globe, on average, the assumption that “we can use your time any way we see fit” is still a demoralizing, disrespectful and destructive workplace norm.

In our study, we called for business to wake up and realize that

hierarchies needed to be radically reimagined. Here, I'll take a more reasonable but no less truthful stance...

Maintain hierarchies if you wish. Just realize that there are costs to today's current approaches...

Far too much corporate stupidity
is disguised as cost-saving efficiencies.

Far too much horrific waste of human capacity
is disguised as order, predictability, and minimizing uncertainty.

Now... **Is that really a sustainable business model?**

So if you are a senior executive, here's the bottom line...

Companies wishing to be Future Strong
need to hire Future Strong individuals.

Future Strong individuals will not
take on personal sacrifices, hardships,
and corporate crap that sidetrack them
from their dreams and goals.

So you need to do a lot more
to respect each individual's right
to choose which hardships and sacrifices
are and are not worthwhile,
and then design your company culture
and systems accordingly.

If you want the trust and loyalty of tomorrow's workforce, you will need to show that you respect and trust their ability to figure out the difference between good and bad hardships.

This approach is called *enlightened self-interest*. If they win, you win. Fewer hardships and sacrifices for them = faster results and better productivity for you.

3. Getting Started

Here are multiple ideas, organized by different roles in the organization...

If you are a worker bee or mid-manager: After Choices 1, 2, and 3 prepared you for this: Start having *Living My One Thing* conversations (page 92) with your manager, coach, or mentor.

- » **Track your portfolio of work.** This is the sum of your past and current projects. Divide your projects into two broad categories: **1.** Those that mostly strengthened **the company**, and **2.** Those that truly helped **you** strengthen your one thing. (Work that fits within your personal dreams and goals for your future.) Some projects will fall into both categories; list them as such.
- » **Track the Company/You portfolio mix** over the course of six to twelve months. The ideal mix is different for each person. For some, an 80-company/20-you mix is fine. For contingency workers, job-hoppers and self-starters, a 50/50 mix is ideal. But be aware: the further the mix shifts from away from a 50/50 equal partnership,

the more likely it is that you are being Future Shackled.

» **Conduct proactive career planning conversations**

with your manager: “I need more of these kind of projects.”

» **If this works:** You have a strong future with this company!

» **If not...** If, after several tries over another year or so, your portfolio mix still favors the company... You are being Future Shackled. Hit the road, Jack! And don't you come back, no more, no more.

For everyone who works: Stop creating your own hardships! You are *still* attending way too many stupid meetings and answering way too many stupid emails! STOP IT!!!!!!

You are losing a couple hours every day doing this! For how tos, I'll send you to www.simplerwork.com. In our store you'll find lots of free downloads with detailed instructions.

But I'll give you the overall secret here: the biggest problem has nothing to do with meetings, emails or the company. It's your assumptions: that you'll look bad or miss something if you don't show up at that stupid meeting or if you don't answer that stupid email. The biggest problem is your assumption that it's OK to let other people waste your time, attention, and energy.

Like every twelve-step program, the first step is about you and the daily choices that you make. You need to start treating today's 1,440 minutes as a precious and valuable gift, and yourself as the caretaker of those minutes.

If you are a senior executive: If you haven't already, it's time to concede a Galilean Truth — that the energy-giving sun (workforce) does not revolve around the earth (you). You will find this especially

true once millennials hit the tipping point of more than 50 percent of the workforce. (Depending on your industry that's between 2015 and 2020.^{79, 80, 81}) Also during that time, in the U.S. 40 percent of the workforce will be contingency workers,⁸² with absolutely no long-term loyalty to you or your company.

From my consulting work with senior execs, I have found that most every project — reimagining IT, HR, training and development, sales, manufacturing, and all organizational change efforts — almost always comes down to two critical starting points...

- » **Was blind, but now I see:** Start with you! Like the twelve-step reference above, the hardest and most critical first step is to question your own assumptions about power, control, and how people could still get everything done even if you acknowledged their right to vet the hardships and sacrifices coming at them. The most powerful ways to do this:
 - » **Facilitated executive offsite** where the senior team is forced to face the realities of the coming war for talent.
 - » **Frontline worker for a day:** I once worked with a global retailer who refused to believe that the senior team's initiatives were causing problems and hardships in their stores. This changed instantly once they spent a day stocking shelves, answering customer's questions and manning the cash register! Walk a mile in your workforce's shoes and so much will be revealed to you.
- » **Fix the workforce's potholes:** Pareto principle in action... 80 percent of their biggest hardships and sacrifices come

from the littlest things — potholes in their daily workday. Make getting approvals easier; make it easier to get the ear of a senior team member; make it easier to schedule vacation time and get expenses paid; make it easier to get a mentor or one-on-one coaching. I once worked with a global firm whose innovation efforts kept going nowhere. We found that one of the biggest root causes had nothing to do with innovation. It took the average new hire over a month to get their own laptop and phone. Personal pothole! That first month made it clear that speed didn't matter, change didn't matter, and that they would be the last to benefit from company innovations. Fix their potholes and you will remove many of their biggest pain-in-the-ass challenges.

Whew. Detail-packing done. Let's recap all that, simply.

For everyone who works and wants to be Future Strong...

Tomorrow's disruptive world
will sling many hardships
and sacrifices at you.

If you wish to be Future Strong,
you must be intentional —
selecting the best hardships
and sacrifices for your
best future.

Many will try to force their disruptions onto you, packaging their needs and plans as your responsibilities. Stay focused, stay vigilant.

Yes... Sacrifice for the common good.

Yes... Dedicate yourself to something bigger than yourself.

But don't ever...never, ever!!...
sacrifice your future, your goals,
your personal needs, your dreams.
Stay Future Strong.

“Not my problem” is a perfectly reasonable Future Strong response to many of the sacrifices you will be asked to make. So is the Polish proverb, “Not my circus, not my monkeys.” (Even if you only *think* those things and rebuff the sacrifice in a more politically correct way.)

For a strong future, you must close the doors that allow other people's needs in masquerading as your responsibilities.

And, for all senior executives: recruit and retain *that* kind of talent. Because they are Future Strong and will help you be too.

Let's return to people's stories about the fourth choice.

There is so much more to it, beyond our relationship with companies...

■ One Couple's Choices

Neil and Jen Brown are studying the future of work while living it. Their life and work choices are not for everyone, but they do reflect a targeted approach to choosing which sacrifices, coupled with adventure, will vault them into a strong future.

They are principals of Baker+Brown, a design agency, as well as advisors to fellow entrepreneurs. When we spoke they were about 6,000 miles into a several-year, 75,000+ mile road trip throughout the U.S. to study the future of work through the lens of the creative class.

They are meeting with artisans, entrepreneurs, craftsmen, investors, agencies, designers, and more to discover their passions as well as their fears, insecurities, dreams and commitments. “By the end of this project,” they share, “we hope to create new awareness of the many ways to monetize services and how the creative class can positively influence consumerism and sustainability practices.”

To accomplish this, they have chosen a nomadic lifestyle. They have a small apartment in Chinatown, Manhattan — which essentially pays for itself, as they timeshare it with other nomads. Once that was their only home; now they return only occasionally.

They also rented a house in Atlanta, which is maintained by a neighbor and turns a small profit through Airbnb rentals. “We have virtually no living costs,” they say. “We have assets we can monetize, we just don’t own them. Our biggest monthly expense is probably our Verizon data plan.”

■ Three Powerful Words

You’re not alone. “When I finally opened up, sharing something of which I was deeply ashamed, he told me he had experienced a similar struggle for years. Immediately, I felt a weight lift off me.”⁸³ Those are the words of Jeff Goins, author of *The Art of Work*. We all know that feeling. Everybody struggles. Realizing that can lift tremendous weights off of us.

You’re not alone. Go share your struggle with someone you respect and/or love. You will find a lot of what you’re seeking in that conversation.

You’re not alone.

Theirs is not a story of hardships, but it does showcase the different kinds of trade-offs, sacrifices, and changes many of us may face if we are to be Future Strong in the new economy.

“We began this idea,” says Neil, “shortly after our ten-year wedding anniversary. That was the first time in my life I started thinking in terms of decades. So besides researching other people’s futures, this is also about us figuring out how we want to spend our next ten years.

“What we’ve discovered so far is that the future of work will be nomadic. Not like what we’re doing. I don’t mean traveling or road trips. The future of work will be much more temporary and transitory than it is now. Nomadism is the new work model. A lot of skills and services are being democratized and shared in ways we never could have previously imagined. We will all need to learn to be a lot more flexible in how we work and live. We are hearing that the biggest changes are in changing how you view yourself, your priorities, what you have to hold on to, and what you have to let go of.”

Jen picks up on that point and discusses how it applies to them. “We had to work through lots of trade-offs and figure out what was best for us. It was hard letting go of the idea of home. It was hard making a home in Atlanta and then turning it over to Airbnb guests. Most of us create our identities and sense of belonging and stability through our homes. In the future of work, many people will need to reexamine how they think about home.

“There were trade-offs and challenges in maintaining community and friendships as well. A lot of our personal and professional network is back in New York. We’re discovering how much work it takes to stay connected.

“If the future of work really will be nomadic, I’d say the most important qualities to make that work are lots of personal discipline and intense dedication to your vision for the future. Our travel routine will be like most people’s workdays — constantly changing, a new diversion every few minutes.”

She concludes, “Nomadism takes lots of discipline! And every day brings new trade-offs and new crises and new priorities. The only way to get through that is to have a very clear personal vision that’s guiding you.”

Neil and Jen Brown’s life choices may or may not look like yours. And even they have no idea how their journey will turn out. But in this moment, they embody adventurous self-mastery. They are learning how to be Future Strong.

If you are able to flow like water,
your future could be one helluva adventure!
If not, your future will definitely be
one helluva struggle.

The future of work will feel nomadic to many of us.

What lies ahead will force many of us to rethink how we think about hardship and sacrifice. For many of us, our life journeys will need to be completely uprooted and rerouted. Frequently.

