

1 Teams That Do Big Things

Those who know history increase their ability to make it. Here's a brief look at a team that made an epic impact. These seemingly unexceptional people demonstrated that together most any team can do big things. And they left a map for you to do the same.

At 1:00 P.M. on May 24, 1869, a team of 10 explorers pushed their boats into the water and floated away from Green River Station, Wyoming. They were determined to do something that had never been done: travel and chart the Green and Colorado Rivers of the western United States. At this point in history, the details of the nearly 100-year-old country's map were largely complete—except for one conspicuously large space. In an area the size of France, cartographers had simply written “unexplored.” The region was unknown. And for good reason.

Downriver, danger lurked. To begin with, the desert terrain was nearly all rock and sand. Native Americans roamed the untamed and unknown territory. And the river—it was already legendary. Tales were told of waterfalls that made Niagara look small. Others claimed the river disappeared completely like an enormous snake vanishing down a hole.¹

The last portion of the journey would take the explorers through what is now known as the Grand Canyon, a gouge in the earth 277 miles long, 18 miles wide, and a mile deep. Today, tens of thousands of people apply for the chance to raft the river for sport; occasionally, some lose their lives as they do so. But to the team pushing their boats into the water that day

some 150 years ago, the wild Grand Canyon wasn't there for fun. It was a job, something they were hired to do. It was something they had to do.

The leader of the band was a short, one-armed Civil War veteran named Major John Wesley Powell. As a would-be scientist, he had little experience in the Wild West. Still, he beamed with optimism. He'd assembled nine other men, all with varying degrees of experience as explorers and hunters, to complete the party. Some joined the team just days before their launch, motivated by the need for adventure and a paycheck. Altogether, these men weren't the best of their time, but they were all Powell could afford.

Prepared with supplies and food to last 10 months, the team reflected their captain's confidence. What they didn't know—couldn't know—is that they had prepared for the wrong trip. Their approach and planning were suited for entirely different circumstances. How they thought about their environment and each other was based upon the only resource they had: past experiences.

But there was nothing like the land they found themselves in. No river could compare to the one they were floating down. To achieve their objective, they'd have to do what they'd never done before.

The purpose of the expedition was to map unknown territory. For Major Powell, there was an additional objective: fame. The big thing he wanted to accomplish was earning a reputation as a legitimate scientist. While celebrity and fortune appealed to the members of Powell's crew, their primary objective was altogether different, yet equally clear: survival. While they'd never been on this particular river before, they knew enough from legend that they would be tested and pushed like they'd never been before. Success was not certain.

We'll return to Powell's journey into the great unknown shortly. First, though, consider the team you're on or the team you lead. What's your Grand Canyon? What's the significant objective the team must accomplish to positively and meaningfully impact the business? What's the transformation or big change or launch or innovation the organization is demanding you deliver?

And now, the question this book will equip you to answer in the affirmative: Is your team equipped to deliver big things?

A word of caution: Many who have gone before you into uncharted territory have mistakenly thought that the key to their team's success (survival!) was a matter of equipping themselves with a new structure,

software, process, (quick, make another Gantt chart), or rearranging where people sit or dine. Most of those teams have not been heard from again. Their work was at best marginal, and therefore, forgotten.

That's because it is not merely how your team is structured or the equipment and resources in your hands that you'll need for success today. It's something more—much more.

Why Many Teams Can't Do Big Things Today

Well-intentioned organizations everywhere are sending their teams into the great unknown future riding inflatable floaties—the same type you give to children in the backyard pool. Companies spend an inordinate amount of time determining what they must accomplish, then slap acronyms on those goals, like S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) and WIGs (wildly important goals).² Knowing your team must conquer its Grand Canyon, without being equipped with how to do so, however, is reckless (if not madness). Teams are increasingly desperate for knowing *how* as humans they'll achieve the *what*. We're functioning in what the U.S. military coined a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous)³ world. The disconnect is obvious: Employers are pulling employees together, calling them a team, giving them a directive, and expecting them to deliver results quickly.

