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TAKE CHARGE AND STAY CONFIDENT

4 ACTIONS TO IMMEDIATELY INCREASE YOUR VALUE, IMPACT AND HAPPINESS

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Take Charge and Stay Confident - 4 Actions to Immediately Increase Your Value, Impact and Happiness

If you're reading this guide, you are most likely someone who has a sense of wanting a deeper "more."

Perhaps it's a desire to increase your impact, success, value, recognition in your current situation/leadership role? Or maybe you want to take charge and embark on a new chapter for you or your organization?

In order to achieve those goals, we need to start at the beginning and take the time to identify what we truly "want." Establish what kind of impact you want to have so that you can *then* choose the embodied actions, thoughts, and behaviors every day that will support those goals.

This process of identifying what we really want is often the starting place with my 1:1 Leadership Coaching clients. It's also the same process I use as a professional interim leader to create strategies for non-profits going through leadership transitions, or create fundraising campaigns. No matter the dilemma, challenge, or opportunity we want to address, or question we want to answer, the process stays consistent. First... establish *what you actually want*. **Then** put the wheels in motion.

So, as you read this guide, I challenge you to really think about what you are aiming FOR. And even more importantly, think about *why* it's important to achieve it.

Interestingly, knowing what you want – really want – is harder than it seems, and can often be an "Achilles heel" for successful people. It's not always easy to take the time to really focus on yourself. True leaders are focused on service, and that can mean they don't set aside time to really work on their own strategic plans.

It also can be challenging to use the same diligence, insight and objective assessment on ourselves that we use with our team and businesses.

Don't worry – this dynamic is normal (and it's why having a coach/mentor is so valuable!). Remember the story where "The cobbler's children have no shoes?" And also remember the instructions to "Place the oxygen mask over your mouth first, and then your child."

I promise that your investment of time in getting CLEAR about what you really want and why, will be worth it.

Also interestingly... even when we have clarity on our goals, there can be significant resistance in choosing the specific actions that will give us the best chance of success. Again, there are some very understandable reasons why that may be.

We may be convinced that we **can't** take such actions because of external circumstances and forces out of our control. Or, perhaps there's an even trickier dynamic at play, such as making assumptions on why not to take action based upon best practices, expert advice, the news, and internal thoughts all based on *past* experiences.

Achieving what you want and are *meant* to achieve is critical – to you, to those around you, to your community, to the world! I recently heard a quote from my mentor – and it's a strong one. Ready? “Choosing not to live to your life's purpose is like... spitting in the face of God.” Ouch. We have a responsibility to take charge of our lives.

In this guide, I offer you to **Take Charge and Stay Confident - 4 Actions to Immediately Increase Your Value, Impact and Happiness** ...that are 100% within YOUR control.

You are already doing great things for your clients, your organizations, your community, your family - and let's take a look at how you can use your powerful leadership skills for YOU!



Kathryn R. Martin works with leaders, entrepreneurs and organizations to leverage moments of change into opportunities for growth and success. She is an expert Interim Leader; helping to create empowered and strategic transitions. Her coaching, workshops, consulting, writing and speaking engagements offer a unique blend of insight, acumen and practical advice based upon over 25 years of hands-on knowledge. As Vice President at Arts Consulting Group, Inc. (ACG) from 2003-2015, Ms. Martin served in numerous Interim Executive Director roles; most recently as the Interim Executive Director of the Santa Barbara Symphony, Interim President & CEO of the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, and as Executive Director of the Linda Pace Foundation in San Antonio, Texas. She has personally supervised, trained and coached over 20 professional Interim leaders placed in arts and culture organizations across the United States.

Take Charge and Stay Confident - 4 Actions to Immediately Increase Your Value, Impact and Happiness

1. View the glass as "half empty" (just for a little bit)!

Before we can create specific strategies and choose the specific embodied actions that will support us, we must first identify – with precise clarity - what we want.

If you recently made a change to leave a situation where you weren't happy, and are now realizing that there are now the same familiar dynamics in your *new* role, new relationship, new organization... it can be a sign that you didn't go "deep enough" on your goals and what you really wanted.

If you're finding yourself "stuck" and not moving out of where you are even if you've done a Vision Board or made New Year's resolutions, and if you have a list of "reasons" why something is not possible, practical or realistic... then stop beating yourself up about it, and try something different:

- Make a list of all the negative things that might occur if your goals are *not* achieved.
- What will the impact(s) be? To whom? To you, to your family, to your business, to your colleagues, to your community, to the world if you DON'T achieve your goals?
- Why does that negative impact even matter to you? How will you feel if you don't do what you know you want/need to do?