That means: if you are willing to disrupt yourself and be vulnerable, your adventure could be amazing! But if how you see yourself and your sense of security and how you create value is locked in place, your journey will likely be filled with many avoidable hardships.

For many in the industrialized world, **most of tomorrow’s**

discussions about hardships and sacrifices will come back to changing oneself. If you are willing and able to adapt, opportunities will abound. If not, you will create many of your own hardships — economic, career, personal.

Know Which Struggles Make You Great

When I first met Rob Newson, years ago, he showed me what U.S. Navy SEAL hardships looked like. He laughed as I almost tossed my breakfast from just the tiniest taste of their training — whipping across San Diego Bay at 47 knots, being subjected to tremendous forces as we made tight 180° turns, hurtling across the crests of our own waves.

At the time, he was Lieutenant Commander Newson, XO (Executive Officer) of Special Boat Unit 12 and SEAL Team Seven. Now Captain Newson, he just served a rotation as a U.S. Navy Fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City. Since 9/11 he has been focused on intelligence, strategy, and counter-terrorism operations. When we met recently, I asked him about his latest role and his future. I began with the same question we asked everyone: *What makes you, you?*

Reimagine Everything

Gregory Korberger is a San Francisco-based tech designer and developer. He's one of the smallest startup players in that market. How to compete? He created www.phileasandfogg.com, named for the adventurous lead character in Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*, Phileas Fogg. Greg and his team have built a traveling startup lab — working killer hours on tough deadlines, but in some of the most amazing locations around the world. Their goal is find cool locations from which to work, rent an amazing house, build viable products within three months, then start over with new teams and new products in the next cool location. **Reimagine the rules!** When facing your next tough decision and hardship: what's your version of Greg's solution?

“I remember vividly being in the second grade,” he begins, “and I was running a race. About a quarter of the way through, someone stepped on my shoe and it flew off. I remember thinking, ‘Do I stop to put my shoe back on? Or do I try to keep up with the crowd with one shoe?’ I kept running. I think that was the beginning of what I’ve always been about: Never quit.

“This No Quit thing is deep inside of me. That has been instrumental in all of the tough choices I have faced, whether that was going through Hell Week [the most grueling week of the 63-week SEAL Basic Training], struggling through a divorce, raising three children by myself, leading my teammates, and now in my strategic work — the constant theme of my life has been working through the problem and never quitting.

“Another important part is that I’m really passionate about being creative and strategic. I love thinking ahead and being innovative about analyzing what options are available and creating new options. Finally, the most important thing that ties it all together is...I have been called to serve. My life has been about creating a better life for my family, my children, and my country.”

Then this strong man, inside and out, this brilliant leader, shares what he’s now struggling with. “My wonderful career in the Navy is coming to an end. Is that quitting? I struggled with that. The Navy always provided a clear path for me to serve others. Now how will I channel that? What new thing is much greater than me? What is my new calling?”

He remarried and his wife is a doctor in the San Diego area. Now he’s thinking they will do something together — serving others in some greater cause. But he’s struggling like many of us do as our futures evolve

and change. Leadership coach Marshall Goldsmith named that struggle: what got you here, won't get you there.

Captain Newson knows that never quitting, being creative, and serving others will be central to his future. He just doesn't yet know exactly what form that will take. His current Future Strong struggle and hardship is figuring that out.

Captain Newson concludes with the best way he knows how to do that: "Tough choices are usually between two competing good possibilities and you have to figure out which is best; or two competing negatives and you have to decide who is going to pay the costs and how to mitigate the bad fallout. The one thing I've learned is that the worst choice is picking the one that provides the most short-term relief. The far superior choice, which is much more difficult and consumes much more time and effort, is to make the decision based on your values. What's best is rarely the easiest choice and is always values-driven."

Wise words, Captain Newson...

For most of us, most of the time...

The worst choice about sacrifice and hardship
is seeking short-term relief.

The superior choice: Values-driven.

Are You Willing to Take on Hardships For What You Believe?

"What drives me is the creation of much more inclusive environments. I stand against all social inequalities. I want to bridge those gaps. True diversity matters. That's when people can carry who

they are and their cultural identity with them at all times and still be part of the larger group.”

That’s Raheela Khan. She is part of the management team at R2 Business Advisory Consultants, based in Dubai. Before joining R2BAC she managed a portfolio of over \$600 million U.S. for Doha Bank, one of Qatar’s largest banks. She is passionate about cultural democracy, women’s empowerment, youth engagement, and education. Raheela has launched several charitable and social welfare programs in Pakistan.

While she is most proud of her work with underserved markets, and with people who haven’t always had equal access to financing, to get there she still faces the struggle of a never-ending series of glass ceilings.

“Not many women from my culture intentionally select male-dominated careers,” she shares. “To create a new normal, most every day is about taking a stand for change. It took me over five years to get any recognition for my talents as opposed to ‘Oh, she’s just been lucky’ in the financial bets that I made.

“I’d go to meetings of the financial markets association with 400 people there and they wanted to seat me at a table of about ten women

Leaders: Make It Easier to Ask Uncomfortable Questions

Nandan Nilekani is an Indian entrepreneur, cofounder of Infosys. For him, everything comes down to one thing: asking and being asked uncomfortable questions.⁸⁴ Ed Catmull, Pixar’s president, said the same thing in *Creativity, Inc.*: “Candor could not be more crucial to our creative process. Why? Because early on, all of our movies suck. Pixar films are not good at first, and our job is to make them so — to go, as I say, ‘from suck to not-suck.’”⁸⁵ If you want to not suck, one of your biggest jobs is to make it easier for everyone to ask uncomfortable questions. That conversation hardship will make your future a lot easier.

among the 400 men. I chose not to sit with those women, because they willingly self-excluded themselves from the power-generating networks.”

Many of Raheela’s toughest hardships and sacrifices are self-generated. Because she will not stop pushing on those ceilings until they crack and shatter for good. In her world, the greater good is women’s empowerment and helping today’s youth become tomorrow’s leaders, and for her, that’s worthy of most any personal sacrifice.

“We all need to create an alignment between our skillsets and what our goal in life is,” she concludes. “We all need to keep clarifying what our goals are, what gives our life the most fulfillment. Never shut yourself out of the genius that resides within you. Always keep pushing beyond what you thought you could do. You need to leave a legacy so that even if you’re no longer there, your passions continue.”

All Other Choices Lead to This One

No book or mentor or parent or leader or training can fully prepare you for choosing one hardship or sacrifice over another.

Only you can do that.

Using your gut. Your intuition. Your values. Your experiences. Your life.

So, now the full Future Strong truth can be told. The previous three choices were all designed to lead you to here.

The hardest work of your future
will be which hardships and sacrifices
to choose over others.

The only way to do that hard work *and* stay Future Strong is use your inner truths to forge and fuel your soul on fire.

And then to use that fueled soul to choose where and how you will be vulnerable.

And then to draw upon all that pre-work to think through competing priorities and difficulties, when every choice has both an upside and a downside.

All Future Strong choices culminate here.

The earlier three prepared you for this choice, and the final choice — Reliance — is how you will keep on keepin' on... how your tribe will help you *stay* strong.

The best hardships and sacrifices...
the ones where we only remember
the good things...
are those that were part of
an amazing adventure.

As Captain Newson says, the toughest choices you will face are not black and white, good or bad. They will be when there are two or more good competing possibilities or two or more not-good competing outcomes.

The only roadmap to those kinds of choices is within you. The roadmap *is* you.

You can rely on that map to keep you Future Strong, if...if the other four choices lead up to and back to this one.

Choosing among hardships and which sacrifices to make will almost always revolve around letting go of what was and should be, and embracing what could be and will be.

Sacrifice: One-Line Summaries

The Choice: Choosing the best hardships and sacrifices for your best future.

Questions to ask to make that choice...

Adventurous: What hardships and sacrifices will help me make an epic leap into my most amazing future?

Self-Mastered: Do I truly believe that it's my right to choose the *best* hardships/sacrifices for me?

Simplified: Will I exercise that right? Continuously?

Amplified: How will I help others choose *their* best hardships and sacrifices for *their* best future?

Run from what's comfortable. Forget safety.

Live where you fear to live.

...Be notorious.

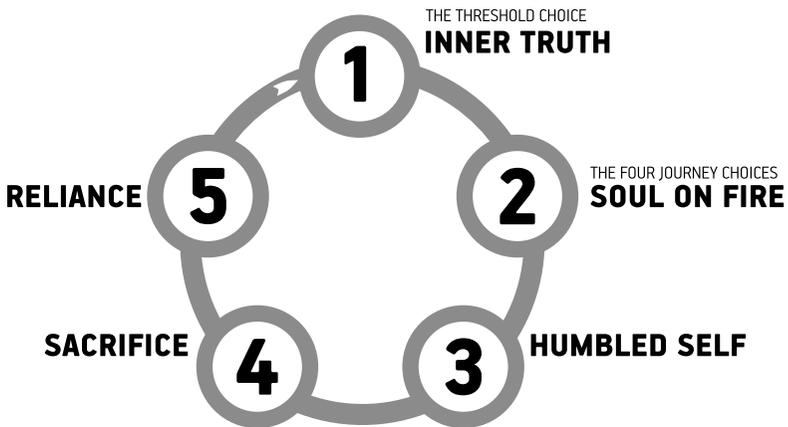
~ Rumi

CHOICE 5

RELIANCE

**Who will you choose to
have your back?**

Who will help hold you accountable
to your dreams and goals?



“When things go wrong in our company, the first question we ask is, ‘Is the person OK?’... Not ‘What the hell happened?’ or by looking for someone to blame. Once you show that you’re focused on the person, then there’s a feeling of security. People feel, ‘Hey, I can screw something up and I’m not going to be burned at the stake for it.’

“You have to balance that with being accountable. But at the end of the day, we’re all human. People can’t grow if they’re fearful of making mistakes. You’ve got to build from the bottom up. Here, the org. chart really is upside down — the senior team is here to support everyone else.”