But such teams can't. This isn't an inflatable backyard pool your team must get across. Your objective today is its own Grand Canyon. The way teams came together before won't work in today's intense, fast-changing world. When organizations fail to grasp the wisdom that the method for teaming successfully has changed, their approach can look like the antiquated change model depicted below:

- Step 1: Announce the new initiative the company needs to meet lightning-quick changes in the market.
- Step 2: Form teams and assign people to roles.
- Step 3: Tell people what to do and give them half the resources needed to do it.
- Step 4: Remind everyone of the company values (optional).
- Step 5: Apply external motivations in the form of rewards or penalties.

- Step 6: Try to overcome the resistance or confusion created in Steps 1 through 5.
- Step 7: Identify who is to blame for missed deliverables, milestones, and budgets.
- Step 8: Disband the teams or change personnel and repeat Steps 1 through 7.

This common approach never gives teams a chance to do something significant. In moments of fatigue, as people are shuffled from project to project while enduring new demands, it's easy to think the bosses have gone mad, while the bosses get mad. They can see what needs to get done, yet can't find a way to get the team to operationalize the new vision.

Is it any wonder why so many people avoid eye contact and hurry back to the isolation of their workspace feeling despondent?

Is Your Team's Whole Heart in It?

Who are we kidding? Nearly all of us lose a bit of ourselves each time we're forced through the eight dysfunctional steps of the antiquated change model. It's an unsustainable formula: We diminish ourselves while the magnitude of our work increases in volume, complexity, and speed. We used to finish the work we started; we used to celebrate jobs well done; we used to have meaningful relationships with those with whom we worked. But now? What used to make us feel alive is too often absent for too many. We are sapped of a certain sort of energy necessary to do big things.

It's clear that there's a new requirement to succeed as a team today. The solution is refined and raw, sophisticated and practical, genius and basic, elegant and simple: It's heart. The ability for teammates to be at their human best and become bigger than anything they face. This is what many teams are starved for.

Is your team's whole heart in it? It's not enough for one or two individuals to have heart on a team of 10 people, as an example. In fact, that's tormenting as emotions usually erupt or apathy sets in. Teams rise above this and significantly increase their odds of achieving big things

when their whole heart is in it. Defined, this is the point at which the members of the team fully commit to bringing their full self to the team and its efforts to ensure successful outcomes—unconditionally. Now, with the personal integrity of each team member in action, the purpose of the team transcends personal position, ambition, and recognition.

Whether your team has been together for years, you're a newly formed team, or every team member only knows each other virtually, can you quickly develop this whole heart, where the best of each person on the team is amplified? Teams we've observed functioning at this level describe it this way:

- Whole heart occurs the moment we act on the wisdom that we are stronger together.
- It's the valor and collective grit that shows up even when times are tough.
- It's the juice we experience when we're up against severe odds, yet somehow summon the strength to win.

This whole heart is what collapses the idealistic into the realistic. Teams that possess it passionately own their plan to deliver on the big thing in front of them. They get off the fence and refuse to allow the circumstances to determine their thinking and actions. They say no to whatever tempts them away from their goal. These are the teams where people speak straight, and remain optimistic when the data say they shouldn't—because they know what they are capable of and what's possible.

This ability for any group of people to quickly unite and operate with a shared, energized focus that brings out the best in all of us is the defining need of our time. If we all tell ourselves the truth, this need transcends business. In too many arenas and communities, people are experiencing self-inflicted wounds through persistent attacks on each other. The tolerance for divisive actions in humanity is reaching a breaking point.

As all of us drop deeper toward our own Grand Canyon, we recognize and agonize over the wisdom inside of us: We are better than this. Our leadership, talent, culture—in other words, who we are as people—all merge at a space called *team*. It is here that we discover our darkness and our brilliance. It is only here that we get serious work done.

WTF (Want the Facts)

In case you have a teammate who's been out of town for a while and missed what's going on, and they want the facts to better understand the reality of the situation faced by all, share this data with them:

- 84 percent of employees are “matrixed” to some extent, meaning they serve on multiple teams.⁴
 - 21 percent of executives are confident in their ability to develop cross-functional teams.⁵
 - 92 percent of companies are going through reorganization.⁶
 - 70 percent of transformation efforts fail.⁷
 - When team members were asked to describe their team, fewer than 10 percent agreed about who was on it.⁸
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How Legendary Teams Succeed in Doing Big Things

Take this quiz. Consider these now-classic tales of glory and identify what they all have in common. What exactly enabled these teams to succeed?

