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A New Mindset

It is often said that without the right mindset, you will not achieve success. Many companies want their employees to adopt a more open attitude or a customer-first mindset. Leaders have a responsibility to help employees change their mindset when required — however, a new mindset does not happen overnight. According to behavioral psychologists, it takes a minimum of 21 days. The stories in the first chapter are offered as an inspiration, to be a first step towards understanding the importance of having the right mindset.

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."

-ANATOLE FRANCE, WRITER

Magic Stone

An old man has been traveling for many days through India, when he arrives at a village. In need of refreshment, he approaches a hut and knocks on the door.

The door opens and he asks the owner, "I have been traveling for many days. Could you spare me some food and water?"

The owner looks at the old man in his stained, tattered clothes and says, "I have nothing to spare. Be on your way!"

The old man knocks on the door of the next hut and asks for food and drink but again the door is shut in his face.

He then approaches a third hut and knocks. A woman answers and the old man can see children playing inside. He asks the woman for food and drink and she replies, "How can I feed you when I hardly have enough for my own children?"

The old man sees in her eyes that she really does want to help him and that she has a good heart. He asks her, "Do you have a cauldron?"

"Yes, of course," she replies.

"Well, in my pouch I have ... a magic stone. If we fill the cauldron with water and drop in the magic stone, then we can make a pot of magic soup."

The woman is unsure about the old man but decides to do as he asks. They go into the back courtyard and put the cauldron on the fire. The old man then slowly reaches into his pouch and carefully drops the magic stone into the cauldron. The stone drops to the bottom. He then takes the wooden spoon and tastes the soup. He looks at the woman and says, "It tastes good but it needs something else. Do you have any carrots?"

The woman has a few and she brings them and adds them to the soup. The old man tastes it again but it is still not right. "Do you have any potatoes?" he asks.

The woman looks at the old man and says, "I have not seen potatoes in weeks." By now a few people from the village, who share the courtyard, have gathered around to find out who the old man is and what's going on.

Another woman overhears the request and says, "I have potatoes." She fetches them from her hut and adds the potatoes to the cauldron.

The old man then tastes the soup again but is still not satisfied. "It needs some, some ... onion," he says. Another villager says, "I have an onion." She brings it out and adds it to the cauldron. This goes on for a while with each villager adding something else to the soup.

Finally the old man tastes the soup and with a smile proclaims it perfect. He passes the spoon to the woman who first helped him. She tastes the soup and agrees it's delicious. She passes the spoon around and everyone starts to enjoy the soup. She then turns around to thank the old man only to find him ... gone!

That day the small village learned a very important lesson. Each hut on their own struggled to survive, but when they shared their resources, everyone benefited.

A little extra ...

The caliber of the people dictates the caliber of the results.

Confucius

Confucius was traveling through a desert with his disciples. They were tired and thirsty. One of the disciples came across a small puddle of water hidden among some rocks. Immediately he scooped some with his rice bowl and offered the water to his Master. Confucius took the rice bowl and went to drink from the bowl. As the bowl touched his lips, he felt all eyes of his disciples watching him.

Instead he poured the water onto the ground saying, "It would be too little for all and too much for one. Let us continue on our walk."

As a leader, Confucius could not drink the water and allow his disciples to suffer. Neither could he pass the water around, as there was not enough for all. It was therefore better to treat everyone as an equal — that is the mark of a good leader.

A little extra ...

In 1980 Ted Turner ignored market research and naysayers, who predicted a 24-hour news network would not survive, and started Cable News Network - CNN.

Lessons from Geese

Have you ever watched geese in flight and wondered why they fly in a 'V' formation and why one side of the 'V' is longer than the other?

The reason is that geese are able to fly 71% further in a 'V' formation. The geese, flying in formation, honk to encourage the leading goose to keep up the speed. When the leading goose tires, another goose will take the lead.

As each goose flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the goose immediately behind it. When a goose starts to fly out of formation, it will quickly feel the drag and resistance of flying alone and will fly back into the 'V' formation to enjoy the lifting power of the birds in front.

When a goose falls sick, two other geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it.

A little extra ...