That’s Rob Castaneda, founder/CEO of ServiceRocket, a software training and support firm, whose goal is to turn every user into a power user. ServiceRocket provides superior customer training and support to fast-growing tech firms. That way, those firms can stay focused on building great software and also keep their customers happy. In 2014, *Silicon Valley Business Journal* named Rob one of their 40 Under 40 — among the valley’s best and brightest. He’s also received Ernst & Young’s Entrepreneur of the Year award.

“Anytime I’m talking to any of our team members,” he continues, “in a small group or one of our all-hands meetings, I always try to put myself in the place of the most bored person. Remembering that they’re

probably thinking, ‘Look Rob, say what you’ve got to say, because I’ve got a support call to handle.’ Or ‘I’ve got a crisis at home.’”

■ Build from the Bottom Up

Rob says, “My job is to keep thinking about the team. It’s all about supporting them. If we’re an apple tree, my job as a leader is to pick up any of the apples that fall off the tree. And my job as CEO is to build a leadership team that can catch as many apples as they can so I’m not the only one.”

To Rob, this isn’t just leadership theory. He’s constantly seeking new ways to put these ideas into practice. “Decisions here are asynchronous. By that I mean no one has to wait for the next meeting. Everybody who works here, including all the executives, maintains and contributes to their own blog. I’ve done thousands of posts over the years. Everyone knows that my ideas might come out in my blog even before my direct reports know about them. That’s a very non-hierarchical way of communicating.”

Every ServiceRocket system is built to focus on supporting frontline employees. “When people start with us, we either supply their desktop or laptop computer or, if they prefer, we pay them to use their own. They quickly realize that after one year, they are making money using their own laptop. And every three years, we’ll pay for a new one. Lots

■ Future Strong Assessment Tool:

Reliance

Use our **free, online self-assessment tool** to explore your own

have-each-others-backs values. Go to www.futurestrong.me.

There’s also a deeper-dive tool for teams and companies: Use Code STRONGER for discounts.

of little things like that help us scale up quickly and easily. It also eliminates the feeling of political controls being imposed from above, and avoids mistrust because someone at corporate is making decisions for them.”

Then Rob focuses on the one thing that makes everything work: values. “An organization without values is just a machine. There has never been a minute, hour or day, or any situation, where we haven’t been able to use our values to make a decision. The fact that you can’t go outside this company and buy those values means a lot,” Rob concludes.

ServiceRocket’s values may look like most every company’s...

- » Delight the Customer
- » Share the Knowledge
- » Focus on the Outcome
- » Think Team
- » Talk Straight

...But from my perspective, Talk Straight is the magical glue that makes ServiceRocket’s values so special. Most companies would call this open and honest communication — and then harbor and condone lots of CYA-ing and politicking and evasive politeness. Not ServiceRocket. They say “We’re able to be upfront with our colleagues while maintaining respect” and they mean it. And practice it.

When you examine all their values combined, ServiceRocket has something that so many companies are missing. The same thing I saw among Rich Sheridan’s Menlo Innovation (page 77) teammates. Something extraordinary...

**Beyond Great Culture,
Beyond Great Community,
Beyond Going Social:
A Pact to Have Each Other's Back**

The fifth and final choice in the circle of Future Strong choices, Reliance, is choosing who will have your back. This goes beyond all the friending, community-ing, buddying, and cultural engagement that most of today's social and cultural gurus talk about.

Reliance is more like Captain Rob Newson's (page 149) Navy SEAL Code, which goes beyond far beyond "leave no man behind" and "failure is not an option." It is a pledge to always, *always* be there for each other. Excerpts...

I humbly serve...always ready to defend those who are unable to defend themselves.

I serve with honor on and off the battlefield. The ability to control my emotions and my actions, regardless of circumstance, sets me apart from other men.

Uncompromising integrity is my standard.

My character and honor are steadfast. My word is my bond.

I lead by example in all situations.

I will never quit. I persevere and thrive on adversity. If knocked down, I will get back up, every time. I will draw on every remaining ounce of strength to protect my teammates and to accomplish our mission.

We demand discipline. We expect innovation.

In the worst of conditions, the legacy of my teammates steadies my resolve and silently guides my every deed.⁸⁶

When I met with Captain Newson's SEAL teammates in San Diego, I was blown away. Never before had I ever seen an all-male group (especially warriors) so in touch with their feminine side — so giving, so caring and so much about servant leadership. To SEALs, team = family. In some ways, more than family.

We all know that corporate teams aren't family — not at most companies, not since the implied employment contract was broken.

Sure, there are great companies to work for, many deserving of intense loyalty. But mostly, employment today is a work-for-hire situation: here today, easily gone the next. Being Future Strong requires something more, something special.

Future Strong cultures
and relationships
are built upon intense
"I have your back" bonds.

So how do companies like ServiceRocket and Menlo create that SEAL-like bond? How could you do it?

Reliance: Share Your Ahas

For posting: What will you write between the hashtags?

#Reliance ... #FutureStrong

#Reliance ... #MyGoldenRule

#Reliance ... #MyCode2LiveBy

While company culture is crucial, the Future Strong secret sauce is how group dynamics within projects create deep in-service-to-each-other person-to-person bonds — where sacrificing for the greater good is also all about the person to your immediate left and right. It’s about creating the space and time for those bonds to form. (Not just at the occasional pizza lunch or get-to-know-each-other fun offsite.) All that adds up to an intense SEAL-like value of taking care of each other — no matter what.

I interviewed scores of ServiceRocket employees all across the globe, almost all twenty-somethings. Quite a few described their culture using the exact same phrase — “having each other’s back.” Here is a sampling of what they told me about different dimensions of that...

Bo Wang, Australia: “My teammates and talk straight helped me discover that I didn’t really know myself. I now realize that most of the perceptions I had about myself before joining the company were incorrect. I’ve realized how much I can learn about me by getting out of my comfort zone. And how much my teammates will help me do that.”

Rodrigo Luna, Chile: “They keep asking me to do things I’ve never done before. It’s hard, but I’m growing so much and so fast, and every person here helps me.”

Joaquín Benavides, Chile: “I’ve learned how to ask for help more. That’s really hard for me. I usually try to solve things myself. And every time I have asked, my teammates have been totally there for me.”

From multiple teammates in Malaysia: “Before joining ServiceRocket, I always saw myself as a follower, not a leader. Now my teammates see me as a leader. Now I see myself that way too. I am a leader! Not just a follower!” And, “I go ‘aha!’ almost every day!” All

teammates laugh loudly and nod knowingly at that, acknowledging that that's their new normal too. "People share so much knowledge, but they also really care about me. That makes it a great learning ground for me."

Jesse Miller, Palo Alto, CA and Malaysia: "Our leaders at ServiceRocket push us to learn new things...they give us the confidence to grow who we are as individuals. Working here I've realized that I know a lot more than I give myself credit for. Being in this culture pushes you to not just advance yourself but to learn more about yourself. Our talk straight value means that everybody is vocal, open, and honest — not to the point of being negative, but being helpfully critical."

Did you catch the subtexts within their quotes?...

- » Choosing to know myself: What makes me, me...
- » Pursuing who I have chosen to become...
- » Choosing to be vulnerable...
- » Choosing specific hardships to be stronger...

Yup... The other Future Strong choices. That's what takes Reliance beyond *just* great culture, *just* great community. Reliance creates an environment where all four of the other deeply-personal choices are incorporated...

The final choice, Reliance,
is when your tribe
is invested in your personal journey,
your adventure — helping you
become and stay Future Strong.

And, in turn, Reliance is when you are invested in their journeys, their adventures.

Why this is so important: Earlier (page 133), we discussed that thirty-plus years ago the implicit employment contract was broken. Part of that bygone era was that your manager was there to guide your career, to coach you, to mentor you.

Nowadays, even in the best situations with the bestest manager you could ever imagine, he/she is sooooo overloaded that it would be foolish to rely mainly on your manager to have your back. And, in the worst circumstances, your manager's primary role is to be corporate enforcer — definitely not somebody you want on your Reliance team!

So every single person who works needs to continuously form we-have-each-other's-back alliances with others.

What this means to you...

For everyone who works: You have a role to play in creating a Reliance culture, regardless of your place in the organization.

If you are to be Future Strong throughout your career and your life — through every project change, every job-change, every career change — your responsibility is to **form have-your-back relationships with 8—16 people**, over and over again. Either maintaining those relationships during every project, or, if your career/life shifts mean losing some of those relationships, continuously forming new ones to maintain approximately 8—16 of them.

I did not choose those numbers randomly. Research has shown that, despite all the hype about social media connections, throughout human

history the largest number of “strong ties” relationships any one person has is usually between 100—200 people.⁸⁷ And really close friends — the kind who will always have your back — can usually be counted on one to two hands.^{88, 89}

Most of us arrive at those connections in sloppy and serendipitous ways. Almost no one chooses their strong-tie relationships and best buddies with great discipline and strategic intent. That would kill all the fun and humanness involved!

However...**if you are going to be Future Strong throughout your life** — a highly disrupted and crazed life — **you need to be disciplined in forming and maintaining a small cluster of elite-level Reliance relationships.**

The U.S. Navy SEALs have figured this out. Each specialized squad is eight teammates. Two squads make up a platoon of 16 men, which is the largest group assembled to tackle a specific mission while still maintaining I-have-your-back coverage.⁹⁰ (Of course, complex missions may entail hundreds, all operating under the same Code. But core operational teams are kept to 8—16 men.)

Who Will Hold You Accountable?

Not to your job responsibilities. God, no... You already have enough people checking up on that! **Who will help hold you accountable to your personal dreams and goals?** Yes, that can be your manager, mentor, spouse, or best buddy. But if you are to remain Future Strong, you will need others. Someone close to your day-to-day pressures. Ideally, on every team, on every project, find at least one person to be your “help me stay true to my dreams” partner. Share your long-term dreams with that person and ask him or her to firmly be there for you when you stray — in much the same way addicts have sponsors. Think of this person as **your sponsor who keeps you from being addicted to morebetterfaster** and becoming afflicted with check-it-off-the-list disease.

