



ACTIVE TRANSFORMATION

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS AND LIFE

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with Val Tripi

Active Transformation
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INTRODUCTION

Before You Begin

Congratulations -- you have an extremely valuable tool at your fingertips! If the concepts of “active transformation” or “authentic leadership” are new to you – get ready to start an incredibly enlightening and enriching journey. If you’re already on this path, be prepared to take a leap forward and learn how you as a leader can actively influence the lives of those around you, while you live an intentional and well-integrated life. In other words, be prepared to transform. This book can be used in several ways -- alone, in a group setting or as a precursor to coaching or leadership consulting. Just pick the way that fits best with your current situation.

Who Should Use this Book?

Anyone who wants to develop, sharpen or expand their leadership skills will find the contents of this book helpful. This transformation process can be of particular benefit to:

- Emerging and aspiring leaders who need to broaden their value and increase their capacity to lead change.
- Leaders in transition who are seeking renewal, new values, new vision and guiding principles.
- Those experienced leaders wanting to enhance their skills. Hard work got them to this point -- now it’s time to explore the values and choices that will take them to a higher level.
- Anyone seeking a way to have an honest conversation with themselves and others about how to elevate their leadership abilities and their confidence in those abilities.

What You’ll Need

To make the experience as meaningful as possible, it’s essential to capture your thoughts and take notes as you progress through this book. That’s the purpose of the Active Transformation journal I’ve paired with this book—so, make sure you use it! Each time you see one of these:



. . . pull your journal out and start writing. The process you'll follow is quite reflective in nature, and sometimes breakthroughs in thinking will occur at unexpected times, so keep that journal close and write (even random thoughts) as they come to mind.

Truths

To begin, I'm offering you some wisdom-filled nuggets found to be key to the success of many leaders that I have coached or worked with over the years. Simply reading and applying them is well worth the price of this book. In short, I am a shameless collector of effective ideas and tactics and I love to share them.

Be prepared to take a leap forward and learn how you as a leader can truly influence the lives of those around you. . .

Simple Truths

- *Engage a coach or mentor to hold you accountable: you can't generate accountability within others if you've never had the experience of being accountable to someone else.*
- *Coaching and leading are experiential adventures; if you have had the experience of effective coaching or leadership generated within you, it's easier to generate that same experience in someone else.*
- *People don't like to be "in the dark" about anything. You can make requests as a leader, but if the people you depend on to implement don't understand why your request is important, they'll resist change.*
- *To be an effective leader, you need to learn to make good requests and sell people on the "why." This is the only thing that will shed light on their "darkness."*
- *Self-awareness is essential. To be a game-changer, you must be acutely aware of your own thoughts and motivations while you maintain a "soft grip" on what you consider to be truth.*
- *Delegating must happen. No effective leader stands alone. The ability to entrust the immediate, critical objectives of the present moment to the hands of well-skilled others is the essence of delegation.*

- *Growth is at the core of everything: to grow your business, you must grow yourself and your people. To grow as a leader, you have to connect to what you value in a new future so strongly that it will compel you to change. You need to commit yourself 100% to your new future. And I define commit as simply “doing whatever it takes.”*

THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

If you're going to build any sort of solid, lasting structure, where would you start? Hopefully, your first thought was the foundation. Regardless of what you're building, if the base isn't strong, placed on firm ground and constructed in an orderly fashion, don't bank on it lasting. It takes what it takes to do it right, and shortcuts never pay off over the long haul.

This book will help you build a solid, lasting foundation for transformation and authentic leadership in your business and life. It's important that we start at the beginning and create the building blocks that will support your transition. Along the way, you'll deepen the understanding of yourself. This is Job One for any leader -- to know yourself. And you must be up for this journey as a lifelong adventure. Your role is to learn and master the tools and perspective you'll need to do a quality job. My role is like a supervisor or foreman – I'm here to oversee and keep you on track while you do the work.

This is Job One for any leader -- to know yourself.

What Do I Mean by Transformation?

Literally, it means to “*change in form, appearance, nature or character.*” In verb form, it means “*to metamorphose.*” My process for transformation came about very organically through years of coaching and training work. Some of this work was formal coaching experience; and some of it took place as heart-to-heart conversations with my friends, co-workers and family. Regardless of who I was interacting with, or how, I found that the basic context I used was the same.

I consistently asked the same types of questions and wound up, through one path or another, going through the same steps. After a while, I sensed there was a pattern, but it didn't fall together as an actual approach until I asked a trusted colleague to listen to me describe how I was working with people -- and to reflect back to me what she heard and “saw.” In response she drew a simple diagram which became the seed of my Transformation Model. Through additional work and refinement, that diagram became the model which is now the touchstone of my coaching work.

This example of “asking for support” and feedback from others is part of the active transformative process you can create for yourself and others. It is a sign of strength and not weakness. Asking for support has certainly helped me every time I’ve stopped to reflect on *how* I can move through a new chapter of life and business. Each time I ask...it never fails that people show up.

Asking for support is a sign of strength and not weakness.

This is what the Transformation Model looks like. It’s the primary tool you’ll use to actively guide your process of transformation. Just think of it as a directional map. There are four steps that encompass the central core. Follow them faithfully and you’ll not only build a solid foundation for your transformation, but you will have a map for the journey forward. This model is a collection of my learning and experience; it has stood the test of time and is informed by practice. It is not just a theory. It is practical, proven and straightforward. You can use this model to effectively coach and deepen discovery.

The Heartwood Group Transformation Model



What to Expect

The following chart summarizes what you can expect as you go through each step.

