



## GETTING UP, GETTING CLEAR: CONSCIOUSNESS

I once spent nearly three years hunting a deer I named Elvis. He was a savvy old buck who owned the woods on Timber Ridge Ranch, the northern Michigan property I've been blessed to hunt on for the better part of my life. Elvis truly was "the King"; the spread of massive antlers and the incredible bulk of his body put him in a different class from every other buck on the ranch. He and I crossed paths on several occasions, and I drew my bow once, but he never presented me with a clear shot. I can still remember every time he got away from me, and I'd like to say that he escaped my arrows through twists of fate and dumb luck. But the truth is, that bad boy outsmarted me. He was as familiar with his territory as he was with his heartbeat; he knew where he needed to go to eat, mate, and rest, and he knew the best ways to get there. His senses were on fire, so he didn't miss any sight, sound, or smell in the woods around him, and he knew *precisely* how to respond to any

potential danger (like me) that he might face. And while he did get lucky now and then, it was his own doing. As my mom would say, “Luck is at the side of the able navigator.”

My parents unlocked the door to a whole new world for me when they taught me to hunt and fish, and lessons like “the able navigator” were the key. Great hunters have to be great navigators, concerned with a whole lot more than just dodging hazards and getting around the next turn. They must imagine the entire journey they’re undertaking from the very beginning. They can’t plan that journey at ground level, or just plow ahead and “see what happens”; they have to form a big-picture understanding of the territory they’re traversing, and it must account for every data point that stands between them and their destination. That’s how they’re able to map out the safest, most direct route and find the best alternatives for pivoting around hazards and roadblocks that crop up along the way.

It took some time for me to really get Mom’s message. But I now know from experience that the people who have the most luck are the ones who do the best job of seeing the world around them through a panoramic lens. With that perspective, they can prepare to make the most of whatever comes their way. As a True Hunter, you’ll have luck along the way. But, just like any able navigator, you set yourself up to *be* lucky. You won’t have to hope for miracles if things start to go south.

True Hunters know that you have to look high before you look low when you're in The Hunt. You can't just hit the ground and start hacking your way through the undergrowth or follow every animal path or distant noise you hear in search of a trophy white-tail, and you can't let yourself be distracted by clashing egos and false alarms when you're tracking down critical issues in a tangled business environment. You'll waste all sorts of time chasing after shadows; and in the process, you'll drive away the game you're really after. Instead, you have to climb up into the tree stand; get above all of the noise and clutter of ego, assumptions, and conflict; and position yourself to gather as many data points as possible. Then you can get quiet, concentrate, and let all of your senses work together to form a much broader and deeper understanding of the territory in which you're hunting. You can plot out the best path forward, toward your target. You're present, aware, and alert to the world around you. That's *consciousness*: the first element of The Hunt method, and the most fundamental skill set you'll rely on in any pursuit.

In The Hunt, consciousness is a state of panoramic understanding in which your mind is neutral and your vision remains focused, no matter how crazy the action around you becomes. Your ego keeps its mouth shut and gives you the mental clarity you need to listen, observe, and assess. You feel steady and in control, even when that massive buck—or monster deal or irate client—is right in front of you. You can see far more from this elevated

perspective than you can when you're tangled in conflicting agendas or caught in the ego traps of shame or fear. Remaining above all of these allows you to scout out the clearest pathway through the false leads, brambles, predators, and pitfalls and on toward your short-term targets, your Desired Outcomes (DO), and your ultimate goals.

### **Climbing into the Tree Stand**

Don't tell me you've never fallen into this trap, because it gets us all at some point: You're desperate to find a solution to a burning issue *fast*. Your mind races over one idea after another until you finally see a small glimmer of hope way out on the horizon. Instead of pulling that idea into a big-picture understanding, collecting all relevant data points, exploring possible consequences, you decide to just *go for it*. You dive in, bust your butt clearing a path for each step forward, and then you hit a wall—then another—and eventually you realize you're going in circles and have no viable way to move ahead. Now you're trapped. Your ignorance has driven you straight into the jaws of fear.

Fear is the deadliest trap for any hunter, because it blocks your ability to see everything that's going on around you. It keeps you from being able to assess the dangers you face and determining your chances for taking them out. Your world becomes narrower, the trap becomes tighter, and you can react only with more fear, more panic, more blind thrashing around.

Even experienced hunters have been known to “shoot before they hunt”—running blindly through unscouted territory, taking potshots at something they haven’t really seen. That’s exactly the mistake I made when I allowed my ego to guide me in launching the World Hunting Association (WHA). I was so worried about someone snatching my idea that I didn’t bother discussing the no-kill angle of the tournament with *any* industry contacts. Instead of looking at the tournament from their—my target’s—perspective, anticipating the blowback, and defusing it before it occurred, I just plowed on. I assumed my idea was so wildly out-of-the-box successful that everything would “just work out.” I was wrong—and totally unprepared to deal with the backlash. So I know how easy it is to be blinded by ego and then stumble into the jaws of fear. But that experience taught me that when you feel yourself getting sucked into that trap, running in circles or freezing in panic won’t save you.