- The Apollo 13 space mission team, including those at mission control in Houston, Texas. After an explosion on board, the astronauts had to scrap their plans for exploring the surface of the moon and divert all their resources to getting a hunk of malfunctioning metal—and the lives it carried—safely home. In what some consider a miracle, they prevailed.⁹
- The 2016 Chicago Cubs. They faced a history book full of 108 years of failure that said they were losers. But in this magical season they made it to the championship of baseball, the World Series. After four games in the best-of-seven series, they found themselves down three games to one. With perseverance, they overcame long odds and fought their way back, forcing a final and deciding game. In what became an instant classic, the game required extra innings to determine the winner. The Chicago Cubs dug deep and found the strength to win.

Legions of fans around the world could finally say: Our team is the best.¹⁰

- The team called the “brain trust” at Pixar, the computer animation film studio known for producing smash hits like *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*, *Monsters Inc.*, and many others. Pixar founder Ed Catmull says, “Early on, all of our movies suck.”¹¹ Yet, the brain trust and other teams within the company have the remarkable ability to produce and deliver feature films to the market that regularly win Academy Awards and almost always make the list of top 50 worldwide highest grossing animated movies.

For more than two decades, we’ve been obsessed with answering one question: How do you equip a team to deliver big things? We’ve studied teams like those just mentioned and observed and worked with thousands more—with a singular lens: What is the *how*? Specifically, the *human* how? In other words, how did they create the behavioral dynamics that make the team seemingly superhuman?

When teams are enthralled with an idea, they are relentless in their learning, experimentation, and practice. We certainly are, which is why we’ve insisted on going far beyond team basics in our work. For example, nearly everyone knows that for a team to succeed they need a purpose, agreed-upon goals and objectives, a strategy, customer, charter, resources, role clarity, clear responsibilities, processes, and all the other fundamentals.

Here is the key question, though: If each of us knows these basics, and many teams fulfill those requirements, why do so many teams still fail to do anything significant at all? The truth is that a lot of organizations are in peril for one striking reason: Dynamics exist that stop employees from being who they really want to be: great people, particularly in relationship to the other members of their team.

Good teams can repeat back a strategy they’ve read on paper. They can watch the slides and listen to leaders at the town hall gatherings. But if the team’s plan isn’t reflected in their hearts, they’re likely doomed to be overwhelmed by an avalanche of priorities and mixed messages about how they should do their work. In addition, the seemingly ever-changing direction of the company creates a dizzying swirl of confusion. A pressure to reinvent oneself while still delivering what the team was told to do yesterday overwhelms capacity and crushes confidence.

Under such circumstances, even though executives can see the strategy clearly on the whiteboard, without the ability to be better together, employees with glazed eyes ask with increasing frequency: Where are we going? Who are we becoming?

Going Deeper Than Behavior Basics

It's painfully clear that it's far more than revising the team charter or redesigning the reporting structure that's going to get any of us through this. As well, the solution requires going further than platitudes about needing to model organizational values.

The answer to what's necessary for teams to do big things today lies in going deeper than the behavior basics. A first step is examining how the members of extraordinary teams behave together. For example, let's go back to the quiz of legendary teams. What did you see as the common thread in the success stories cited earlier? Most people come up with a list that includes these behaviors:

- Trust
- Collaboration
- Respect
- Vision
- Strategy
- Accountability
- Empowerment
- Communication

These characteristics or behaviors indeed are demonstrated in nearly every story of team success. (Come on, though, admit it: Did you have a sense of déjà vu when you read the list? We did because it's a list distributed nearly word for word in countless books and within organizations around the world.) There's no surprise here: These qualities are necessary for a team to succeed.

But there's more. (And once you see and apply it, everything changes.) These values and behaviors are inherently intangible. **What's necessary**

are reliable methods to create tangible behaviors. In nearly every success story, there's a pattern—a way the team approaches their objectives and team members interact with each other—that serves as a mechanism by which the behaviors on the list above become a reality. Those who can see this pattern and these dynamics and replicate them dramatically improve the arc of the team's destiny.