What Happens in Each Step			
			
1. CLARITY	2. EFFECTIVENESS	3. EXECUTION	4. CONNECTION
Clarify, bolster or establish desired culture and processes to embrace significant change and create foundation for transformation	Build the best plan for transformation based on strategic thinking and grounded assessments. Build a plan that captures Values, Vision, and Timelines	Implement professional practices that become part of your DNA. Make development and progress your goal to ensure sustained implementation of the vision	Accountability is the outcome of staying involved and focused on agreed milestones
Questions You'll be Asking During Each Step			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What needs to change, improve, or be created? ■ Why is it important now? ■ Is it Developmental or Performance related? ■ Are my values clear and consistent with my vision? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is the greatest priority? ■ What is most important to do right now to move things forward? ■ What has to happen to make the goals a reality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How will I check in on progress as needed? ■ How will I make my plan the centerpiece of focused conversations? ■ How will I create accountability? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are the results I'm getting aligned with my commitments? ■ Is this still valid or do I need to adjust? ■ Where am I succeeding and where am I falling short?

At the Core

There is a circular core in the middle of the Transformation Model that grounds the steps. This core will drive everything you do in your active transformation so it must be solid. You make it solid by becoming intimately acquainted with your values, using them to create your vision, and devising milestones to mark your progress. You'll learn how to create each component in this "equation" as you work through this book.

$$\textit{Your Values} + \textit{Vision} + \textit{Milestones} = \textit{TRANSFORMATION}$$

Start Where You Are – the Process You'll Follow

- ✓ Your transformation journey starts with some "prep" work to introduce and reinforce several key concepts. This will help you gain perspective before you launch into the steps. There is a glossary of terms at the end of this book to help you with terms that may be new or unfamiliar to you.
- ✓ After that, there are chapters devoted to working a specific step. I'll share some stories and narrative based on my experience, and you'll be asked to do self-assessments and other reflective work. Don't overthink your responses – there are no right or wrong answers; just go with what comes to mind. Answer all the questions and do your best to be open to new perspectives that may arise. You will be challenging yourself throughout this process – and likely looking at some things through unfamiliar filters. Change can feel strange or be uncomfortable – don't let that deter you - it's the way to growth.
- ✓ At points in each chapter I'll ask you to pause and reflect. Take time to check in with your thoughts and write what comes to mind. You'll return to these notes later, as your transformation journey continues.

About Reflection

Reflection is essential to transformation. It not only gives you more awareness of newly formed perspectives, but it helps you to "lock in" learning. No reflection -- no transformation. When you allow yourself to go deeper you stretch yourself in very meaningful ways. You might strengthen some beliefs you've held for a very long time. You may also graciously and with courage let go of some beliefs. Don't be surprised if deep emotions come up through this journey. Experience using this model has proven that the most surprising insights are really your own truths and dreams you've held hostage for some time. Give yourself permission to explore the edges of ideas and dreams. Let them come out into the daylight of possibilities.

Invest some time in reflective practices. You will develop a greater awareness of reality and the ability to gain access to truth, intuition, and personal trust. The first step is to schedule time with yourself -- consider it essential to your well-being -- because it is! Use a journal dedicated specifically to your reflections and develop the habit of writing in it regularly. This is not a diary of how you spent your day -- it's writing down the thoughts, feelings and observations that come up as you reflect. You might start yourself off with a question or set of questions. Here are some examples.

Questions for Reflection

- *What's getting my attention lately?*
- *What have I been struggling to say yes or no to in my life or work?*
- *What am I most proud of in my life?*
- *What have I left undone for too long?*

Understand that asking yourself provocative questions will yield valuable reflection. Coaches can help you with this as well.

You may also choose to do some contemplative reading. This is something that is particularly helpful to me. Books differ based on individual preference, mood, or stage of life. I have a "Friday Men's Group" that has lessons and readings that really get me thinking about things. Certain authors resonate with me very deeply, and I appreciate others who provoke thoughts that I don't normally think on my own.

Other examples of reflective practices include a "sitting" practice (quiet reflection -- not to be confused with meditation), genuinely relaxing vacation/holiday time, hobbies you love, yoga and other exercise.

Reflection allows you greater awareness of reality and the ability to gain access to truth, intuition, and personal trust.

Evolve your relationships (deepen healthy ones, nurture new ones, leave toxic ones) because we are impacted by our peeps. For me, my greatest source of peace and perspective is from my relationship with Christ.

If it's your first time working through the model, I recommend you follow each chapter in sequence to build your solid foundation. Later, return to any step you want to explore further. This is an iterative process -- you'll find that through time some of your responses and reactions may change. That's good -- transformation is a constant

process of renewal!

Risk and Transformation

You may have been saying “no” to your best future for a long time – you just didn’t know it. Taking risk is a part of transforming yourself. Risk and passion are uniquely connected to each other. You may need to take a risk to find what you’re truly passionate about. Why? Because how would you know for sure until you test drive a different adventure? Risk will reveal passion. Conversely, you may have a passion you haven’t allowed yourself to follow with commitment because you didn’t want to risk the future. Risk and passion are not separate, they are intertwined.

Transforming can be hindered by the reluctance to take risks. I’ve met many leaders who fancied themselves as risk takers. With further inquiry and clarity they discovered it was an espoused behavior only – nothing was put into practice. They had file folders full of great, untried ideas. Risk is always associated with the value it creates. Risking your entire life savings when it’s just a few hundred dollars is no different than risking it when it is millions of dollars. Your entire life savings is still your entire life savings. Yet somehow the increased value creates a greater sense of risk. Sometimes risk comes with a conscious choice and sometimes not. Risk ultimately is simply a concept and is based on our interpretation. We often don’t look at the shadow side of not taking a risk to transform. That is, what will not be happening because I *didn’t* do something? We mostly focus on what will happen if we do something. Be aware that risk is a two-sided coin.

Risk and passion are not separate, they are intertwined.

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