Instead, you need to climb up into the tree stand above your ego and outside your own mind to start assessing your situation from a neutral perspective. From there, you can take a calm, clear look at yourself and the challenges and opportunities you’re facing. Acting with consciousness means being guided by reality, not driven by fear. It allows you to keep an objective mind and stay keenly focused on your target, your DO.

Climbing into the elevated viewpoint of consciousness takes some practice. However, it's an essential first step for navigating your way through any quicksand or pitfall that lies between you and your DO. Learning a few critical skills and the disciplined practice of consciousness is where that hunt begins. The following short exercise is a great starting point in that work. You can use it to get comfortable with the idea of eyeing a challenge or opportunity from this perspective:

1. Find a relatively quiet place where you can spend fifteen minutes or so in uninterrupted silence—no phone, email, or other intrusions.
2. Take three deep breaths; as you're doing that, visualize a large tree standing before you.
3. Let your mind's eye move up the tree, above your body, to where you can look down and see your position and everything surrounding it in one panoramic view.
4. Now, as the Scout, look around the "you" that is left on the ground and note the details of the situation that surrounds that image—the people, the events taking place, the physical landscape.
5. Find the target you want to hit, the place you want to go—your DO. What can you see that separates you from it? How tough are these obstacles? Which ones can you knock down? Which should you try to change? And which should you bypass as quietly as possible?

Every step of The Hunt should be focused on *outcomes*. That's why it's crucial to train yourself to climb high enough to spot and clearly see those outcomes. This is how you'll identify the key *and* the driver for every move you make. When you're in the consciousness "zone," you're better able to understand just what end result you really want to arrive at. Are you gunning for more money? A promotion? Stronger business partners? A better relationship with your spouse or kids? A more meaningful direction for your life? Hunting with consciousness allows you to see everything in your world more clearly—people, ideas, events, emerging trends, and the connections that link them all together. That perspective brings into focus the long-term outcomes you desire, and the short-term goals you'll need to take down in order to hit them.

Learning to get above your ego will teach you to see the world as it is: clearly, completely, with no blind spots or camouflage. It puts you in a near-meditative state; active, alert, calm, but fully hooked in to your surroundings. This kind of "getting high" actually grounds you in a reality that's bigger than any single problem you may be facing. You'll see the world as predator *and* prey, and use that killer clarity to visualize the entire hunt before you. Eventually, you'll be able to make this climb in any situation—even in the midst of important conversations, critical meetings, or other highly charged events. But start with this first, basic visual work on your own.

It will help you get used to pushing egos and other “clutter” out of the way, so you can make a careful, comprehensive observation about the issues, opportunities, and obstacles you’re *really* facing. Over time, you’ll find that getting into that elevated viewpoint is as natural to you as breathing, as consciousness becomes the first step in your go-to approach to problem solving, decision making, and leadership.

### **Being There: The Scout and the Judge**

Your next step in the journey toward consciousness is learning to show up in your life, to truly *be there*—alive, awake, and totally engaged with the territory around you. When you’re really present, you are a *Scout*, not a *Judge*. You’re able to observe yourself and the events taking place around you without filtering the view through your ego or allowing the Judge to drag you into the jaws of insecurity and fear. While we each have our own version, the Judge’s droning voice sounds something like this:

*“Stop looking confused! And don’t give in—you always give in. Aw, no! You forgot your smartphone, so you can’t check that schedule. What an idiot. Look at Paul—he’s an idiot, too, but you know he’s going to try to shut you down on your proposal. Why is he such a jerk? Why didn’t you spend more time prepping on interim deliverables? Why are you always the last one to figure this stuff out? Damn, you should have applied for that job in Jersey. What would you do if you*



*lost this gig? You've got to make this job work—it's probably the best you can get."*

That's the Judge talking—and talking and *talking*. Once you let him get started, it can be unbelievably hard to shut him up. In fact, if you listen long enough, you simply *become* the Judge, and his negative self-talking controls everything you do.

The voice of the Judge is nothing more than our ego messing with us. The fear it evokes may feel real, but it *isn't*—unless we choose to give it life by listening. So, if you want to be absolutely certain that you'll lose money in a deal, then start saying to yourself, "I won't be able to pull this thing off. Too late to do anything about it now. It's gonna fail, and when it does, I'm screwed." And guess what? You'll be right! All you have to do is keep listening, and all of those bad predictions *will come true*.

The Judge specializes in sidetracking you *just* when you most need to stay on target. Worse, his damaging self-talk becomes an excuse for failure. Instead of elevating your perspective, the Judge drags you down to where you lose *all* perspective, *all* clarity on your DO and the people and events that surround it. But when you focus your thoughts and actions intensely on a *positive* target, you're in a position to start tracking it.