The key to seeing the pattern requires understanding that the values and behaviors we've all been conditioned to believe are the Holy Grail (in other words, if you have them, the world is yours) aren't the end-all resolution. The values and behaviors successful teams demonstrate, while important, are in reality just one of two steps toward the solution. To illustrate, consider pi.

$$\pi = 3.14159265$$

- The values and behaviors we listed for successful teams are not wrong; they're merely incomplete. For example, if you ask someone, "What's pi?" and she answers, "3.14," you wouldn't jump up and down and claim she lied or was incorrect. Likely, you'd explain that there's more to the numerical value: It's 3.14159 . . . and so on from there.
- Recall that we asked what exactly enabled these exemplary teams to succeed? At that moment, most of our brains did the same thing. It defaulted to describing *what* the teams did to succeed (3.14 = trust, courage, collaboration, and so on). To complete the answer, however, we must dig into *how* the teams functioned to create the *what*, the trust, courage, collaboration, and more (3.14159 = the how).

What's important is rarely achieved until a team knows how to do it.

A System for Creating the Thinking, Actions, and Outcomes Necessary for Success

None of us have been told a lie. The talented people in HR and organizational development know what they're doing. Values and behaviors and

characteristics and capabilities—identifying them is critical to success in any endeavor. And if you are as passionate about developing and being a part of teams that do big things as we are, you’ve likely reflected on the list of values and behaviors and asked yourself these critical questions:

- Why does it seem everyone keeps talking about the same behaviors but little changes in people’s actions?
- Why is it that many professionals could look at their bookshelves and see pages upon pages promising the characteristics identified on this list, yet these same people are challenged to demonstrate these qualities when under pressure?
- Why is it that nearly every person in today’s workforce can define and describe the virtuous behaviors they believe their team needs to demonstrate to win—yet are unable to consistently model the behaviors?

We know why. (And so must every team with big aspirations.) And here’s why we know why. Together with our team of specialists, we reverse engineered what successful teams, including those highlighted earlier, were doing as they achieved big things. Specifically, we looked at the outcomes–actions–thinking (in that order) demonstrated by the members of those teams. **Thus, we cracked a code: how to shape *thinking* that creates the *actions* necessary for any *outcomes* you desire.**

The knowledge of incredible thinkers has powered our work. This list includes Aristotle (thinker who needs no introduction), Viktor Frankl (Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist who helped humans find meaning in even the cruelest form of existence), Daniel Goleman (the psychologist who looked beyond IQ and explained the skill set called EQ or emotional intelligence), Daniel Kahneman (another psychologist whose life’s work has focused on judgment and decision-making), and David Cooperrider (professor and innovator of appreciative inquiry into leadership).

By pulling the research and wisdom together of those who study how we behave—and holding it up as a lens to view how teams quickly and effectively change their behaviors so they can do big things—a clear pattern of thinking and actions became obvious.

For 25 years, we’ve tested this pattern through various applications and constructs. We’ve analyzed results, adapted our models, and then applied

them again. Our empirical data are collected from partnering with teams from 37 countries in 25 different industries, those on the Fortune 500 list, multinational companies, and small businesses alike.

As we saw the pattern reveal itself, we wondered: Does the methodology work more effectively with a certain type of thinker than another? And across all functions of a business? Using a phenomenological approach to answer those questions, we've tracked applications and outcomes within teams made up of multiple age groups, representing those in commercial, production, research, finance, legal, and in multiple industries. Additionally, we've broadened the scope of work to include nonprofits and those in government and academia. By so doing, we captured the experience and developed a thorough, contextualized description of the process teams were using to do big things.

No matter what culture, country, industry, function, or team, the results have always been abundantly clear: We've tapped into something profound. Regardless of the circumstances within or around the team, there are specific steps successful teams take to create the thinking-actions-outcomes necessary to do big things.

These forces of success, now obvious upon post-assessment, can be purposefully used as a system of success for teams today. Why wait until after your team has done something significant and then share stories of glory? It's far more useful to tell those stories in advance; you reduce risk (and its sibling, stress) when you know how a story ends. By naming and simplifying this method, the outcomes can be replicated and scaled within your organization and team. Now, your aspiration of doing big things is actionable.