Antarctica is the coldest, windiest place on Earth. Penguins will stand on the ice breeding their chicks, huddled together to keep warm. The outermost row of penguins shuffles slowly but continuously sideways so that eventually they all get a turn at being sheltered from the cold winds by the rest of the group.

- BRENDAN ATKINS

Al Kuwait

The freighter "Al Kuwait" sank in Kuwait Harbor in 1964. Its cargo of 6,000 drowned sheep, if left to rot, would have caused a serious health threat because the harbor was also a source of drinking water. Somehow the freighter had to be raised to the surface without the ship breaking up or the cargo breaking free.

A Danish engineer came up with a solution. He pumped 27 million ping-pong balls into the ship's hull and successfully raised the freighter without any damage.

This amazing solution came to him after reading a Donald Duck comic book. In the story, someone had sunk Donald's boat and they used ping-pong balls to bring it to the surface!

You never know where your next solution to a problem will come from, so think laterally as much as logically.

A little extra ...

A man named George Thomas was frustrated in his search for an effective way for people to apply deodorant, until he realized he was holding the answer right in his hand! George borrowed the concept of the ballpoint pen and created roll-on deodorant.

Hannibal Crosses the Alps

The formidable challenge at hand for Hannibal, a leader who set out to achieve whatever he put his mind to, was to conquer Italy. At the time, he was in Spain and had to conquer the Roman army, cross the Pyrenees, fight his way across southern France and then cross the Alps.

Hannibal first won a victory against the Roman army by approaching them from the north while they were expecting him to attack from the south. He led his army across a river on pontoons to avoid the Roman army and was able to circle his enemy from behind.

He then had to overcome the Alps — not just the arduous mountain range, but also the local tribes who fought anyone entering the mountains. Hannibal marched on undeterred and arrived in Italy with his men and the elephants to win another famous victory.

Hannibal would let nothing stand in his way. What self-defeating doubts do you have that stop you from achieving what you want to do?

A little extra ...

In 1980, Sony began distributing the Walkman because Akio Morita noticed that young people liked listening to music wherever they went. Morita decided that no market research was necessary because, "The public does not know what is possible. We do."

The Myth of Technology

Two men were passing through Customs at an airport. The first, a Japanese, had two large suitcases and the other, a Briton, was helping him move them towards the Customs officer when the Japanese man's wristwatch started to beep. He listened to the message and talked into a miniature telephone on his watch. The Briton was amazed and offered the man \$5,000 for his watch. The Japanese man, however, was not selling.

The Briton continued to help the Japanese man push his heavy bags forward and a few seconds later the watch beeped again. This time the man opened the watch to receive an email on a small screen and used the tiny computer keyboard on the watch to reply to the message. The Briton watched in awe and offered him \$25,000 for the watch. Again, he was told the watch was not for sale. Once again, the Briton helped push the enormous bags forward.

The watch beeped a third time and out came a fax. The Briton, now determined to have the watch, upped the bid to \$300,000. The Japanese asked if he had the money and the Briton wrote a check on the spot. The Japanese man processed the check on his watch and transferred the money to his Swiss bank account. He took off the watch, handed it to the Briton and walked away.

"Wait," the Briton shouted. "You've forgotten your luggage."

"Those aren't my bags," the Japanese man shouted back. "Those are the batteries for your watch!"

How often in business do we hear or see a good idea and immediately adopt it without understanding how it really works? During the Internet boom, CEOs who did not immediately transform their companies into online businesses were considered old-fashioned, stubborn and even a threat to their companies' survival. Only three years later, the same CEOs were being regarded as strategic thinkers, visionaries, and even geniuses for waiting to understand the Internet better.

A little extra ...

Two men look out from behind prison bars. One sees mud, the other sees stars.

Ford's V8 Engine

Henry Ford wanted to build an engine that would have eight cylinders all in one block. The design plans were drawn up, but his engineers unanimously agreed that such an engine could never be built.

At Ford's insistence, and to keep their jobs, his engineers set out to build the engine anyway.

Six months later they reported that no solution was in sight. Ford sent them back to the construction room. Another six months went by without success, and again the engineers were sent back by Ford. They still believed it was impossible to construct the engine, but, as if by magic, this time they found the solution. Ford's determination had driven the engineers to find success.

Ford was not an educated man in academic terms, but he was strong in many other areas, determination being one of them.