If the Judge rules your brain every time you find yourself in a tough spot, I have an important piece of advice: step away from the center of the universe! Believe me,

I get it. We learn self-absorbed, ego-driven routines almost from birth. This makes it all the more difficult to silence the Judge's harsh reminders of our fears and shortcomings. But *you* are not the focal point in every challenge you face—your *target*, your *goal* is the point. And the Judge's nonstop trash talk can make it easy to lose track of that important reality.

If you're going in circles instead of progressing toward your goal, the Judge is taking control. So just stop—and then follow this simple, three-step exercise:

1. **Take a quick time-out to determine exactly what you're feeling.** Are you afraid? Do you feel anxious? Is your stress building? Are you listening to your fear, instead of focusing like a laser on the words, actions, and events going down around you? Try to identify ego-driven distractions like these that might be cluttering your path forward. Now ask yourself: How is this serving me?

2. **Take yourself out of the picture, and focus on your Desired Outcome.** Step back, climb up above your ego, and observe the big picture, *always* with your focus trained on how every element within it relates to your DO. Ask yourself: What do I want? What's standing in my way? What first forward steps can I take? List all of your answers on paper; you can even sketch them out as a graph to give yourself a visual guide to the process ahead (more about the process of identifying DOs in just a bit).

3. **Take action.** Listening to the Judge will trap you in fear, but action will free you. Don't worry about making a wrong move. Just make some sort of move, and let that lead you to the next. The path ahead may bend here and there, but your focus needs to remain fixed on your target—your DO—and every move you make should advance you toward that goal. But you need to take that first step.

With this process, you've flipped from Judge to Scout. You can observe the big picture, be present, and return your focus to the reality of *now*. You're operating with a neutral mind, collecting data points, identifying obstacles, weighing options, and preparing yourself for a successful hunt—no matter where it may take you.

You don't have to wait for a crisis to practice the discipline of consciousness. You can use this exercise and other techniques outlined in this chapter to develop your clarity and awareness all day, every day. For example: instead of worrying about screwing up a presentation or plotting some vigilante justice for that jerk who cut you off when you were driving to work, tune out the Judge and put the Scout to work. Focus on the big picture—what you want to accomplish with that presentation and how your plan will get you there; what clues to next moves you can pick up from the drivers around you; and what leverage points that information gives you for making your own drive as painless as possible.

As the Scout, you're living in the real world, not fighting dragons in your mind. You want your presentation to kill, you want to get to work without having a wreck, and you want to deal with *everyone* as successfully as possible. The real world is always out there, feeding you information, delivering data points that can bring you critical ammunition for hitting your targets and taking the trophies. You just have to be there to take it all in.

### **Checking into Rehab**

Few things are more depressing and nonproductive than our ego's nagging voice. So why do we listen to it? Well, it's a habit, and one that I believe has both physical and emotional triggers—sort of like a drug addiction. Our brains guide our actions by building synapses and firing neurons that tell us how to respond to the world around us. When we rehearse the same kinds of negative thoughts over and over again, our brains learn that destructive pattern—and our actions conform to it. We're at risk of making what was just a worry—a negative fantasy—into a negative reality, a world where we expect the worst, and we *get* the worst.

That's a habit you have to break. Think of consciousness and the combined elements of The Hunt method as rehab, the detox you need to purge the Judge's negative garbage from your thoughts and beliefs.

When you move into a state of consciousness, it's easier to lose the Judge's negative influence on your life.

But be aware that he's still going to be in charge of a lot of the people around you—so be careful not to fall back into old patterns. Spend as little time as possible with others who are under the control of negativity. You don't want to be lured back to that dark space. Use your consciousness to be alert to *all* of the influences that cross your path, so that you can see them for what they are and keep moving forward—no sidetracks, no dead ends, no downward spirals.

### **Sighting the Target: Desired Outcomes**

Without a designated target for your hunt, you're going nowhere. And *really* understanding what it is you're shooting for isn't quite as easy as it might seem. I've spent a lifetime learning to spot whitetails in the forest, so I can tell you that it's a lot easier to see a well-camouflaged deer in a thicket than it is to identify an undefined outcome hiding behind a cluster of fuzzy half-formed goals. That's why identifying the Desired Outcome that you're aiming for is an important step in developing consciousness and the absolute clarity it provides.

Identifying your Desired Outcome, your DO, is a tricky business. That's because most of us grow up learning to ignore our real desires or to hide them behind something bigger, sexier, or more socially acceptable—which is a great way to *never* hit your target. And many of our targets are tangled up in our egos and identity, making them

incredibly difficult to see or understand (we talk more about the authenticity of our DOs in Chapter Two). Most people have to *deliberately practice* slowing down at this stage of consciousness, so they can strip away the camouflage, identify what they *really* want out of any situation, and then take the next step toward claiming it.