The Do Big Things Framework

Here it is. We won't make you read to page 127 to get what you're looking for. Let's get busy being who we know we can be. Right now.

It's called the Do Big Things (DBT) Framework. It's the method teams practice (whether they know it or not) to transform how they think and act together so they can deliver transformative outcomes. The DBT Framework provides the language teams use to transform and quickly elevate their power and effectiveness. It's how everyone on the team aligns to a powerful and singular focus necessary to achieve the big objective in front

of them—and deliver the greatest impact to the business while seizing the opportunity to be better human beings along the way.

Importantly, the Do Big Things (DBT) Framework is how team members realize the best of themselves and the team’s collective significance. Now, the whole person is showing up in big ways.

The steps within the DBT Framework equip any team to standardize—meaning agree and align—on what it means to operate in daily interactions in a manner necessary for success. This, of course, is not typical in most organizations.

“Our deliverables are all standardized,” a portfolio project manager in the entertainment industry told us. Quality standards? Not negotiable. Safety standards? Don’t even think about questioning established processes. Timelines, customer care, and budgets? We rarely budge, the manager said.

But what about how teammates behave? Treat each other? Their conduct when under pressure? “Entirely negotiable. Nothing is standardized,” the manager answered. “And that’s exactly why we’re insanely busy but getting nothing important accomplished.”

As with the thousands of teams we’ve partnered with, we’re deeply honored to deliver this to you. Here’s why: The DBT Framework doesn’t require any of us to change who we are. Instead, it activates and amplifies the brilliance we already possess. Don’t buy the lie that your team doesn’t have what it takes. **We all have the wisdom within us and the ability to create the whole heart necessary to overcome the obstacles in front of us. The work of doing big things does not require *doing* more; it is a method to *being* more.**

This wisdom is one of the primary reasons why the DBT Framework is so powerful: Its mechanics are always turned on, and always available to us. What’s necessary is to make the complex, simple; the mundane, inspiring; and that which seems to take forever, achieved quickly. The vision for the team becomes the reality now.

The DBT Framework from 30,000 Feet

Although we’ll be getting to the specifics of each of the steps starting in Chapter 3, to build necessary awareness we want to provide a high-altitude flyover so the big picture is clear (Figure 1.1).

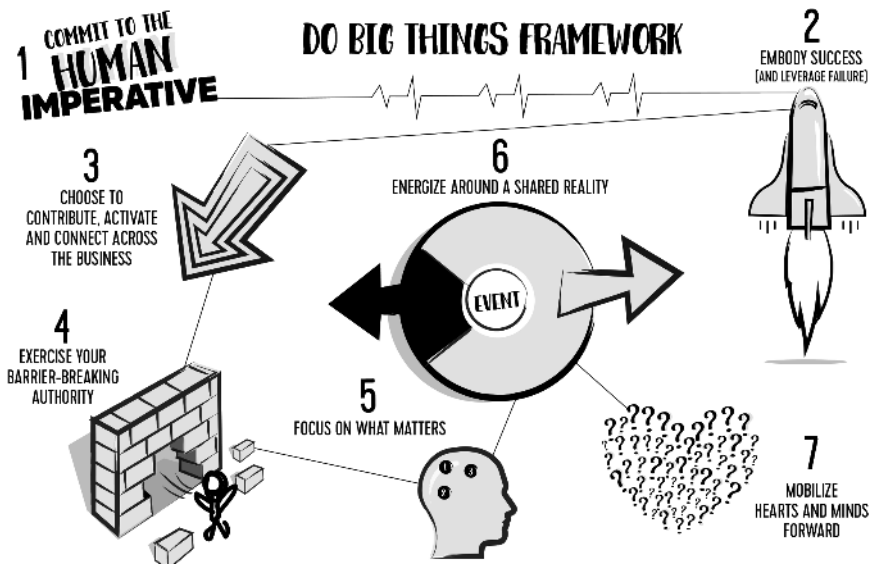


Figure 1.1 The Do Big Things Framework: Seven Replicable Steps Teams That Achieve Extraordinary Success Use

Here are the seven steps of the DBT Framework.