Translating that to a Future Strong you: Ideally...for every project you do, strive to form and maintain **two to eight work-related relationships with coworkers guided by a shared pledge: “No matter what, we have each other’s back.”** (Two is minimum, up to eight is ideal maximum.)

Can some of those be friends or family who have nothing to do with your work? Yes, of course. For example, a spouse or friend can help out if you are overloaded one day and need help covering some of your other duties. But be forewarned: To stay Future Strong, you will need more than that. You will also need Reliance relationships *within* your work teams.

To be clear: this isn't *just* building team relationships where you all trust each other, and like each other, and do fast and superior work together.

Reliance goes beyond that. It is about you trusting your teammates to have your back with your personal development, life, and career goals. Reliance is building relationship bonds with teammates who will help you build your best future. And vice versa.

Future Strong work
requires a small group of people
who have each other's backs...
No matter what.

Your daily Reliance bonds will be situation-specific. If most of your work involves mostly the same people, then the number of Reliance relationships will probably remain small and steady.

But if most of your work involves continuously changing teams, then you'll need to keep creating new have-your-back relationships.

Some Reliance relationships will be ongoing. For example, for most everyone who works, two ongoing have-your-back relationships will likely be with **1.** your mentor and **2.** someone who is far more tech-savvy than you. For all contract workers and entrepreneurs, add **3.** your accountant, and **4.** your lawyer.

When you combine your situation-specific and your ongoing have-your-back relationships, you will likely be in the 12-16 range.

To stay Future Strong, no matter where you go or what you do, one of your top priorities needs to be seeking out and forming have-your-back relationships that are specific to those circumstances.

For every senior executive: You need to do more to earn the workforce's trust, loyalty, and having *your* back. A lot more.

Earlier I mentioned that everything you do uses a portion of their lives (page 48), and that far too many corporate hardships benefit the company but drain and sap the individual (pages 138–139), and that the constant pressure to maximize the minimizing of uncertainty is destroying far too much human capacity (see Future of Work Study).

All leaders need to face a series of crucial questions. If you are a senior executive, how will you answer...

"Dear Senior Exec,
why should I have your back?
Have you pledged to have mine
in equal measure?
Should I put my life and my future
in your hands?"

Continuing that line of questions from the workforce's perspective: "When you add up how many of my daily 1,440 minutes are dedicated to covering your back, and how much I sacrifice for you, and how much stress and strain I take on for your *morebetterfaster*... Do you have my back in EQUAL measure? Please...help me understand why I should put so much of my life and my future in your hands?"

Those are all valid questions. How will you respond?

Have you built your company structures and culture so that your response will always be "Yes, I have your back as much as you have mine"?

Remember that the workforce's questions go far beyond compensation. Studies show that that's not the motivator behind behaviors like "we have each other's backs."⁹¹ Nor do benefits, rewards, or recognition influence have-your-back behaviors.

True reliance goes far beyond those things and even beyond a great culture and a great place to work. True reliance is where your culture is driven by a code of having each other's back. Where trust is the secret sauce. "I trust you to have my back."

Dear Senior Exec, that code starts with you. Your actions.

Your values.

Everything you do, and everything your senior team does, and every corporate structure and plan you build must demonstrate that you have the backs of the people who have your backs. (If you haven't already read it, please read Simon Sinek's *Leaders Eat Last*. Sinek thoroughly explores this one idea — that your biggest job is to have everyone's backs.)

Want to know what that looks like? Go food shopping in the privately-held New England grocery chain, Market Basket. They have about 75 locations and over 25,000 employees. In the summer of 2014, workers at every level of the organization walked off their jobs. Stores emptied and customers supported their boycott.

What was their grievance? More pay? Unionizing? Benefits? Nope. They wanted their CEO back. They had *his* back!

There was a battle for ownership between cousins. CEO Arthur S. Demoulas (known as “Good Arthur”) lost to Arthur T. Demoulas (“Bad Arthur”) and was ousted. Good Arthur favored sharing profits with employees and personally knew many of the old-timers, and had helped many of them during their careers. Bad Arthur focused more on the needs of family shareholders than on workers’ needs.⁹²

As a result of the employees’ walkout, their CEO, Good Arthur, got his job back.

He had proven over many years that he had the workers’ backs. So, when the time came, they had his.

Create a Reliance Assessment Map

To some, the following may feel cold and too analytical. Try it anyway. You’ll discover it will greatly speed things up. List your top 10, 20, 30 or more work-related friends. (Privately; this is not to be shared with anyone.) Then assess each according to four criteria:

- Those who *get* me the most
- Those who will be brutally honest with me, for my own good
- Those whom I most admire and respect
- Those whom I am happiest to be with

Score those people according to those criteria. Keep it simple. Like...

1. Not so much, 2. Somewhat, 3. Lots.

The three to five people who scored the highest on all four criteria are most likely to be your best Reliance buddies.

Dear Senior Exec: **How many of your employees would stage a walkout for you, to get you your job back?**

Reliance is the ultimate measure of a team's or organization's culture. It's not "Would I recommend a friend to work here?"

It's "Would this group of people put their ass on the line for me?" And "Would I do the same for them?"

Beyond team cohesiveness, **reliance is also about having the backs of the people who change the rules.**

Big bets on innovation aren't just about the *company's* future. They're also about **putting your ass on the line to attract and retain the people who are driven to create the future.** For example...

Google's Advanced Technology and Projects group (ATAP) has one driving mission: the pursuit of epic upheaval, not just modest disruption. Its team symbol is the same as the original Apple Macintosh team's: a skull and crossbones pirate's flag. Google's chairman, Eric

Share Your Crucible Moments, Broadly

One of the best and fastest ways to build a passionate Reliance network is to share your crucible moments publicly and often. (Reminder: These are deeply personal experiences that forged or tested how you view the world.) In written posts. In talks you give or in presentations. People who share your passions and values will seek you out. That common bond will fast-track and amplify the connections needed for you to possibly select each other as have-your-back buddies.

Schmidt, specifically sought out DARPA (U.S. Department of Defense research) director Regina Dugan to head up Google's effort. And she, in turn, sought out the best of the best, to create the future.⁹³

Google's big bets aren't just on new technologies. They seek out people who will put their ass on the line for the future, and then have *their* backs.

Tiburcio de la Cárcova is founder of Santiago Makerspace in Chile. Beyond creating a space for hackers, makers, and DIY geeks, Tiburcio is also building his own educational institution. He's got the backs of tomorrow's geniuses. "The way that we learn is broken. University is broken. When you most want to change the world is when you are from 18 to your early 20s — and education is currently wasting a lot of that. My goal is to help them change the world during those years by combining education, invention, and making."

He closes, "We are in the new industrial revolution. We are at the beginning of a much more rich, sustainable, generous industrial revolution for inventors and crazy people."⁹⁴

Vishen Lakhiani is founder of Mindvalley, a groundbreaking company based in Kuala Lumpur. Mindvalley is a publisher and online education firm, dedicated to self-help and elevating the human spirit and each person's potential. Their mission: "We are determined to push humanity forward by empowering our audience to live healthier and happier lives, to unleash their fullest potential — to be extraordinary."

"My goal," says Vishen, "is to build *the* greatest place in the world to work — to bring the best and brightest here. Not *one* of the greatest. The world's greatest place to work. Better than Google, Facebook, Zappos, better than any other company out there. So I started studying

all the things these companies did and decided how to one-up them. Mindvalley was born.”⁹⁵

He’s well on his way to doing just that. I recently had the opportunity to meet many of Vishen’s Mindvalley teammates. Every single one saw their personal mission as changing the world. When they join Mindvalley, each new hire places their hands on the feet of Wonder Woman (their workspace is filled statues and figurines of superheroes) and reads the Code of Awesomeness...

I dare to dream big.

I evolve through learning.

I am positive and passionate.

I practice transparency and candor.

I help others rock their greatest lives.

I turn customers into raving fans.

I am grateful and I celebrate life.

I kick serious ass.

I am a money magnet.

I honor my words with action.

Once on board, everyone is responsible for shifting *I* to *we* — We dream big, etc.

I felt blessed to be invited to speak in their Hall of Awesomeness, where speakers from all over the world give free talks, available to all Malaysians. Says Vishen, “Malaysians come together in the Hall of Awesomeness to share new, exciting, and different ideas. In short, we are merging a company with a completely free university. We think we can do 10,000 people per year coming here. Now, we’re filming the sessions like TED talks, and we’re getting them out to the masses. We call this Project Renaissance. Our goal is to take this global.”

We help others rock their greatest lives.

We kick serious ass.

Dear Senior Execs,
your innovation projects
are not just about business.
They are part of your Reliance contract
with your workforce.

With those projects, you are
saying to them:

“You can depend on me —
and our ideas, and our commitments,
and the team we’ve built —
to create an amazing future
for you and everyone.”

Every team that has each other’s back — whether it’s yours, or the Enterprise crew’s, or Mindvalley’s, or Google’s, or SEAL Team 6’s — is always dedicated to creating a more amazing future for all.

Your innovation projects are your opportunity to say to every potential new hire, “You can depend on me and us to create the future with you — to create an epic and amazing journey with you here, as part of this team.”

Or not.

That's the choice you face as a senior exec. Can your next ten or 10,000 new hires rely on you to create an epic and amazing journey for them, and with them?

That is a crucial part of your responsibility if you want a Future Strong organization.

Reliance is Hard Work, Especially in a World of Chaos

“One of the toughest challenges that leaders face is operating in a world of chaos,” says James Rusk, chief security officer at bgC3, a think tank and venture capital firm created by Microsoft’s cofounder Bill Gates, which also supports the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

“Too much so,” James continues. “We’ve normalized chaos as a regular part of working, when it doesn’t have to be this chaotic. As a leader, your job is to ensure that everyone understands the vision, and then make sure they have the tools and resources they need to get their job done. But first, you need to embody the vision. In the military, we called this the commander’s intent.” (James served as a special agent for the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations, which protects technology and detects threats.)

“In being the keeper of that vision, I, as a leader, have to be sure that I’m not sticking with ideas just because change is uncomfortable for me. I need to do self-reflection often to be sure that my thinking evolves as much as is needed.”