Your first step in making that ID is to ask yourself two simple questions:

1. What do you want?
2. Why do you want it?

I ask those questions of myself and of anyone who comes to me for advice about gritty issues like resolving a conflict at work, closing a deal, or dealing with a downwardly spiraling relationship. They're straightforward questions; if you can't answer them, you have virtually zero chance of resolving things to *anyone's* satisfaction.

Most DOs move us forward when we find solutions to problems or eliminate their source. But getting at those root problems or issues can take some thought. The word "root" is the key, because you have to be able to cut to the very source of the challenge in order to understand what you're truly hunting for. Of course, when you've answered question 1, and you have a pretty clear idea of what goal you're targeting, you still have to deal with question 2—*why* are you targeting it? To flush that

answer out of hiding, you may have to ask yourself some other questions:

- If I get this Desired Outcome, what does that success look like?
- What does solving this problem bring me?
- How will the outcome feel?
- Will I have moved forward? Or will I have just moved sideways, or even backward, in relationship to the bigger outcomes and goals I've set for myself?

Be *very clear* when you answer these questions. Life is constantly changing, so your goals will always be somewhat fluid. But you need to be able to measure a solid DO in some way—as this is the only way to know with absolute clarity whether or not you've achieved it.

Taking time to think through what you want, why you want it, and how you might feel when you get it is an important step in hunting with consciousness. If you can't be completely clear about your Desired Outcome, you won't be able to form a solid plan for taking it down, and you sure won't be able to defend your plan or lead others in the hunt to accomplish it. Your crystal clear visualization of your DO forms the target *and* the trophy that you and your allies will pursue. And developing the right Desired Outcome helps keep everyone's ego at bay. It only takes one “me, Me, ME!” spin-out in a meeting to tank the chances

for a productive resolution. I have seen countless projects with massive potential tank because someone's ego got out of check—and the group lost focus on its desired endpoint. If we know exactly what we want and remain committed to obtaining it, we're in a better position to keep even the biggest egos subordinated to that overriding goal.

The person in the room who can be grounded and present—who can help keep the group focused on a clear vision of the Desired Outcome—will always emerge as the True Hunter in any organization. I want this person to be you. When others see you as the one who can hang steady when the pressure is on, everyone else will be ready to back you when situations heat up. And you can pretty much count on the fact that things will get heated from time to time. Tracking down dangerous game isn't a bad thing. In fact, the more skillful you become as a True Hunter, the more passion and joy you'll find in achieving oversized wins or stopping unpredictable, rapidly moving problems dead in their tracks. We need to take on tougher challenges if we want to keep growing and flowing, and your skills of consciousness help keep you on track to achieve your Desired Outcomes, no matter how much weight they drag along with them.

### **Dan Gilbert: Master of Clarity**

You won't find a hunter with a more targeted focus on Desired Outcomes than Dan Gilbert. Dan is the founder and chairman of Quicken Loans, a company that handles



more direct-to-consumer home mortgage loans than any other organization in the world. He also is the majority owner in a number of professional sport teams and chairman of Rock Gaming, the company that is opening Horseshoe Casinos throughout the Midwest. Dan's a True Hunter, and the clear view of consciousness rules his game. "Clarity is a big word around here," he told me. And for Dan, defining a Desired Outcome is central to reaching that place of clarity: "So much of the world is vague and muddy. I don't even want to meet with people who can't tell me what they want to get out of the meeting."

Dan's had plenty of practice in learning to define and pursue his own Desired Outcomes over the years. Growing his fledgling loan business was a difficult hunt—for big game. He knew that he had to scale the business, but how could he possibly pull in the number of people and build the number of locations he'd need to occupy a real presence in the national marketplace? "The process of closing a home loan is a killer," he explained. "We closed 42,000 loans last month. As crazy as it sounds, when we closed 420 loans a month, it was a lot harder. It was loan-to-loan combat. I couldn't keep up."

Back then, Gilbert struggled with the idea of growing his staff and infrastructure to handle the bulky and time-consuming loan process. But when Gilbert got up above all of that noise and studied the issue from a broader perspective, he was able to identify the solution. He didn't

need to figure out how to *do more* of what he was doing; he needed to find a better, more scalable way of doing loans—period. As Gilbert explains: “It came to me that all lending is local. I realized that I had to come up with a system—the technology, the process—to close loans in fifty states, two thousand counties, from a centralized environment. If we could do that, I knew we’d go big.”

While Gilbert was able to clearly identify his Desired Outcome, he still had a lot of work to do—and a big hunk of that was to home in on individual goals within his larger Desired Outcome. “A very small piece of the home loan process is verifying home insurance. I spent a week asking myself and every potential source I could find: how do we communicate with six thousand agents around the nation, all of whom are going to do things differently? That became another Desired Outcome, and it took about a week to figure out just that small part of the process. But we did—and then moved on to the next piece of the puzzle. It takes money and time, trial and error. I didn’t know that we’d get as big as we are, but I knew that as soon as we figured out the process and discovered how to handle all of that with a system, we’d blow it out of the water.”