1. *Commit* to the human imperative. Identify and align as team members to the human thinking and actions essential for delivering the business imperative. Often born from a sense of caring for one another, this is the transformative manner in how team members perceive each other that sets the stage for values to be put into action.
2. *Embody* success (and leverage failure). Team members personify the spirit of the success they seek while they pursue their lofty objectives. When excellence is who we are (rather than what we will be someday), then even the hardships we encounter make us better and stronger as a team.
3. *Choose* to make three decisions: Contribute, Activate, and Connect across the business. Each team member decides to bring their best to every situation and bring out the best in those with whom they interact. Then, together, they choose to partner across the business to deliver shared objectives.

4. *Exercise* your barrier-breaking authority. The team determines what stands between them and success—both real and perceived. Then, by controlling what they can control, team members act upon their inherent authority to choose their response in daily situations.
5. *Focus* on what matters. The team uses the 3 *Mind Factors* to concentrate on and deliver what causes big things to be achieved: the relationships and teamwork necessary to succeed.
6. *Energize* around a shared reality. Team members use the *Energy Map* to address issues with a similar frame of mind, enable people to better tell the truth, and function with authenticity. The Energy Map is used to guide the focus and common language necessary to elevate how team members interact with one another. This step facilitates the needed skills of adaptability and accountability required to do big things.
7. *Mobilize* hearts and minds forward. Empower the team to own their role in delivering a stronger future. Use *Questions That Trigger Hearts and Minds* so everyone internalizes and delivers the team's business imperative.

The italicized words that begin each step form an acronym that spells *cecefem*, which in Latin means “to come together quickly as a team and do big things.” Wait. Um, actually, it doesn't mean that. We just made that up. In fact, the acronym doesn't spell or mean anything.

And that's good news: To be successful you're not going to have to memorize yet another acronym. The reason is because the italicized words are merely labels—just like trust, collaboration, and the other values that are labels for actions. We are going to focus our attention where teams that do big things concentrate their attention: on the thinking and actions that occur to succeed at each step.

What's critical is that the team members together are shaping the team's future, instead of one person doing it. Jim Kouzes, coauthor of the timeless book *The Leadership Challenge*, during a discussion about what's necessary for teams to succeed, told us, “We need to reinforce that leadership is not hierarchical. The role isn't just a position. Therefore, it's the context of leadership we need to change—not just the content. As a team

member, we are not just followers. Leadership is everyone's responsibility."¹²

The DBT Framework is how each team member can be accountable to that responsibility.

What Success Looks Like

Raise your hand if you like power. (Okay, that's nearly everyone.) As people, we behave in curious ways when we believe someone is taking power away from us—or attempting to have power over us. This was especially apparent in one of our consulting projects.*

To say these individuals weren't operating as one team would be to make a gross understatement: The R&D folks and those representing the commercial side of this specialty goods business came into the room in a power struggle with their boxing gloves on. A recent restructure of teams—designed for greater speed and efficiencies—had changed the processes for getting their work done. And it immediately revealed and amplified a serious disability: The people who had to work together were only demonstrating proficiency in finger-pointing and sabotaging the best efforts of others.

Collectively, they were moving toward their Grand Canyon, the one big thing they had to deliver: Momentum had to be regained in sales. Once a titan in their industry, they were losing market share. They had to get back to growth. And the members of ops and commercial were at the center of delivering this one big thing.

Each person in the room agreed: The new structure they were in, on paper, would allow them to move more effectively in delivering on their objectives. But (and it was a big but) *how* they were operating as humans was rendering their structure and improved process nearly worthless.

We asked one of the senior leaders, "Why haven't you elevated this barrier to your boss?"

*All the stories we share are based on actual experiences. In some cases, throughout the book we've changed contextual specifics to conceal identities. But the pertinent facts remain.

His answer impressed: “Because we all agree that we can and should resolve this ourselves. We want to communicate to the organization that we’re fully capable.”

Specifically, this meant that if they were going to accelerate their ability to get innovative products to the market, they had to collectively identify and agree on how they would make decisions faster together. Specifically, who would decide—and how and when—which solution would be given the green light and which would be scrapped? These are difficult decisions—especially because everyone has their favorite pet projects.