Then go back to what you said you want, add your list of negative (and positive) impacts when you accomplish that goal, and complete this statement:

- "I am choosing to (insert what you are going to do), so that I can (insert impact(s))!!"

By looking at the glass "half empty," we can often create the emotional leverage we need to move us out of neutral and into ACTION

2. Re-frame the “shoulds,” and test your “assumptions!”

There's a saying in the personal development industry that says “Stop shoulding all over yourself!”

“Shoulding” on ourselves is absolutely toxic to progress and growth, yet it can often be challenging to identify; often hidden in admirable qualities of being responsible, practical, and realistic.

Another version of “shoulds” are the assumptions we make - which are often recognized as common knowledge of best practices, industry standards, success-models, wisdom from others, and rules.

These pre-conceived assumptions or accepted practices can actually be completely **opposite** of what is true for **us** and can be the very things that are holding us back.

Do any of these sound familiar?

“I should stay with my current job for at least three years, otherwise my resume will look like I've moved around too much.”

“I should keep working full time when I have children because if I don't, I won't be able to get back into the workforce at the level I want.”

“I should take the job that pays more, has a better title.”

“I shouldn't expect to raise as many contributions this year because the economy is still unstable and people are not making donations like they used to.”

“I should get additional training, more experience, before I...”

“I should wait until...”

And, “I should know better, I should have done better, I should have listened to the advice,” ... etc., etc.



Consider these questions to help you move forward:

- What are your “reasons” for not being able to achieve your goals, or feeling like you need to wait, or do more first? Write them down.
- What are the internal and external forces that are preventing you from creating the life and work that you want? Write them down.
- Look at your lists.

Now what? If, by following Step #1 of this guide, you have clarity that – based upon impact – what you want is important...do you give up?

Or do you become “irresponsible” and ignore conventional wisdom? No, to both!

- What are the “should’s” and the “assumptions” in your list? Ask yourself: “What if... the complete opposite is true of each of my assumptions? What would I do *then*?” The exciting, complicated, powerful dynamic of this work is that we get to choose how we frame things, which in turn creates new reactions.

Again, challenging ourselves can be... challenging. Start this process and see what you notice and observe as you make your lists.

3. Take off your blinders! Reveal and acknowledge the common threads that have existed in all your (or your organization's) actions over the years.

By nature, we tend to approach our work and lives in a series of projects, events, goals and deadlines. In interviews and networking events we tend to speak in terms of titles, job roles, budget sizes.

This “works,” until it doesn't.

Have you begun to notice that even when you're closing out a major project or a successful year, you seem to:

- feel empty
- feel like you're losing the desire to “do it all over again” next year
- find that you are not getting the promotions or new jobs you are seeking,
- find you are having to create new programs or other “shiny” things in order to get the attention of your organization's supporters?



If you answered, “yes” to any of these it may be time for you to regain some clarity on the larger context, your strategic trajectory, what you stand for (and - in Action #4 – it may be time to start sharing it with others).

In his keynotes on the *Art of Possibility*, Benjamin Zander demonstrates on the piano the positive impact of creating the “longer line.”

Like a beginning piano student playing every single beat of a measure with equal emphasis, we can often move through our fiscal years, artistic seasons, our career and our lives as a series of individual events.

Our work and lives become tedious, monotonous, we go on auto-pilot. Or we focus on so many things that it becomes overwhelming, stressful, or confusing.

Now – without changing a thing – when we identify an overarching context, or purpose, or trajectory that ties everything together, things get a lot more interesting and full of life!

When we look at what we've done in the past, what we are doing now, and what we want to do... and *why* ...magic happens; both for an organization and for us as individuals.

Like an *accomplished* pianist playing a Beethoven sonata, a beautiful arc is created.

This “longer line” can carry us with grace over all the individual beats, measures, projects, jobs, budget cycles, and key relationships to something that makes sense. The longer line is unique, and is something of beauty and movement and purpose, rather than just a series of individual events and transactions.

Creating this “longer line” can guide us, help in decision making, and shift how we feel about our current situation, without needing to do anything *first*, or needing anything or anyone to change!

This can help provide a spring in your step in your current job, provide important context and clarity on what you want in the *next* chapter, and it can help create a network of people around you who are drawn to what you stand for and will want to help you achieve it.