This experience taught Dan a lot about the importance of developing the clearest possible picture of where you want to go and why you want to get there. He still uses that kind of clarity today to identify Desired Outcomes and drive success in every new marketplace he enters.

Gilbert's a big-game hunter, and not everyone will have the need—or desire—to target DOs as big and beefy as those of the Quicken Loans empire. But *all* of us can benefit from leveraging the process Gilbert used to evaluate his situation, ID his true goals, and form a plan for taking them down. That's consciousness at work—the kind of broad, neutral assessment that can help show the way through even the most tangled issues and challenges.

### **Scouting: Intel from the Trail**

Many of the practices that my hunting lessons have taught me have become almost like natural reflexes. I remember the day this became clear to me. It was late April, and I was walking a ridge that divides a swamp in Antrim County, Michigan. The weather was gorgeous—60-plus degrees and a sky as clear and blue as Lake Michigan. I was moving along at a fast pace, but feeling almost like I was out of my body, totally tuned into everything in my surroundings—watching the sky, listening to the wind, gathering and sorting information about every tree, shrub, animal, and physical landmark I was passing. In other words, I was *scouting*—gathering information and feeding it directly into the data banks of my consciousness. I was drawing heavily on my skill to both detect movement and spot specific shapes and colors to track down some of the best-camouflaged prey a hunter can pursue: black morel mushrooms.

As my trail banked south, I suddenly stopped in my tracks. I'd seen something I needed to pay attention to, but what was it? I scanned the woods around me, and there it was—a massive ash tree hidden behind some pines and cedars, maybe three hundred yards from where I stood. Man, I thought; I must have walked this ridge a hundred times over the years, and I've never noticed that monster. But on *this* hunt I was after black morels, which love to cluster near mature ash trees—and that's why the tree set off my radar. I walked up to the lone giant, and *oh, yeah!* The ground below it was covered in a bumper crop of nearly a hundred black morels. To this day, I've never found a better stash. And I've never lost appreciation for the power—and instinctive nature—of scouting as a True Hunter.

Whether you're on the trail of moose, mushrooms, or more money, scouting is what the hunt is all about. It's the process that feeds your consciousness, by gathering critical information from every conversation, chance meeting, presentation, negotiation, and other event that flows through your world. As a Scout, you won't be someone who sleepwalks through life, failing to see or benefit from all of the opportunity, ideas, and information it offers to those of us who scout with our senses wide open and on high alert.

I've seen over the years how scouting works. It doesn't just uncover the treasures lining your path; it actually brings *more* good things your way. The more scouting

you do, the more connections you'll notice among all of the people, ideas, events, and outcomes that flow around you. And tracking down those connections often leads to even bigger, more fulfilling wins than you originally were gunning for. Business deals, friendships, family, personal growth—whatever type of trophy you're seeking, scouting is an essential tool for tracking it down.

So how can you prime yourself to gather the information you'll need to hit your targets and to create a journey that leads to next big win—and the one after that? Here are three basic types of scouting you'll need to master:

1. **Pre-Season Scouting:** The best time to gather information about your hunting territory and the activity of the animals within it is before hunting season begins, when there's less "clutter"—fewer hunters, less competitive combat between animals, and more opportunities to gather real intel about your prey and the territory they're living in. The Pre-Season strategy works when you're scouting out the trail of *any* objective. The more you can learn about broad market trends, emerging competition, and other player developments before you begin negotiating a deal or moving into a highly competitive season or marketplace, the better your chances of walking away with the trophy you're pursuing.

2. **Macro-Scouting:** You need to see the landscape of the territory where you're hunting, and every competitor,

customer, accepted practice, and major challenge roaming there. If you're scouting out new markets for ad sales, for example, your Macro-Scouting will focus on determining who your major competitors for ad space will be, what the buyers are currently looking for, and what trends are catching fire. Macro-Scouting demands stealth and focus. You need to pull in as much data as possible before any other predator *or* your prey knows you're in the territory. If you make a lot of noise before you're ready to act, you're probably going to go home empty-handed—not the outcome you're after. So before you make your move, you need to maximize your visuals, collect all relevant data, and learn about the area you're hunting in—and all of the obvious pitfalls and power positions it contains. Then use the information you gather to get smarter about the challenges and opportunities before you.

3. **Micro-Scouting:** You watch a lot of deer when you're Macro-Scouting. But when you find the one that you want to take, it's time to dig into the details and do your Micro-Scouting. You have to gauge the wind direction so you don't get busted, find the right tree for a clear shot, confirm the actual direction of any tracks to determine the right shooting angle—and find the best way to apply *everything* you've learned from past hunts and observations. If you're Micro-Scouting a business negotiation, be just as detailed: Who has the power to make the final decision in the negotiation? What are they passionate about? What

have their past hunts involved, what are they hunting for now, and what's hunting for *them*? To get this kind of intel, you'll have to get closer to your prey, but go slow and stay small. The hunter who can get in close is going to be the most effective in bagging the trophy. This is why the old saying "You don't see them coming" often applies to the best sales professionals.