A little extra ...

During the Great Depression, the Kraft Company tried to market a low-priced cheddar cheese powder without success. A St. Louis sales rep, looking to unload his allotment of cheese powder, added individual packages of it to boxes of macaroni. He then offered grocers the opportunity to sell the combo as one product, which he called Kraft dinner. The classic dish, Macaroni & Cheese was born.

Lessons from a Garage

Many believe that to start a company, you need capital for an office, furniture and equipment. Yet many famous companies and people have started from their garages.

Henry Ford started tinkering with a prototype engine for the horseless carriage in a friend's garage at 58 Bagley Street, Detroit.

Walt Disney started making cartoons almost as soon as he arrived in Los Angeles in 1923. He was staying with his uncle and filmed the cartoons in his uncle's garage.

One of the most famous garage start-up companies is that of the two gentlemen who rented a garage in 1938 at 237 Addison Avenue, Palo Alto. When they first started, they had no idea what the company was going to do; they just thought it would be fun to start a company. They started to produce audio oscillators and Hewlett-Packard was born. The garage is known as "the birthplace of Silicon Valley."

More recently, in 1975, Steve Jobs and Stephen Wozniak started Apple Computers in Jobs' garage.

A little extra ...

"Happiness is not wanting what you don't have, but appreciating what you do have."

- DALAI LAMA

Colonel Sanders

Colonel Harland Sanders is famous for starting Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). It was his can-do attitude and belief in himself that built the company.

Harland Sanders was in his sixties when he realized that his recipe for frying chicken was good enough to open up a fried chicken restaurant. However, he was living on \$105 social security checks and had no money to start a business. He decided to find an established restaurant and sell them his wonderful recipe for fried chicken. He packed his suitcase and started off in his car in search of the restaurant. At each restaurant he came to, he would cook the chicken for the restaurant owner. If they liked it, he would sell them the recipe - one nickel for each chicken they sold.

Colonel Sanders had just enough money for fuel but not enough to feed himself. But he knew his recipe was good and his determination drove him on. He went from restaurant to restaurant, frying his chicken for the owner and surviving on any leftovers.

After 12 years he had more than 600 franchised restaurants and he sold the business for \$2 million. He continued to work with the new owners for many years as his personal endorsement of the product he created.

Do you passionately believe in your dream? Success does not come from paying lip service to your goals, but by being driven, determined and dogmatic in its pursuit.

A little extra ...

Clarence Crane, a chocolate dealer, sold peppermints during the summer when chocolate sales declined. He had the mints pressed into shape by a local pill manufacturer. In 1912 the machine malfunctioned and pressed out peppermint rings instead of solid mints. Instead of complaining about deformed mints, Crane knew he had a unique product, which he called Life Savers.

Shoe Salesmen

An American shoe salesman is sent on a two-week mission to an underdeveloped country to see if there is any potential business in the region. The salesman flies around for two weeks and then returns home to inform his boss, "Boss, there is no opportunity for us — they don't wear shoes there!"

The boss is a careful businessman and decides to send a second salesman to the same region. The second salesman goes on the same two-week trip. On his return, he rushes straight from the airport to the office. He barges into his boss's office and with bubbling excitement says, "Boss, what a wonderful opportunity to sell shoes — no one there is wearing them yet!"

People perceive things in different ways — and your perception is highly dependent on your attitude.

A little extra ...

Siemens' quality motto says: "Quality is when our customers come back and our products do not."

Thomas Edison

In 1878, Edison created his prototype light bulb, which was a thin strip of paper attached to wires. The whole thing was enclosed in a vacuum inside a glass bulb. When the power was turned on, the paper 'filament' heated up and glowed. The only problem was that the paper burnt out very quickly.

After thousands of attempts at designing a workable electric light bulb, Edison's student, Lewis Latimer, said, "We'll never succeed!" Edison, forever the optimist, replied, "We have found 999 ways not to make the light bulb, so we are one step closer." Shortly thereafter Latimer found the right material for the filament — a carbonized cotton thread.