From the vantage point of hindsight:

- Look at your resume. What are the common threads in terms of impact, and your “whys?”
- Look at your business and/or your family, look at your projects, initiatives and programming. When you successfully completed all those different projects or activities, what were the common threads (in terms of impact and your “why”)?
- Look at the kinds of problems you have solved over the years. How did you solve them, and why did you choose to solve them? What are the common threads of your choices?
- Are you attracted to causes? Which ones and why?

4. Claim your crown. Take responsibility.

As you review the thoughts that came up in Actions 1, 2 and 3, now think about how you can *communicate* that overarching context.

While there are many tools to help create a vision statement or an elevator speech, the idea here is to take charge of what you want people to know and remember about you.

Please don't make people guess, and then be disappointed when they don't seem to understand you, or you don't end up getting what you want. You have control of this. Own it!



Write an empowering sound byte(s) about yourself.

I counsel my 1:1 Coaching clients to think in terms of a hierarchy of statements as they work towards commemorating the insights gained in Action 3.

We normally communicate in the “transactional” statements – and that is a good place to start.

Here are some examples of transactional statements:

- I'm tired and frustrated. My Board is dysfunctional. I'm not appreciated. **I want a new job, in a better organization.**
- This season we are presenting over 35 events! Tickets are on sale! We need your support to balance our budget! **Donate today!**
- Hello, I'm Bill, Development Director of Acme Non-Profit. I'm seeking new opportunities, and am **looking for an Executive Director job, in an organization with a budget of \$3M.**

Now – while these statements may be true... how many other people and organizations in the world can say that exact same thing? You are leaving so much on the table! You are unique! You have a purpose. Claim it. Communicate it.

Instead, keep going “up” to communicate the broader context, the longer arc.

Let's keep using Bill as an example.

- NORMAL but “EMPTY” language: “Hello, I’m Bill, Development Director of Acme Non-Profit. I’m looking to make a change, and apply for an Executive Director job. I have successfully managed contributed revenue budgets of \$2M. ”
- SHOULD’s and ASSUMPTIONS language: “I’ve never been an Executive Director, I should get more experience first, I will have to move, openings are few and far between.”
- PURPOSE-FUL language: “Hello, I’m Bill...
 - ...I am a seasoned fundraiser, and am looking to expand upon this experience to create larger impact within a purpose-driven organization.”
 - ... For my entire career I’ve been moved and inspired by learning what motivates people and what they value - and then being knowledgeable about what programs and opportunities might be a good match for them to contribute their time and financial resources to.”
 - ... Connecting people with a cause that they believe in inspires me to make a difference.
 - ... I am a champion for creating teams of people moving towards a common goal of impact.
 - ...This is such an exciting time for me as I build upon my past successes and find ways to help people match their passion to a purpose that makes a difference in our community/our world!

Keep going until you can’t go any “higher,” and... you smile! *These statements are meant to capture your unique-ness, what you “stand for,” and under which all your activities can occur (“the longer line”).*

You’ll know it when you have it. And then THAT is what you can lead with – in networking situations, job interviews, board and staff meetings, press releases announcing your recent appointment or even dating sites!

You can also look at this process in reverse. I’ll use myself as an example:

My overarching context: This is such an exciting time as I dedicate my time to doing things that make my *heart sing!*

- “Under” that: I help purpose-driven leaders achieve the impact they envision.
- Under that: I help organizations and individuals create and leverage change and move purposefully through times of transition.
- Under that: I am a professional interim leader, transitions & turn-around expert, a leadership coach, consultant, speaker and trainer.

Conclusion

You have already done so much, made a difference in the lives around you!

It's your job to know what that is, why that is, and to find the common threads of your life.

It's your job to identify the momentum that you have, and where and what you are aiming FOR (in terms of impact)...and, why.

It's your job to be able to have clarity on this so you can know it and communicate it – to yourself and to others... so that you can then strategically choose the embodied actions to live in your purpose.

As part of your process, use these 4 Actions as a way to begin increasing your impact, success, value, recognition and your happiness and overall wellness in either your current situation/leadership role – or in order to take charge and embark on a new chapter.

The next time you experience resistance about moving yourself or your organization to the next level, revisit these 4 key Actions again. Chances are, you'll gain greater insight and thus be able to create a strategy... and crack open that little speck of inspiration that you can build upon.

Once the resistance has cracks in its foundation, it's only a matter of time before the floodgates of creativity are opened for you, your best next steps become crystal clear, and you see that by setting a clear intention, you are able to take charge and get what you want - really want.

To Your Success

Kathryn