Scouting is a weapon that can cut both ways, so you have to learn how to use it well. The more scouting you do, the more data you gather—and the easier it can be to lose sight of what you originally wanted to accomplish with the hunt. You may make a conscious decision to realign or adapt your Desired Outcome based on new information you've uncovered; that's just good hunting.

However, as a True Hunter you *can't* allow yourself to get distracted. Even when you do the heads down, low-to-the-ground work of Micro-Scouting, never forget the big picture—what you came to this hunt to accomplish. If your target is to negotiate a deal, the intel you've gathered should better prepare you to drive the best possible terms from that negotiation. You can't get lazy, stop gathering data, get pulled off track by a target that doesn't really matter, play your hand too early, or drop your guard or your weapons. I've seen more than one broker, salesperson, or account manager work a deal right up to the finish—then blow everything by making a sloppy move at the close

(we'll talk more about staying strong right up to the end of *The Hunt* in Chapter Four). Being a good scout also means having the kind of long-term vision that keeps you on track and headed for real success.

By staying neutral enough to gather the massive amounts of information that life is always throwing our way, we remain open to learning. We see and hear critical pieces of information that we would miss if we were busy ducking for cover. And it's all of that critical data that determines how strong our decisions are and how successfully we act on those decisions—and, in turn, how often we realize our Desired Outcomes. As a True Hunter, you remain aware, maintain consciousness, and continue scouting the best way forward right up to the moment when you take your target. This is a key ingredient for closing the deal in the field or in life.

### **Seeing Everything: Hunter's Vision**

Although successful hunters rarely mention the word “clairvoyant,” they will tell you that it's their second nature to put themselves into the mind of their prey—to experience the world through that animal's senses, and to envision the successful outcome of their hunt. And I know that some people aren't comfortable picturing that level of connection to others or being guided by visualization. But I'm also very certain that successful hunters have been using visualization to conquer their prey for tens of



thousands of years—painting images of the hunt on the walls of their caves and carving figures of the animals they hunted.

Many hunters have embraced one tradition in particular: they visualize the entire hunt before it takes place, by mentally walking through every step of sighting, tracking, and taking their target.<sup>1</sup> Such a detailed visualization is an essential preparation for *any* hunt—including yours. When you build a clear, detailed picture from multiple perspectives of how your hunt will unfold, the challenges you and other players are likely to meet, the opportunities that you might leverage, and the pitfalls and sidetracks to avoid, then you’ve drawn up the “able navigator’s” map. I call this skill “Hunter’s Vision.” It’s an essential tool that you can develop with practice and that will bring you a powerful weapon for hitting your targets.

Achieving Hunter’s Vision enables you to make decisions with your eyes wide open and focused on long-term benefits—the successful outcome you’re aiming for. You’re not only seeing everything that’s taking place in the territory around you; you can also view the world through the eyes of every other creature within that territory. And when you can bring other people’s or organizations’ perspectives into focus, you can begin to feel what they feel, understand their goals, see their targets. This allows you to predict pretty accurately how they are likely to act—and react—in tight corners and tricky negotiations.

Henry Ford thought so, anyway—he's often quoted as saying that in any negotiation he tried to see the issue from the perspective of the guy sitting across the table.<sup>2</sup> And Henry Ford took the trophy in many of the across-the-table contests he entered into.

All you need in order to use this tool of consciousness is a well-trained mind. Whether you're prepping for a brutal negotiation, developing a critical business alliance, or solving a family conflict, you need to make like Henry Ford and get into the heads of the other people involved in the process. That perspective will feed you some critical information about the hunt ahead, because it will help you to visualize challenges and opportunities from multiple angles. And by wrapping all of that into a visualization of your successful outcome, you are training your mind to:

1. **Anticipate the likely next moves of others and form options for dealing with them.** What are you picking up from the people around you? Is it anger, sarcasm, deceit, or any other ego-driven, fear-based response? When you get a jump on people's fears—or can figure out the prey you're trying to lure in—you're in a better position to pull them into the your target zone.

2. **See the players and the relationships involved, how they fit into the equation, and how they may help or hurt your chances of achieving your Desired**

**Outcome.** When you've evaluated these elements purely in terms of how they can impact your Desired Outcome, you can use that information to play cautious but deliberate offense.

**3. See the situation with absolute clarity at a macro level, and use that understanding to bring some of the micro pieces into focus.** If you aim small, you miss small. Travis "T-Bone" Turner, a highly successful professional hunter, says that he aims for a particular hair on an animal. Hunter's Vision helps you pinpoint your target with that same level of accuracy. This precision and clarity will help you beat any reasonable quota, deliver on budgets, and hit the bull's-eye of the target you are pursuing.