Freeze! The story must be stopped here. Do you recognize this moment? It’s the point in time so many professionals know because they often experience it in their own work: A new structure, new process, new objective, or a new team (read: they don’t have a history of relationships necessary for trust) must perform with excellence when the stakes are high.

The last thing most of these professionals need is training on trust, collaboration, or communication or any other desired behavior. (This is why they so often cancel and postpone or, if they do go, do so kicking and screaming the entire way.) They’ve seen it all; in fact, they *do* intellectualize it all. Yet what will too many of us be subjected to in this situation? **Another forced professional development exercise focused on *what* behaviors are needed to succeed—when what we really want is the *how*.** And because the business is demanding results, we want it quickly. (Please, spare us another talk about how important values are, when we already understand our values.)

The DBT Framework is what the R&D/commercial team was seeking: a playbook to create the thinking and actions that create trust and their other targeted values. And in this case, we needed to make haste: It all had to be oriented toward a decision-making process they all could own.

Fast-forward a couple of days: The most junior person in the group raised his hand and said, “I finally feel like we’re on the same team. Why did we wait so long to do this?” Then everyone stood. In the left hand of each person was the agreed-upon decision-making model they had codeveloped; they used their right hands to shake the hands of their teammates.

How did they get there so quickly? Because we didn’t train them to do something different. That takes more time than the business has to spare. Instead, by facilitating the seven steps of the DBT Framework, we enabled

them to more effectively and consistently demonstrate what they already possess. Once equipped to do so, they ran with the DBT Framework.

Here's what this looked like for the ops/commercial team:

1. They *committed* to the human imperative necessary to increase the sales of innovative products: to function as one team. They began their meetings by focusing on key questions that would advance creative collaboration and innovation. Questions such as:
 - ◆ What capabilities do we possess as a collective team that will make it possible for our customers to realize success?
 - ◆ What is working in our collaboration?
 - ◆ What does it look like to have each other's back when R&D or marketing is being scrutinized by the organization?
2. They gained a clear understanding of what it means to succeed as one team so they could *embody* that specific success. (They also identified how they would respond to failure.) They asked questions like: What does success look like for our customers? For us? The organization? Our talent?
3. They aligned and agreed on what it looks like to *choose* to contribute, activate, and connect with one another, as well as with those beyond the people sitting in the room. An understanding of what it means to be at their best personally, to bring out the best in others, and to partner across the entire organization was established. This team, as an example, determined that transparency in their actions and communications would be critical to success.
4. They began to *exercise* their barrier-breaking authority by identifying and agreeing to focus on the barriers they could control. For example, no longer would the team blame past leadership for decisions they'd made that had created the difficulties the team was now facing. They chose to own how they could influence change by focusing on the customer, internal capabilities to save on resource costs and the monetary outcomes from being first to market with innovative products. They focused on why they needed to remove a barrier as much as they focused on what they were innovating. The barriers that were once formed by the thinking and actions that created silos, were now driven by one team with one agenda.

5. They equipped themselves with a method to ensure that they stayed *focused* on what matters as it related to how they interacted with one another so they could successfully execute their new decision-making model. They made the commitment to speak up to redirect the focus and common purpose when the team was focusing on what was not working or what wouldn't work. They collectively made a choice to stay forward focused, together.
6. They established a means to *energize* around a shared reality so that healthy conflict didn't degrade to relationship conflict. "It's pretty simple, really," said one team member. "When we share the same understanding of how to approach issues that arise, we invest our time seeking out and embracing differing points of view to ensure we bring the most innovative solution to the market for our customers. This fuels our ability to put our passions to work much faster."
7. They determined their plan to *mobilize* the hearts and minds of teammates, including those not in the room, to ensure the new decision-making model was adopted by the entire organization. By cocreating a model that was customer-centric in its design with a compelling story about why it mattered, together, they inspired an organization to rally around what would be a differentiator for the company—something that restored internal pride and confidence, and would be felt by the market. The tools we equipped this team with so they could take these seven steps are examined in Chapters 3 through 9. And each is effective.