James continues, “We have all experienced places and times at work where we were super excited by a project. Those times created the connectivity where everyone also watched out for each other. Connective

tissues are formed where you know what each person's motivations are and how best to communicate with them and work with them.

“The beauty of teams like the SEALs and other special mission units is that they're small in numbers and extremely cohesive. When we try to scale that throughout an entire company, procedures or structures won't make that work. It's the person-to-person connectedness and cohesion that makes it work,” he concludes.

Beyond Reliance, James also touches on a key element that makes everything Future Strong: trust.

He speaks about the importance of trust in technology security. “We need to trust our employees more, because most CISOs (chief information security officers) are treating employees as potential bad guys, with too many restrictions.

“However, for trust to work, we all need to do a better job educating employees. The average person is completely unaware of their own habits and behaviors that create security risks for everyone. So, trust more...but educate first.”

Reliance is built upon trust.

Trust can leave you vulnerable.

There it is again: vulnerability.

The key to making that work for you —
and not freaking out and
over-securitizing and bureaucratizing
everything —

is intense person-to-person
connectedness.

The one theme that ran through every single one of our interviews:
it's the people, stupid!

You have heard that a gazillion times before reading this book.

And yet, that's the one key component that's the most forgotten,
most of the time.

Oh, when will they ever learn?

Oh, when will they ever learn?

~ Pete Seeger

Utu

Most every culture and religion has one core value that makes Reliance work. It's the ethic of reciprocity — known universally as The Golden Rule.

Buddhism: “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.” Judaism/Christianity: “Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself.” Confucianism: “Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.” Islam: “None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.” Hinduism: “One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself.” Shinto: “The heart of the person before you is a mirror. See there your own form.” Taoism: “Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss.”⁹⁶

In its simplest, purest, most timeless form...Reliance is living The Golden Rule. Others have your back because you have theirs, and then

it continues in a never-ending circle of reliance upon each other.

During trips to New Zealand, I met many Māori, the indigenous people of the region. There, I learned about the Māori version of The Golden Rule, *utu*, meaning balanced exchange.

Utu seemed the best way to close this section on Reliance because, to the Māori, it guides not just social and spiritual relationships, but also economic ones.⁹⁷

Utu is governed by several guiding principles — essentially whenever you receive something, you are bound to pay it forward, only better than you received. And those who don't do so lose *mana*, which is inner power or authority. (Yoda and the Jedi would call *mana* The Force.)

I wanted to learn how *utu* was carried into leadership and business environments, so I sought out three exceptional leaders within the Māori community: George Riley, board member of Leadership New Zealand; Teresa Tepania-Ashton, CEO of Māori Women's Development, Inc.; and Ngāroimata Reid, a business and community development consultant.

Here's George Riley on leadership and its relationship to Reliance: "Almost all Māori leadership principles begin with family. In mine, like most Māori children, we were encouraged to discover who we are — what's inside of us, to be true to who we were born to be.

"So being part of a group in our society, as well as leading others, always begins with being true to who you are. I'm in my fifties and I'm still exploring and discovering that.

"We also make great efforts to accept and internalize the opinions of others and make that part of decisions that need to be made.

“*Whanaungatanga* in business is an ethic of belonging, kinship. It’s an acknowledgment that no matter what the business priority is, and no matter who the leader is, sustaining relationships and building networks is how we will achieve our goals. And, ultimately, any decisions that are made must be in alignment with our cultural mores — which include that we are guardians of what is handed on to future generations. Monetary wealth and innovation can be a part of that, but it is mostly about sustaining cultural and environmental resources. Our obligation of the highest order is to future generations.”

You’ll note that George progresses from inner knowingness, to relationships, to a shared responsibility for the future.

The circle of deeply personal Future Strong choices leads right into the circle of reciprocity — all of us having each other’s back.

Teresa Tepania-Ashton on Reliance as part of their culture: “When my first daughter was born, I finally realized the importance of what my father had taught me. He spoke about real wealth being the legacy that

Senior Execs: Do a Reliance Audit

- List your last 25 business initiatives that were rolled out through the organization
- Ask everyone on the senior team to score each initiative according to this question on a 1-2-3 scale: “Have we, as the senior team, had our workforce’s backs on this initiative in equal measure to how we expected them to have the business’s back?” 1. Not at all, 2. Somewhat, 3. Lots.
- Collect responses and distribute the mean scores among the team.
- Set aside several hours to discuss the results...truthfully...fully
- Be prepared for an eye-opening experience
- After everyone’s Ahas have been shared, discuss what more could be done to create an organization-wide code of having each other’s backs. Begin with your own behaviors.

you leave for your children and grandchildren. Everything I have done since the birth of my children is about creating a better world for them. And I am so much happier since I made that my life's focus.

“My role at Women's Development is to help all Māori women succeed in business in ways that always create a better future for their children's children. We give them training, provide loans, and build small support groups around the women so that, if they need anything or if they become unsure, or start to fail, the group supports them.

“The biggest challenge they each face is to continue to believe in themselves. So we make sure somebody is always there, believing in them, supporting them, reaching out to them. It takes some of them a long time to find the courage they need to take on certain business challenges. We're there for them for as long as that takes. And that's very much part of our culture — helping each other draw upon our own unique inner strengths.”

Finally, Ngāroimata Reid on the relationship between Reliance and legacy: “When we talk about leadership, it's all about legacy — what we are handing over to future generations. That sometimes gets interrupted by all the distractions thrown at us in business. But if you hold onto who you are, that keeps you focused on that legacy.

“That's the importance of family-like community bonds. Many of us, individually, can get caught up in those distractions. People who know us can help pull us out of those distractions, back to the legacy we want to leave.”

She concludes, “It's common for successful Māori businesses to have a council of elders, or *kaumātua*, to have input into organizational decisions. They don't have voting power like a board. They can't make

leaders do anything. They just help watch out for things the leaders might not be thinking about.”

Three different leaders, each speaking about different dimensions of the same thing: Reliance — each of us forming have-your-back relationships — is a crucial component to all things that matter...

First: Strong We begins with Strong Me... Everything begins with your deep inner knowingness of what makes you, you.

Daily: Reliance is part of The Golden Rule, or *utu* — a circle of reciprocity, taking care of each other, as we would like to be cared for. Making room for others to shine, ensuring their uniqueness enriches the whole. Helping others to be Future Strong.

Finally, it all adds up to your legacy — your actions today are the foundation for your children’s future.

Reliance in its most basic, daily, form
is being part of a group that lives by a pact:
To always have each other’s backs —
no matter what — so that everyone
comes out Future Strong.

Reliance in its purest, highest, form
is a code to live by:
That every life matters.
Every future matters.
Taking care of each other matters.

And our shared purpose is to create amazing futures for our children's children.

Reliance cannot be digitized, standardized or scaled — at least not in the ways that most businesses view scaling and standardization: where the highest goals are creating efficiencies and lowering costs. Reliance relationships are not engineered.

Oh, we may use digital tools to make Reliance easier when we're not all in the same place and the same time....

And we may standardize check-ins or streamline calendaring or add common training and development, which will also create efficiencies....

And we may build disciplined processes so up to 16 people at a time can form the deepest bonds possible....

But at the end of the day, Reliance is about living by a code. A human-to-human bond where even “in the worst of conditions, the

Reliance: One-Line Summaries

The Choice: Choosing a core group of elite teammates who all commit to a pact: to have each other's backs, no matter what.

Questions to ask to make that choice...

Adventurous: Have I chosen a group of amazing people, who know my dreams and life's adventure goals, to have my back?

Self-Mastered: Am I doing my part? Do I have the backs of every person I made a pledge to?

Simplified: Am I living the Golden Rule, every day in every way possible?

Amplified: How have I sponsored, driven, and supported a code by which everyone has each other's backs?

legacy of my teammates steadies my resolve and silently guides my every deed.”

A bond that is guided by our humanity, and our better angels.

Take care of each other.

~ Robert Louis Stephenson

CODA

#IAMFUTURESTRONG

I am your strong future.
Choosing me means choosing the unknown
when others chose the familiar.

Choosing me means fanning the flames of
that which tests you.

Will you pause long enough
to see what's possible,
to feel what's possible?

Your choices are where your future begins.

Will you choose, every day, who you are
becoming?

I am your strong future.
If you choose to be vulnerable in ways
that help you grow beyond today,
If you choose the best hardships for your
best future...

Then I will have your back.
By taking just the first step, you have the right to declare
IAmFutureStrong.

Each day thereafter offers a new gift,
a new opportunity.
A new choice to continue the journey.

Will you choose to renew?
Will you fan the flames higher than yesterday?

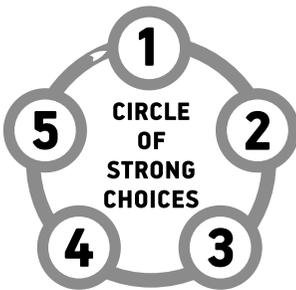
If so, then you continue to be Future Strong.

Then you have a new responsibility,
To pay it forward,
To transform IAmFutureStrong into WeAreFutureStrong.

Then on the third or thirtieth or three hundredth day,
you will experience a major setback.

What will you do?
Will you choose to continue?

Will you loop back to the circle?



Will you call upon your crucible moments
to find the strength and courage and focus that you need?
Will you have others' backs?
Will they have yours?

Will you willingly choose to be vulnerable, again, in a new way?

Will you continue to ensure that the joys of today
dance with who you have chosen to become?

If so, then you will continue to be Future Strong.

I am your strong future.

I cannot and will not promise an easy journey.

Often, Future Strong days will be among
your toughest.

I promise only strength,
The strength to create and embrace the
journey you were meant to travel.

And the stronger you become,
the more responsibility you bear
to transform IAmFutureStrong into WeAreFutureStrong.

And so it begins.

Your future.

Your strong future.

Enjoy the journey!

ABOUT THE TOOL

Would you like to learn which of the five Future Strong choices you have already mastered? Interested in knowing how you compare to others on their Future Strong journeys? Looking to identify how you can amplify your strengths throughout your team or organization?