Edison is quoted as saying:

- 1. Always be interested in what you undertake.*
- 2. Don't mind the clock but keep at it and let nature indicate the necessity of the rest.*
- 3. Failures, so called, are but finger posts pointing out the right direction to those who are willing to learn.*
- 4. Hard work and a general interest in everything that makes for human progress will make men and women more valuable and acceptable to themselves and to the world.*

A little extra ...

One morning, as Edison approached his factory, he saw that it was on fire. One of his students came running over and asked, "What shall we do? The factory is burned to the ground, we have no more money and no insurance!" Edison paused for a second and then said to his student, "What a wonderful opportunity to rebuild the factory the way we want it!"

The Wedding Portrait

Many of us set out to make changes in our lives, such as losing weight, giving up smoking, spending more time with the kids, being a better leader, etc. Yet we fail more often than succeed. Those who succeed associate more pleasure than pain with the change. The following story exemplifies this message.

Imagine the situation: the bride-to-be is having afternoon tea with her friends two weeks before the wedding. The waiter brings the dessert trolley over. He removes the cover to reveal the chocolate cake, the cream éclairs, the double-layered strawberry sponge and asks, "Would you care for dessert?"

Though her head is nodding yes, she manages to say, "No, thank you," to the waiter. How does she manage to resist the temptation? It is because she is thinking of her wedding portrait.

She is thinking of the moment when all her family and friends hear the celebrant pronounce them married. She is thinking of her husband walking her back up the aisle towards the large wooden mahogany doors and as the doors open, there waiting outside is the photographer. The photographer who is going to take the wedding portrait that is going to sit on their television set for the rest of their lives! The wedding photo that their friends will look at. The wedding photo that the whole family will ask to see. The wedding photo that

a few years later the children will look at and say, "Mummy, you were so beautiful on your wedding day!" The wedding photo that later still the grandchildren will see and say, "Grandma, were you really that thin once?"

It is these thoughts that allow our bride to say no to the waiter.

This story illustrates what it takes to make changes. You must associate more pleasure than pain with the change you are making. In psychology, this is called hedonism. In Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), it is referred to as the pain-pleasure principle. The bride-to-be associates more pleasure with looking slim in the wedding photo than she associates with the pain of missing out on a delicious but fattening dessert.

A little extra ...

In 1950, Frank McNamara forgot his cash one evening when he went out to eat, causing him to develop the first credit card, the Diners Club Card.

Socrates on Success

A man is walking in search of Mount Olympus. On his journey he meets Socrates and asks him for directions. Socrates replies, "If you really want to get to Mount Olympus, just make sure every step you take is in that direction."

A little extra ...

The Chinese word for "crisis" is made up of two characters: danger and opportunity.

Disney and the Bank Loan

When Walt Disney was starting up his business, like so many other entrepreneurs, he needed a loan. The first few banks he visited turned him down, but Disney believed in himself and his concept enough to keep trying. He got dressed up again and went to another dozen banks, but they turned him down too. He visited another dozen banks, all with the same result. In all, Disney visited 405 banks without success.

It was only at the 406th bank that he finally received a loan. Can you imagine growing up without Mickey Mouse? Disney went on to win 48 Academy Awards and 7 Emmys. As Disney said himself, "Get a good idea and stay with it. Do it and work it until it's done and done right."

A little extra ...

Ninety-one percent of CEOs surveyed agreed"... the biggest challenge in TQM (Total Quality Management) involved changing human behavior, not mastering technical skills."

-TODAY (US) (26 JULY 1993)

A Bird in the Hand

An old guru with a long, white beard lives high in the mountains and is renowned throughout the valley for his wisdom. One day two young men decide to test the guru's wisdom by hiding a small bird behind their backs and then asking the guru whether the bird was dead or alive. If he says the bird is dead, they will open their hands and let the bird fly away. If he says the bird is alive, they will squeeze their hands to kill it. Either way, the guru will be wrong.

They catch a small bird in the forest and then climb the mountain in search of the guru. When they find him, they stand before him and ask, "Behind our back we have a small bird, is the bird dead or alive?"

The guru looks down at the ground for a few minutes, then slowly he raises his head and says, "Whether the bird lives or dies is up to you."

The moral is that whether or not you change is up to you - the decision is in your hands.

A little extra ...