**4. See your strategic choices and their potential repercussions.** Any action you take is going to move you forward or take you backward—and the latter won't do you any good. This sounds basic, but when I failed to use my Hunter's Vision in the early stages of the WHA, it nearly broke me. Had I forced myself to slow down and think about how others in the hunting industry might react to the tournament I was so happily (and blindly) planning, I could have saved myself a lot of pain down the trail. Lesson learned: Be bold enough to consider *all* possible consequences of your strategic choices.

**5. See the tactical steps it will take to wage your chosen strategy successfully—and begin to choose**

**your smartest moves.** Hunter's Vision will help you see the path and the trophy it leads to. You'll need to tweak your plan as you go along, but you'll always be moving forward.

Hunter's Vision sets your hunt on fire. Your senses work in harmony and process every new piece of data at a different, more powerful frequency. And hunting at this level puts you in a much better position to pivot as situations demand. Desired Outcomes can and will change, sometimes in a heartbeat. Hunter's Vision keeps a laser focus on the trail ahead, while still allowing you to hold a neutral mind and adapt your Desired Outcomes as situations evolve. You're not wedded to a specific outcome or locked in by your ego. The kind of disciplined flexibility that Hunter's Vision makes possible actually helps you develop better, more solid Desired Outcomes that truly reflect your core desires. As you practice visualizing, remember that every person, place, or event in that hunt holds opportunities that you can exploit, and your visualization needs to help you make sure you don't miss them. These opportunities include:

- **Weakness:** Like Superman with kryptonite, even the smartest buck (or negotiator) has a vulnerability. Seeing the situation from others' perspectives will help you uncover any weaknesses at the table. Consider this

information the essential ammunition that you need to have on any hunt.

- **Game-changer moments:** Remember Dan Gilbert's game-changer moment, when he realized he could use technology instead of bricks and mortar to build his Quicken Loans mortgage machine? Much like wild mushrooms in spring, game-changer moments are treasures that can be easy to miss. But when you're using your Hunter's Vision to see the challenge ahead from the perspective of everyone involved, you're much better able to spot pivotal indicators or developments. Game-changers may be signaled by a facial expression, a throwaway comment, or a subtle reaction to a related issue. But even the smallest cue will be easier for you to detect when you are viewing the situation with Hunter's Vision.

- **Controllability:** Most people move through life allowing situations to control *them*, but that's not what drives True Hunters to successful outcomes. When you look at a challenge, deal, or negotiation with consciousness, keep an eye out for signs that others are dropping the reins. Look for any gaps in leadership that would allow you to step in and take control. Remember, our thoughts control our results, so think control, and you will be in control. Most often, it's the internal obstacles that are keeping us from our targets. We can avoid falling victim to such obstacles by staying above the nonsense and keeping a clear, objective mind.

When you're in the woods, Hunter's Vision is just as powerful as all of the trail cams, heat-sensing goggles, scent-masking soaps, decoys, and artificial pheromones that hunters use to find an animal and lure it into the kill zone. The more experienced you are as a True Hunter, the more lightly you can travel. Hunter's Vision is one piece of essential gear that requires no schlepping—and it works in any territory and any season.

I know that I wouldn't be as successful as I am today if I hadn't developed the tool of visualization for tapping into the universe of information and ideas that surrounds us all. This process will prepare you to deal with other people involved in your hunt, because you'll have made the necessary efforts to see the whole experience through their eyes. You're in their heads—armed with some idea of the concerns, objections, and demands they may bring to the process. When you spend time trying to really understand how *they* want the hunt to end, you open your mind to a range of possibilities even bigger than any you've imagined before.

Developing that kind of focus may not come naturally to you; it didn't for me. But Hunter's Vision is one of your most powerful tools for negotiating deals, planning and delivering a pitch, finding and building strong alliances, resolving family disputes, and much, much more. It's a practice well worth the time and energy it will take for you to master it.

## A Tool for Visualization

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I was a pretty hyperactive kid. By the time I was three years old, my mother knew that I needed some kind of anchor to help focus my attention—ideally, something small and light that I could carry around with me and use at a moment's notice. So she gave me a shoelace, and when I grew too wild, she encouraged me to hold it in my hand and focus on it. And it worked! When I was holding that lace, I could focus my mind on a single idea, which I could develop into a story. As I grew older, the lace became a meditation tool, a tactile object that helped me focus, plan, create elaborate strategies, and imagine their outcomes. I took the lace with me when I went hunting; it calmed my mind and centered my focus by helping me imagine myself in the head of the animal I was tracking.

You need to practice using your Hunter's Vision to visualize and achieve your definition of success. You can find your own visualization tool—a stone, a coin, a key chain. It might even be something you can't hold in your hand, like a specific place or a piece of music; anything that directly taps into one of your five senses of sight, touch, taste, smell, or hearing. Choose a method that will help you focus your Hunter's Vision, and use it in conjunction with the other tools, practices, and techniques we've talked about in this chapter. That practice will help you develop the *sixth* sense of a True Hunter—the ability to get out of your own head, above your ego, and into a state of consciousness.