Then I have the online assessment tool for you. And it's free!

Go to this book's site, www.FutureStrong.Me, or go directly to the Future Strong Assessment Tool's site, **www.FutureProofing.Today**.

The tool has been developed in partnership with Elaine Newman, CEO and founder of the Global Learning, who has deep expertise in leadership, diversity, and HR assessments and consulting.

Let us help you discover if you and/or your organization are **Future Strong, Future Passive, or Future Shackled**.

Future Proofing provides the organizational analytics behind the book's ideas:

- » Assess your and your organization's future readiness
- » Identify barriers to future readiness and get help in addressing them
- » Track key metrics behind Future Strong action plans and get help in implementation

■ **How the Tool Works**

If you use the free version, the tool's focus is on you as an individual performer. After answering 15 questions, you will receive a score of Future Strong, Future Passive, or Future Shackled, as well as recommended next steps.

If you opt for the fee-based team/organizational assessment (use Code STRONGER for a discount): You and your teammates will be asked to respond to two sets of questions. One set to assess your Future Strong preparedness as an individual, and another to assess where your organization falls on the Future Strong scale.

Upon completing the assessment, you and your organization will receive a score of Future Strong, Future Passive, or Future Shackled. Each participant will also receive a robust follow-up report, outlining your and your organization's current future strengths, as well as some suggested resources to help you address any identified gaps.

Check out the tool: you'll be glad you did!

To learn more about my partners who coauthored this tool, go to www.eGlobalLearning.com.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank You!

These are the people who kept me grounded as I pursued my call to adventure with this book...

Family and Friends. You kept me somewhat sane during the process and very loved. As always, couldn't have done this without you!

Research Teammates. Thousands of interviews and surveys were conducted and studied. Huge thanks to the superheroes who made help make that happen: Brian Barela, Papitha Cader, Suzanne Daigle, David Dunnington, Sue Elliott, François Lavallée, Johann Gauthier, Mark Koskiniemi, Mathieu Laferrière, Mark Leyba, Jean Marrapodi, Eileen McDargh, Tanveer Naseer, Linda Stevenson, Lance Tracy, Tony Vlahos, Mike Wittenstein.

In-Progress Counselors and Readers. Someone had to tell me when I was full of myself and when my babblings were incoherent. In addition to the teammates above, these folks filled that role amazingly: Mark Babbitt, Don Barry, Tami Belt, Kiron Chatterjee, Ashley Clinch, Carol Cole-Lewis, Kellie Crantz, Mika Cross, Howard Deane, Brian Durr, Bob Franco, John Gillen, Michael Giuliano, Dave Gray, Naomi Gunkel, Deborah Hinton, Trina Hoefling, Emily Hoole, Tom Janson, Madison Joseph, Steve Martin, Sherri Maxson, Dennis Morris, Bernadette Palumbo, Tanya Sakamoto, Rhonda Singer, Camille Smith, Michael Symonanis, Lori Thomas, Sue Tokuyama, Ross Wirth, Trudy Wonder, Joel Wright. Thanks guys!

Book Teammates. Nothing you read would have been possible without the wonderful support of Motivational Press, headed by Justin Sachs. Amazing MP teammates included Joseph Emnace, cover design; Tom Matkovic, interior design/production; Lauren Milne, copyediting; Elizabeth Walker, indexing. Thank you all! Plus my huge thanks to all our generous and insightful interviewees. I didn't really author this book, they did!

You. This book is nothing without your Ahas and actually putting it to use. Thank you for adding that missing ingredient!

ENDNOTES

- 1 <http://www.fastcompany.com/3049022/the-future-of-work/3-lessons-ibms-watson-can-teach-us-about-our-brains-biases>
- 2 <http://singularityhub.com/2015/05/11/the-world-in-2025-8-predictions-for-the-next-10-years/>
- 3 Ibid
- 4 Ibid
- 5 <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/03/11/digital-life-in-2025/>
- 6 http://www.salon.com/2015/04/21/robert_reich_americas_flexible_economy_is_making_workers_lives_hell_partner/
- 7 <http://recode.net/2015/05/27/the-impact-of-the-on-demand-economy-as-told-through-mary-meeker-slides/>
- 8 <http://newsoffice.mit.edu/2014/predicting-the-future-of-global-water-stress>
- 9 <http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/scenarios/energy-scenarios.html>
- 10 <https://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2014/03/14/what-will-education-look-like-in-2025-what-the-experts-have-to-say/>
- 11 <http://www.businessinsider.com/labor-shortages-will-cost-10-trillion-2014-7>
- 12 <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/08/06/future-of-jobs/>
- 13 <http://billmoyers.com/2014/12/19/well-educated-middle-class-joins-working-poor/>
- 14 <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/19/opinion/your-waitress-your-professor.html>
- 15 <http://www.dailyfinance.com/2014/02/25/morgan-stanleys-utopian-society-will-be-built-by-t/>
- 16 <http://www.cluetrain.com>
- 17 <http://www.businessinsider.com/tony-hsieh-self-management-memo-to-zappos-employees-2015-4>
- 18 <http://wirearchy.com/what-is-wirearchy/>
- 19 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/magazine/what-hollywood-can-teach-us-about-the-future-of-work.html?>
- 20 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/on-leadership/wp/2015/07/21/in-big-move-accen-ture-will-get-rid-of-annual-performance-reviews-and-rankings/>
- 21 <http://www.businessinsider.com/ginni-rometty-on-ibm-watson-and-ai-2015-5>
- 22 <http://www.reuvenhorsht.com/2015/02/07/machines-replace-middle-management/>
- 23 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/11607315/Humans-have-shorter-attention-span-than-goldfish-thanks-to-smartphones.html>
- 24 <http://fortune.com/2015/06/04/fortune-500-facts/>

- 25 <https://hbr.org/2002/09/crucibles-of-leadership>
- 26 The quotes here are a combination of our interview with Dara-Abrams and her own blog post about our Future of Work salon, which appeared on Huffington Post.
- 27 The quotes here are a combination of our interview with Savage and her own writings about her personal journey.
- 28 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/dorieclark/2012/08/08/is-workplace-hierarchy-becoming-obsolete/>
- 29 http://business.financialpost.com/executive/leadership/are-middle-managers-becoming-obsolete#__federated=1
- 30 http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2002236
- 31 <http://ww2.cfo.com/human-capital-careers/2005/08/the-21st-century-organization/>
- 32 <https://medium.com/about-holacracy/whats-wrong-with-your-organizational-structure-91dd71a76eb7>
- 33 <http://wirearchy.com/wirearchy-the-ebook/>
- 34 <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-secret-math-of-airbnbs-24-billion-valuation-1434568517>
- 35 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/louiscolombus/2015/03/31/2015-roundup-of-3d-printing-market-forecasts-and-estimates/>
- 36 <http://www.gatesnotes.com/Education/11-Million-College-Grads>
- 37 <http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/notrocketscience/2011/03/07/people-dont-know-when-theyre-lying-to-themselves/>
- 38 <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15298868.2014.955049>
- 39 <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2011-12523-001/>
- 40 *Predictably Irrational*, by Dan Ariely, HarperCollins Publisher, 2009
- 41 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/05/opinion/david-brooks-what-is-your-purpose.html>
- 42 <http://www.fastcompany.com/3046338/my-creative-life/anderson-cooper-why-no-plan-b-is-the-only-plan>
- 43 <http://www.fastcompany.com/3046630/lessons-learned/7-business-leaders-share-how-they-solved-the-biggest-moral-dilemmas-of-their>
- 44 <https://medium.com/@goonth/the-economics-of-you-a-call-to-be-extraordinary-a27b8465496d>
- 45 <https://medium.com/stronger-than/malala-s-open-letter-to-the-abducted-chibok-school-girls-4af420a5d19d>
- 46 <https://medium.com/@sandikrkowski/secret-25-get-out-of-your-own-way-48df31dcf336>
- 47 <https://www.startwithwhy.com>
- 48 <https://medium.com/@PeterDiamandis/my-advice-earlier-this-week-b40fca7cfc08>
- 49 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/11607315/Humans-have-shorter-attention-span-than-goldfish-thanks-to-smartphones.html>
- 50 *Search for a Simpler Way*, ongoing study by The Jensen Group
- 51 Ibid

- 52 Ibid
- 53 <http://newsfeed.time.com/2013/07/12/forget-sexting-9-of-americans-claim-to-have-actual-sex-while-texting/>
- 54 <http://www.iftf.org/futureworkskills/>
- 55 <http://luman.io/future-ready-humans/>
- 56 <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/66920744433298556/>
- 57 <https://agenda.weforum.org/2014/12/how-to-teach-students-to-think-critically/>
- 58 The quotes here are a combination of our interview with Ritz and several of his own talks.
- 59 <http://www.simplerwork.com/futureofwork/>
- 60 <https://youtu.be/bWG-MlruW28>
- 61 <https://medium.com/@jeffgoins/a-simple-guide-to-making-better-decisions-1996f8c8f05>
- 62 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ayelet-baron/never-ever-ever-give-away_b_6666424.html
- 63 http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/business_technology/The_Internet_of_Things_The_value_of_digitizing_the_physical_world
- 64 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kashmirhill/2012/02/16/how-target-figured-out-a-teen-girl-was-pregnant-before-her-father-did/>
- 65 <https://medium.com/bad-words/the-asshole-factory-71ff808d887c>
- 66 <http://blogs.wsj.com/cio/2015/07/08/ibm-researchers-try-to-measure-employee-well-being-using-technology/>
- 67 http://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame
- 68 <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2005/june15/jobs-061505.html>
- 69 <http://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/print-edition/2012/01/06/steve-jobs-poisonous-personality-was.html>
- 70 <https://youtu.be/6a6Hup6tWKQ>
- 71 <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/06/20/charleston-shooting-families-proved-grace-wins-out-over-hate.html>
- 72 http://futureworkplace.com/wp-content/uploads/MultipleGenAtWork_infographic.pdf
- 73 <http://www.marcanangel.com/2009/07/13/50-questions-that-will-free-your-mind/>
- 74 <http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1405&context=bjell>
- 75 Study: Work 2.0: Is Business at War With Its Workforce? 2012, updated 2015, The Jensen Group
- 76 http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/C/consumerization_of_it.html
- 77 <https://hbr.org/2008/06/design-thinking>
- 78 SimplerWork Index, The Jensen Group, 2015
- 79 <http://elance-odesk.com/millennial-majority-workforce>
- 80 <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-dttl-2014-millennial-survey-report.pdf>
- 81 <https://www-03.ibm.com/press/us/en/pressrelease/45904.wss>