"After our time with you," one of the senior leaders reported, "I have observed a different level of trust and communication between leaders in commercial and R&D. Their messages were once passive and tense. Now, they ask each other questions. They share perspectives and ultimately agree to speak with one another to cocreate a shared solution. It is amazing to watch."

We chose to share this story because it highlights the hard work that every team must undertake on their journey to doing big things: Transform the interactions among teammates. Achieving extraordinary outcomes first requires that none of us be ordinary as team members. That's what precipitates improved outcomes, so is, therefore, what success looks like. This R&D/commercial team will tell you that the meetings they now have, spent sharing their power, may not be glamorous, but the improved market share is worth it.

The Important Requirement of *You*

If any of us want to be on a team that does big things, we are required to do something first: be bigger in our character. Our insecurities, our fears, our anger, our jealousies, our discontent, our pettiness—all of this we must transcend if we are to do something significant as a team. We must realize our own potential if the team is to realize its potential. We must go all-in with our hearts if we are to know the reward of being on a team whose whole heart is in it.

It is only when we give ourselves to something greater than us that we realize a greatness within us.

Ultimately, there's no question each of us as professionals is really good at what we do, that we've put in the hours and demonstrated the skill to be on this team. The question is: **Will each of us choose to matter? Will we choose to do something significant, not for ourselves, but for the team?**¹³

The risk of not being significant, of not doing work that matters, is its own quiet terror. Even though we know we shouldn't quit, we see teammates we care about descend into noncaring. It's subtle and gradual, but detectable: One team meeting after another, there's a decay of passion. Their eyes no longer meet ours on the video conference. Smartphones become their conscience. Efforts are minimized. They're protecting themselves from something. Then they travel home in the dark and give their families their leftovers.

And we begin to wonder about our own apathy. We wonder if we've begun to settle, to acquiesce. Then a question enters our mind that, at first, we push away. We don't want to answer it, because doing so may mean a future we don't want to see: Is what I'm doing—all this time committed to this work—worth it? Am I doing the right thing with my life?

The answer should be, can be, will be, yes. This existential reckoning, where we judge the merits of our own efforts, is natural. We are not to blame for the experience of stepping from solid ground onto an ever-faster spinning carousel. And we won't be victims, either. The spin of today's workplace, new and dizzying, can be brought under control: A rhythm always forms when we apply a mechanism that better enables us to be who we want to be—to be a part of something significant.

To do big things, we don't have to change our world, the entire company, or even the community. To be bigger than whatever is in front of us, we simply need to do what we *can* do: *commit* to leveraging the power of humanity, *embody* success, *choose* to make a meaningful difference, *exercise* our natural barrier-breaking authority, *focus* on what the business needs most, *energize* ourselves around a shared reality, and *mobilize* our hearts and minds forward. **By using the DBT Framework, we move beyond talk about what behaviors are important—and get busy with the how. We get better at being who we already are.**

We can do this thing; the team is within our sphere of influence; success is within our control. This is our greatest opportunity to matter.

Big Ideas in This Chapter and 3 Recommended Actions

- The question this book answers: How do you equip the team to deliver the thinking and actions to do big things?
- When your team members have heart collectively, then the team's "whole heart is in it." **Recommended Action:** Determine your answers to these questions with your team:
 - ◆ What difference does it make when our whole heart is in it?
 - ◆ Is this dynamic important to us, and if so, why?
 - ◆ How do we know if our team's whole heart is in it?
- It's not enough to train the team in the basics of "high-performing teams." To do big things today requires more. **Recommended Action:** Assess whether or not your team uses the Antiquated Change Model. If so, do you have a proven plan to utilize a different model?
- Knowing what values and behaviors are important for success is only part of the solution. Understanding how to demonstrate targeted values and behaviors is the key to being able to do big things.
- This ability for any group of people to quickly unite and operate with a shared, energized focus that brings out the best in all of us is the defining need of our time.

- Teams that achieve extraordinary success and have an epic impact on their business use a replicable, seven-step process called the Do Big Things (DBT) Framework. **Recommended Action:** Ask your team to assess which steps of the DBT Framework they are already demonstrating. Then determine which additional steps are important to better master to improve the team's effectiveness.
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