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## **Fueling The Hunt with Consciousness**

Robert Redford is a True Hunter I've always admired, and not just for his award-winning films. Redford has done so much more than acting, producing, and directing in films and on stage. He's also tagged multiple successes as a businessman—as founder of the Sundance Institute, for example, and of the film festival, resort, catalog business, and more that go with it. He's a philanthropist, a mentor, and a make-it-happen advisor for new and independent filmmakers—and he still finds time to be an environmental and political activist.

Redford doesn't get in front of the camera much when he isn't acting, but in interviews or appearances linked to his causes, he comes across as being very still, alert, totally focused on the questions and comments of those around him. Maybe I'm projecting some of his deep-woods character, *Jeremiah Johnson*, into my impression of him—but he seems like a man who's mastered consciousness.

Redford received a career tribute during the 2013 Telluride Film Festival. One reporter wrote in an article that Redford, alert to the dangers of getting locked in the “pretty boy” trap, built his chops as a serious young actor in part by traveling through Europe. There, he had to really watch people carefully and listen to the way they sounded to understand what they were feeling and



meaning, since he didn't speak their language.<sup>3</sup> A woman who worked with Redford at Sundance once described his listening style: "He listens in meetings like nothing I've ever seen." She went on to say that Redford starts every meeting with some form of the same message: "My goal in this conversation is to be changed by you. If I walk out with exactly the same perspectives I have now, we have both failed."<sup>4</sup>

What a brilliant way of looking at the world—curious, confident, goal-oriented, and totally attuned to the flow of information and understanding life is constantly sending our way. For me, that openness to life is what consciousness is all about:

- Being present, alive and awake, approaching life as a Scout instead of a Judge
- Staying focused on your ultimate goals as you grow and change
- Gathering the pieces of critical information that life throws in your path—Macro-Scouting the big ideas and Micro-Scouting the small details while holding an observational, neutral mind
- Using a Hunter's Vision to see the hunt from multiple perspectives, to form a clear vision of your Desired Outcome, and to continually guide your actions toward achieving it

You should keep Redford's approach in mind along with your own commitment to consciousness in practice every single day. Remember, if every conversation, meeting, chance encounter, even every observation doesn't change your perspective in some way, you're not paying attention. You're missing important opportunities and therefore failing to grow as a human being—and a True Hunter. If you don't take the time to actually *become* aware—conscious, alive, and alert to your environment—it can be easy to forget about the big picture. Let your ego be your guide, and just struggle through all the undergrowth and dead-end trails that clutter any territory.

Developing and using consciousness is just the first step in becoming a True Hunter. With discipline and practice, consciousness will become your go-to state, the way you live in the world. Think about it, use it, and welcome the changes it brings. That's the kind of outcome we're all aiming for.

### **The Last Thirty Minutes of Daylight**

Whether or not they've completed their hunt, at the end of the day every hunter has to get off the trail and head home. When I find myself in the last thirty minutes of daylight, I know that the time for that day's hunt is running out—and I have to seriously amp up my focus if I want to avoid going home empty-handed.

We've reached the end of the chapter, and I want to be sure you leave this part of The Hunt with something solid. So here are your takeaways from this leg of the journey:

- **Don't be trigger-happy:** True Hunters don't shoot before they hunt. Climb into the tree stand, above your ego and the clutter of circumstance, where you can pull together a big-picture vision of the hunt ahead.
- **Show up in your life:** You see the best path forward toward your Desired Outcomes by *being there*—awake, alive, and alert to the territory around you and everything that's happening within it.
- **Silence the Judge:** Judging doesn't move you forward; it just keeps you stuck in the same old swamp. If you start to feel fear, sadness, or other negative emotions dragging you down, know that it's your ego and not a reflection of reality—so stop *making it* reality. When the Judge starts talking smack, stop listening; instead, focus on the real challenges, opportunities, and events unfolding before you.
- **Get your target in the scope:** Allow your Desired Outcome to drive everything you do. You can't hit your target if you don't have a crystal clear vision of what it is and how to reach it. Know what you want, why you want it, and what success will look like. It should be a measurable achievement, or it's probably not a true Desired Outcome.

- **Better scouting, better hunting:** Scout out the trail toward your outcomes by gathering all of the relevant information you can to fuel your hunt. Get started early, be stealthy and relentless, see and hear and assess your data points. Use Macro-Scouting to bring the big picture into focus, then dive into the small details by Micro-Scouting. Taking the proper prep time to plan out and visualize what is ahead will help you take down your prey more often—every single time.
- **See the win:** Visualization is a powerful tool for True Hunters. When you learn to develop Hunter's Vision, you can see the world through others' eyes and experiences of others. This will allow you to form a detailed vision of how you want your hunt to unfold and to use that visualization to guide your journey through this hunt and on to the next.