- 82 <http://qz.com/65279/40-of-americas-workforce-will-be-freelancers-by-2020/>
- 83 <https://medium.com/@jeffgoins/the-3-most-powerful-words-in-the-english-language-987253313a30>
- 84 <https://hbr.org/2015/05/make-it-ok-for-employees-to-challenge-your-ideas>
- 85 <http://www.fastcompany.com/3027135/lessons-learned/inside-the-pixar-braintrust>
- 86 <http://navyseals.com/nsw/seal-code-warrior-creed/>
- 87 <http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/social-media-affect-math-dunbar-number-friendships>
- 88 <http://motherboard.vice.com/blog/your-brain-can-only-handle-a-few-close-friends>
- 89 <http://www.livescience.com/16879-close-friends-decrease-today.html>
- 90 <http://navyseals.com/nsw/structure/>
- 91 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kensundheim/2013/11/26/what-really-motivates-employees/>
- 92 <http://www.fastcoexist.com/3035051/the-most-unusual-strike-this-year-shows-why-it-pays-to-treat-employees-well>
- 93 <http://fortune.com/2014/08/14/google-goes-darpa/>
- 94 excerpt from *The Courage Within Us*, by Bill Jensen
- 95 excerpt from *Disrupt! Think Epic, Be Epic*, by Bill Jensen
- 96 <http://www.thesynthesizer.org/golden.html>
- 97 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Māori_culture

INDEX

A

Accenture, 25
acting, choosing to, 78
Adams, Lucy, 120–122
adventurous self-mastery, 17, 33, 60–61, 72–73
amplified characteristic
 defined, 17
 humbled self, 124
 inner truths, 73
 reliance, 183
 sacrifice, 155
 souls on fire, 102
The Art of Work (Goins), 146
attention spans, 28, 85
attitude measurement surveys, 137–138
Awesomeness, Code of, 173

B

Bailey, Morgana, 69–71
Bapat, Vivek, 66
beliefs and values, 50–54, 151–153, 160, 164
Benavides, Joaquín, 163
Bennis, Warren, 46
boundaries, 97–99
Bradley, Rick, 126–128
Brogan, Chris, 100
Bromberg, Gidon, 117–119
Brooks, David, 98
Brown, Neil and Jen, 145–149
business structures, 24, 90–94, 138–139

C

Campbell, Joseph, 45, 54
Cárcova, Tiburcio de la, 172
career planning, 142
Carmichael, Chris, 97–98
Castaneda, Rob, 158–160
Catmull, Ed, 152
change
 embracing, 18
 leaders, relationships and, 31
 systems and structures, 24
 technology, 31, 106, 107

chaos, 18, 85, 175
choices. *see also* strong choices
 individuals, 14, 20–21, 33
 leaders, 14
 maps, 14
 past influencing future, 36, 42–43
 selection among, 153–155
 stories of, 14
The Cluetrain Manifesto, 24
Code of Awesomeness, 173
comfort zone, 40
conversations
 career planning, 142
 void in, 13–14
corporate hierarchies, 140
corporate infrastructures, 138–139
courage
 hero's, 23
 leadership, 26
 meaning of, 108–109
 one thing vision, 100
creative flow, jumpstarting, 57–58
creativity, 100
Creativity, Inc. (Catmull), 152
crucible moments
 overview, 45–49
 Bapat's, 66
 Dara-Abrams', 56–57
 80/20 rule, 51, 54
 exercise for, 60
 inner truths, 45–52, 60
 Jarre's, 58–60
 Jensen's, 48
 Maradiaga's, 46
 Sandberg's, 69
 Savage's, 61–62
 sharing, 171
 Viesti's, 66–68
 VUCA and, 53–55
Crush It (Vaynerchuk), 58
Csikszentmihályi, Mihaly, 57

D

Dalziell, Janet, 94–95

Future Strong

Dara-Abrams, Benay, 55–57
deeper meaning, 94–96
Demoulas, Arthur S., 170–171
Demoulas, Arthur T., 170
design thinking, 139
digital future, 28. *see also* technology
disengagement, 132. *see also* engagement
disruptions, 15, 115–116, 145
Dufresne, Andy, 98
Dugan, Regina, 172
dysfunctional organizations, 130–131

E

80/20 truths (Pareto principle)
 example of, 143–144
 rule of crucible moments, 51, 54
 rule of inner knowingness, 50, 78
 rule of values, passions, and habits, 50–51
Einstein, Albert, 56–57
employee
 career planning, 142
 work portfolio, 141
employee-employer relationship, 26–29,
 135–137
employment contract, 133, 136, 165
empowerment, 23–24
engagement
 employee-employer relationship, 26–29
 future model, 137–138
 play and, 55–58
enlightened self-interest, 141
environment, conducive to success, 108, 118,
 124, 137, 164
exercises
 for crucible moments, 60
 hardships and sacrifices, 132
 for inner truths, 46
 for leading others, 64
 listening in to lean in, 69
 obituary writing, 92–93
 reliance, 162
 sacrifice, 131, 132–133
 for soul on fire, 77

F

fears, 20, 30, 59
Fletcher, Ella, 104–106
flow, state of, 57–58
focus on success, 19, 121
focused attention, 18

Follow Your Bliss (Campbell), 54
Frech, Sofia, 119–120
freedom, 99–102
Future Strong
 defined, 17–20
 importance of, 22–23
 introduction, 13–16
 top reasons for, 23–30

G

Galilean Truth, 27, 142
Gates, Bill, 175
Gibson, William, 53
Glacier and Hare story, 24
goals
 individuals, 27–28
 short-term, 18
Goins, Jeff, 146
Goldberg, Dave, 69
Golden Rule, 177
Goldsmith, Marshall, 136, 151
Google's Advanced Technology and Projects
 (ATAP) group, 172

H

habits, 50–51
hardships, 127–129, 136–137
have-your-back relationships
 building and maintaining, 165–168
 employment contract, 165
 Navy SEAL Code, 161–163
 ServiceRocket employee's comments,
 163–164
heroes, 18, 22–23, 46–47, 91
Hollywood model, 25
holocracy, 25
Horne, Jenny, 112
human capacity changes, 31, 63–65
humbled self, 103–124
 overview, 37, 103
 Adams' story, 120–122
 Bromberg's story, 117–119
 courage, 108–109
 disruptions, 115–116
 environment, conducive to success, 108,
 118, 124
 Fletcher's story, 104–106
 focus on success, 121
 Frech's story, 119–120
 industry change, 112

- innovation, 114–115, 118
 - leaders and leadership, 111–112, 119–122
 - one-line summaries, 124
 - paying it forward, 122–124
 - questioning, 113
 - risks, 117
 - Rule of Disruptive Personal, 116
 - self-assessment tool, 109
 - technology and, 31, 106, 107
 - Ukaegbu's story, 122
 - vulnerability, 105–112, 118
 - vulnerability questions, 113
 - Wright's story, 112–114
- I**
- individual's
 - choices, 14, 20–21, 33
 - empowerment through technology, 24–25
 - goals, 27–28
 - jumpstarting flow, 57
 - legacy of, 62, 181
 - responsibility of, 63
 - right to choose, 134–141
 - role in new conversation, 132–134
 - success, 19
 - time, 139, 142
 - industry change, 112
 - inner knowingness, 50, 78
 - Inner Mandela, 43–44
 - inner truths, 41–73
 - overview, 35
 - adventurous self-mastery, 60–61, 72–73
 - Bailey's story, 69–71
 - Bapat's story, 66
 - beliefs, 50–54
 - choices, past influencing future, 42–43
 - creative flow, jumpstarting, 57–58
 - crucible moments, 45–52, 60
 - Dara-Abrams' story, 55–57
 - 80/20 rule, 50–51
 - exercise for, 46
 - fears, 59
 - heroes, 46–47
 - human capacity changes, 63–65
 - inner knowingness, 50, 78
 - insecurity, 65
 - Jarre's story, 58–60
 - leading others, 64
 - leaning in, 69
 - legacy, own, 62
 - love, leading from, 44–46
 - Maradiaga's story, 42–45
 - one-line summaries, 73
 - passion, 50–51
 - play, importance of, 55–58
 - risks, 66, 71
 - Sandberg's story, 69
 - Savage's story, 61–62
 - self-assessment tool, 45
 - state of flow, 57–58
 - values, 50–51
 - Viesti's story, 66–68
 - VUCA, 53–55
- innovation
- play and, 55–58
 - self-assessment and, 114–115
 - vulnerability and, 118
- J**
- job statistics, 115, 135, 139, 143
 - Jobs, Steve, 111–112, 121
 - Joy, Inc.* (Menlo), 77
 - joy, pursuit of, 77–80
 - Jung, Carl, 117
- K**
- Khan, Raheela, 152–153
 - Kim, Sean, 99, 101
 - knowingness, inner, 50, 78
 - Korberger, Gregory, 149
 - Kurzweil, Ray, 106
- L**
- Lady Gaga, 79
 - Lakhiani, Vishen, 172–174
 - Lao Tzu, 65
 - leaders and leadership
 - choices, 14
 - courage, 26
 - Galilean Truth, 143
 - hardship choices, 131–133
 - have-your-back relationships, 168–175
 - human capacity changes, 31
 - humbled self, 111–112, 119–122
 - implementing change, 143–145
 - individual's choices, 134–141
 - jumpstarting flow, 57–58
 - leading for love, 44–46
 - questioning and, 152
 - relationships and, 31