Nokia, a name now synonymous with mobile phones, was not always in the communications business - it used to sell rubber boots! Realizing that they were in a sunset industry, however, Nokia reinvented itself in a few years with a new strategy.

The Unsolvable Math Problem

A student falls asleep during his math lecture. He wakes up just as the lecture ends and sees two problems on the blackboard. Assuming that they are the homework questions for next week, he quickly scribbles them down. That night he works on the first problem. It's tough and it takes him a few days before he finally solves it. He then starts on the second problem, but in the end concedes that he cannot solve it.

At the end of the next lecture he approaches the professor and explains how he could not finish the homework from last week. The lecturer looks at the student and asks him what homework he is referring to. The student shows the lecturer the two problems.

Amazed, the lecturer checks the student's solution to the first problem and ascertains that it was done correctly.

It turned out that the two problems on the board were unsolvable mathematical enigmas that had baffled the greatest minds for years. Now, if the student had been awake and heard that the problems were unsolvable, do you think he would have even tried?

A little extra ...

In 1952, Kemmons Wilson built the first mid-priced Holiday Inn in Memphis, Tennessee because he and his family were disappointed by the expensive and/or dirty motels they encountered on holiday.

Bannister and the Golden Mile

Humans believed for hundreds of years that it was physically impossible to run a mile in less than four minutes. The British Olympic coach in 1903 is quoted as saying, "The mile record is 4 minutes 12.75 seconds. This record will never be broken."

Yet on 6th May 1954, Roger Bannister proved the whole world wrong and broke the 'miracle mile'.

Most have heard this story before but not many know that within thirty days of Bannister breaking the barrier, 32 men had run a sub-four-minute mile and within one year, 317 had achieved the same goal. John Walker, a New Zealander, has amazingly run more than 120 four-minute miles.

And they said it couldn't be done!

A little extra ...

A chemist dropped a flask on the floor containing a liquid plastic substance. When he tried to pick up the pieces he noticed they stuck together. The result of this accident was the invention of shatterproof glass.

The Water Carriers

Two men were responsible for carting water from the well for the whole village. The journey took half a day to get there and half a day to return with the full buckets back to the village.

One day a stranger asked what their responsibilities were. The first water carrier complained that he had to perform this tiring chore every day for the whole village. His job was tiring, hard and unappreciated.

The second water carrier explained that his role was critical to the survival of the village. He was entrusted by the elders of the village to provide the water that would refresh the children, wash the clothes and grow the crops.

A little extra ...

Winston Churchill was invited to give the graduation speech at Oxford University. He stepped onto the stage, looked out at the audience, paused and then said, "Never, never, never, never give up." He then sat down.

Creamed Frogs

Two frogs fell into a container of cream. The first frog, seeing that there was no footing for jumping out, simply gave up and died.

The thought of death did not appeal to the second frog. He started to swim around in search of some way out.

As the frog swam round and around, the cream started to thicken until it turned to butter. The frog was then able to jump out.

The answer will not always be before us; sometimes we need to start looking and keep swimming before we see it.

A little extra ...

Penicillin was discovered when Alexander Fleming was examining culture plates contaminated by mold. Under the microscope, he noticed islands of bacteria on the plates surrounded by clear spaces. On further examination, he found that the clear spaces were bacteria-free areas due to the mold, *Penicillium notatum*. This discovery led to the genesis of an antibiotic he named penicillin.

A Pillow of Feathers

Many salesmen display the characteristics of being competitive, but it must be within limits, as one young man found out the hard way.

The young man was renowned for competing fiercely in the company and for being determined to win at all costs. One year, his competitive nature got the better of him and he deeply disturbed and upset his colleagues. In his bid to be the number one performer, he bad-mouthed his colleagues in front of their customer. This crossed the line of what was acceptable company behavior. His colleagues heard about what he did and ostracized the young man.

The young man went to his boss to ask for guidance. His boss told him to go home and to empty a pillow of feathers into the wind and then collect in all the scattered feathers.

The young man returned the next day, realizing that the damage he had done rippled out across the company, and that he could not repair the damage completely, just as he could not recover all the feathers. He learned that in the future, he must be more considerate and conscious of the impact that his actions had on his colleagues.

A little extra ...

"If you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail."

-ABRAHAM MASLOW, PSYCHOLOGIST