Future Strong

reliance audit, 179
responsibility of, 63
role of, 49
sacrifice, 131–141
Utu ethic, 178–181
vulnerability and, 111–112, 117

Leaders Eat Last (Sinek), 169

Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead
(Sandberg), 69

legacy, 62, 181

letting go, 19

Lightfoot, Ben, 49–52

love, leading from, 44–46

loyalty, 20, 96

Lucas, George, 46

Luna, Rodrigo, 163

M

mainstream workforce goals, 27–28

Mandela, Nelson, 43–44

Maradiaga, Felix, 42–45

markets, self-organizing, 24–25

meaning-making, in relationships, 29

middle management positions, 28

Miller, Jesse, 164

N

Nagel, Marilyn, 99–101

Nanterme, Pierre, 25

Navy SEAL Code, 161–162

Navy SEAL organization, 166–167

networked markets, 24–25

Newson, Rob, 149–151, 154, 161–162

Nilekani' Nandan, 152

nomadism, 147–148

O

obituary exercise, 92–93

one thing vision, 82, 85–90, 92–93, 100. *see*

also crucible moments

one-line summaries

humbled self, 124

inner truths, 73

reliance, 182

sacrifice, 155

souls on fire, 102

organizations

dysfunctional, 130–131

individual's choices and behaviors, 20–21

productivity, 19–20

success, 19

P

Pareto principle. *see* 80/20 truths

passion, 50–51

past, influencing future, 36, 42–43

past influencing future, 36

paying it forward, 122–124

people systems, 24

performance reviews, 25

personal accountability, 20

personal choices. *see* choices

personal fears, 20

personal risks, 30, 66, 71, 98, 117

personal sacrifice, 19

personal vulnerability, 29–30

platform model of business, 86

play, importance of, 55–58

The Power of Myth (Campbell), 46

power words, 146

Q

questioning, 113, 152

R

reasons for being Future Strong

human capacity, 23–26

personal, 29–30

relationships, 26–29

Reid, Ngāroimata, 178, 180–181

reimagining, 149

relationships

future necessity, 20

have-your-back, 161–168

leaders and, 31

meaning-making in, 29

new approach in, 26–29

sense-making and meaning-making in, 29

technology and, 107

yearly plan, 100

reliance, 157–183

overview, 39, 157–158

assessment map, 170

Awesomeness, Code of, 173

beliefs and values, 160, 164

Castaneda's story, 158–160

chaos, 175

Demoulas' story, 170–171

employment contract, 165

environment, conducive to success, 164

- exercises, 162
 - Golden Rule, 177
 - have-your-back relationships, 161–175
 - Lakhiani’ story, 172–174
 - legacy and, 181
 - Navy SEAL’S, 161–162, 166–167
 - Newson’s story, 161–162
 - one-line summaries, 183
 - Rusk’s story, 175–176
 - self-assessment tool, 159
 - talk straight value, 160, 164
 - trust, 176–177
 - Utu* ethic, 177–181
 - values, 160, 164
 - reliance audit, 179
 - Riley, George, 178–179
 - risk, 23–26, 66, 71, 98, 117
 - risk-aversion, 30
 - Ritz, Stephen, 91–93
 - Rometty, Ginni, 28
 - Roongta, Shilpi, 81–82
 - Rule of Disruptive Personal, 116
 - Rumi, 155
 - Rusk, James, 175–176
- S**
- sacrifice, 125–155
 - overview, 38, 125
 - attitude measurement surveys, 137–138
 - beliefs and values, 151–153
 - Bradley’s story, 126–128
 - Brown’s story, 145–149
 - business structures, 138–139
 - career planning, 142
 - choices, 153–155
 - corporate hierarchy, 140
 - corporate infrastructures, 138–139
 - design thinking, 139
 - disengagement, 132
 - disruptions, 145
 - dysfunctional organizations, 130–131
 - 80/20 truths, 143–144
 - employee-employer relationship, 135–137
 - employment contract, 133, 136
 - engagement, 137–138
 - enlightened self-interest, 140
 - environment, conducive to success, 137
 - exercises, 131, 132
 - Galilean Truth, 142
 - hardships, 127–129, 136–137
 - implementing change, 141–145
 - individual’s right to choose, 134–141
 - individual’s role in new conversation, 132–134
 - individual’s time, 139, 142
 - Khan’s story, 152–153
 - leaders role, 131–141
 - Newson’s story, 149–151, 154, 161–162
 - nomadism, 147–148
 - one-line summaries, 155
 - personal, 19
 - self-assessment tool, 127
 - systems and structures, 138–139
 - technology and, 139
 - 10/100/1000 Plan, 132–133
 - unnecessary hardships in workplace, 129
 - work portfolio, 141
 - sacrificing others, 19
 - Sandberg, Sheryl, 69
 - Savage, Roz, 61–62
 - Schmidt, Eric, 172
 - Seeger, Pete, 177
 - self-assessment, innovation and, 114–115
 - self-assessment tool
 - humbled self, 109
 - inner truths, 45
 - reliance, 159
 - sacrifice, 127
 - souls on fire, 81
 - self-interest, enlightened, 140
 - self-mastered characteristic
 - defined, 17
 - humbled self, 124
 - inner truths, 73
 - reliance, 183
 - sacrifice, 155
 - souls on fire, 102
 - self-mastery, adventurous, 17, 33, 60–61, 72–73
 - self-organized teams, 24, 25
 - self-organizing markets, 24–25
 - sense-making, in relationships, 29
 - Shah, Rawn, 86
 - Sheridan, Rich, 76–80
 - short-term goals, 18
 - Simmons, Wanda, 112
 - simplerwork.com, 142
 - simplicity
 - for all, 19–20
 - communications and data, 86

Future Strong

- company's, 85
 - as goal, 17
 - simplified characteristic
 - defined, 17
 - humbled self, 124
 - inner truths, 73
 - reliance, 183
 - sacrifice, 155
 - souls on fire, 102
 - Sinek, Simon, 96, 169
 - skillsets for the future, 86–87
 - souls on fire, 75–102
 - overview, 36
 - attention spans, 85
 - boundaries, 97–99
 - business structures, 90–94
 - Carmichael's story, 97–98
 - chaos, 85
 - choosing to act, 78
 - courage, 100
 - creativity, 100
 - Dalziel's story, 94–95
 - deeper meaning, 94–96
 - exercise, 77, 92–93
 - freedom, 99–102
 - heroes, 91
 - inner knowingness, 78
 - joy, pursuit of, 77–80
 - Kim's story, 99, 101
 - loyalty, 96
 - Nagel's story, 99–101
 - one thing vision, 82, 85–90, 92–93, 100
 - one-line summaries, 102
 - platform model of business, 86
 - risks, 98
 - Ritz's story, 91–93
 - Roongta's story, 81–82
 - self-assessment tool, 81
 - Sheridan's story, 76–80
 - simplifying, 85–86
 - skillsets for the future, 86–87
 - Struebi's story, 82–84
 - systems and structures, 90–94
 - yearly plan, 100
 - Star Trek* (TNG), 111
 - Star Wars* (movie), 46, 109
 - state of flow, 57–58
 - Stephenson, Robert Louis, 183
 - strong choices. *see also* choices
 - circle of, 34
 - humbled self, 37, 103–124
 - inner truths, 35, 41–73
 - reliance, 39, 157–183
 - sacrifice, 38, 125–155
 - simplified, 40
 - souls on fire, 36, 75–102
 - Struebi, Patrick, 82–84
 - success
 - environment conducive to success, 19
 - focus on, 19, 121
 - for future generations, 20
 - individuals, 19
 - organizations, 19
 - patterns of, 18
 - systems and structures, 24, 90–94, 138–139
- T**
- talk straight value, 160, 164
 - team work design innovation, 77
 - technology
 - changes, 31, 106, 107
 - customization of, 139
 - empowerment through, 24–25
 - security, 176–177
 - user-centered IT designs, 28
 - 10/100/1000 Plan, 132–133
 - Tepania-Ashton, Teresa, 178, 180
 - The Terminal* (movie), 117
 - three-word mantra, 100
 - time
 - individuals, 139, 142
 - reflection, 19
 - transformations, 92–93
 - Triggers* (Goldsmith), 136
 - trust, 176–177
- U**
- Ukaegbu, Chike, 122
 - uncertainty
 - courage and, 26
 - fear of, 30
 - managing, 18, 20
 - user-centered IT designs, 28
 - Utu* ethic, 177–181
- V**
- values, 50–51, 151–153, 160, 164
 - Vaynerchuk, Gary, 58
 - Velasco, Jose, 68
 - Viesti, Patrick, 66–68

volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity
(VUCA), 53–55

vulnerability

companies use of, 118

personal, 29–30, 105–112

questions for, 113

W

Wang, Bo, 163

wirearchies, 25

Wittenberg, Anka, 68

work portfolio, 141

work process, 18

Wright, Spencer, 112–114

Y

yearly plan, 100

yes decisions, 121

Z

Zappos, 25

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr. Simplicity

Bill Jensen makes it easier to do great work.

Bill helps companies and teams double their productivity and pursue their passions.

He has spent the past 25 years studying how work gets done. (Much of what he's found horrifies him.)

He is an internationally acclaimed author and speaker who is known for provocative ideas, extremely useful content, and making it easier for everyone to work smarter, not harder.

His books:

- » *Simplicity*
- » *Work 2.0*
- » *Simplicity Survival Handbook*
- » *What Is Your Life's Work?*
- » *Hacking Work*
- » *The Courage Within Us*
- » *Disrupt!*
- » *Future Strong*

Bill is CEO of The Jensen Group, a change consulting firm he founded in 1985. He lives in Morristown, New Jersey, travels the world for clients and sneaks in fun-time wherever he goes.

Most valuable valueless possession: 1950s cardboard box that resided in a hall closet in his childhood home. On the side, in Mom's handwriting: Bill's Mittens, Hats, Scarves.

Personal life fantasy: To bicycle around the globe via breweries.



bill@simplerwork.com
www.simplerwork.com
@simpletonbill