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# ***ACCELERATE***

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High Leverage  
**Leadership**  
*for* **Today's**  
**World**

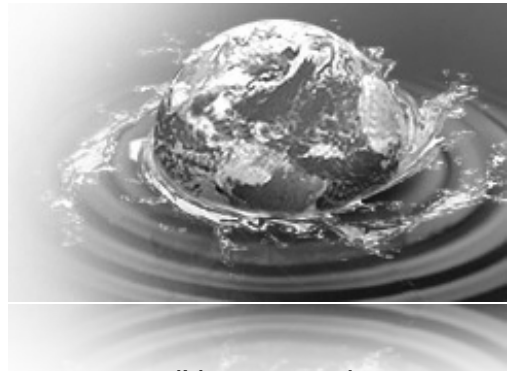
SUZANNE MAYO FRINDT  
AND DWIGHT FRINDT

**For business leaders feeling overwhelmed with the accelerating pace of change, increasing complexities and uncertainties of today's business environment.**

The world of business is morphing at a blistering pace. Dwight and Suzanne Frindt, authors of *Accelerate* and co-founders of 2130 Partners offer a **(R)Evolutionary Approach that will *RevUp* and *Evolve* your leadership, productivity and profitability, on purpose.** The principles and practices in *Accelerate* create a significant shift that will keep you relevant and competitive . . . and thriving, today and tomorrow.

**“The #1 priority for leaders over the next 3 years will be driving and managing change.”**

- *Time for a Leadership Revolution, Global Leadership Forecast 2011*



Do you feel like all you do is manage unrelenting change? **Are you overwhelmed with how to stay relevant and competitive in today's**

**volatile business environment?** The phrase 'business as usual' has never been more outdated. The vast majority of organizations surveyed in the *Global Leadership Forecast 2011* are in the process of changing their business models and services, going global, or looking for ways to be more competitive. **Yet, 43% of leaders surveyed do not feel they are equipped for the challenges and opportunities this presents.**

**Therein, the need for a revolution . . . use *Accelerate* to (R)Evolutionize Your Business - *RevUp* and *Evolve* your leadership, productivity and profitability, *on purpose*.**

## Do you have a Culture Strategy?

**What** is the culture of your organization? Is it by design or default? A company's culture is the invisible glue that binds everything together. It is the 'context' that determines whether the financial, operational or sales and marketing strategies succeed or fail . . . yet, little attention is consciously placed on developing a productive culture in alignment with what's *really* important to you.

Suzanne and Dwight Frindt, authors of *Accelerate* and co-founders of 2130 Partners help business leaders **create a Culture Strategy™ that creates an environment where change is embraced and creativity and innovation can thrive.**

### Use *Accelerate* to RevUp all of your other Business Strategies

Creating a productive culture begins with our 12 Operating Principles. These principles are the **foundation for creating an environment built on mutual trust, respect and safety.** In *Accelerate*, 'principle' is defined as a basic premise that guides how you think, speak, listen, and act, which influences how others think, speak, listen and act. They create an alternative way of being that can give you **new insights into how and when your interactions are productive or unproductive.**

Creating a Culture Strategy™ with these principles in mind acts as an **accelerant** for all your other business strategies, unleashing potential and the creativity to capitalize on opportunities and new possibilities. They require a shift from status quo, all-knowing confidence, rigidity, and judgment to curiosity, connection, mental agility, and learning, as well as courage, choice and practice. This is **even more important at a time when leading and managing change is critical to your success.**

# Operating Principles

## Valuable Ways of Being

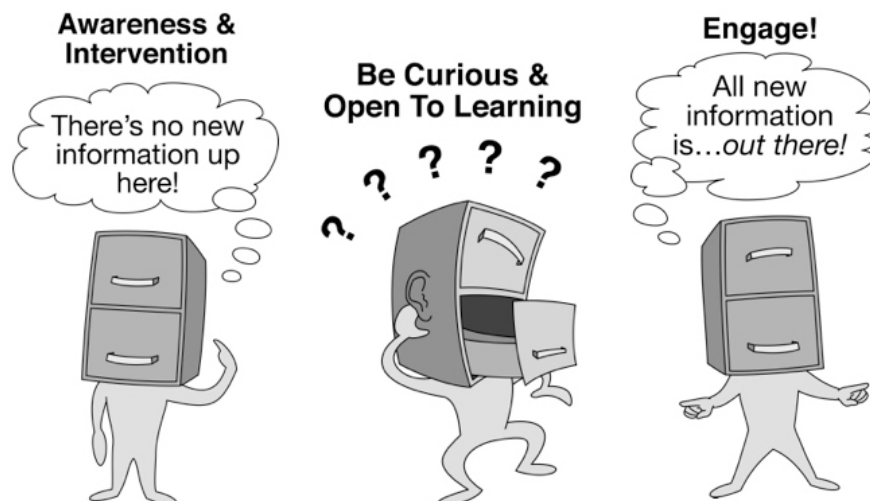
- ★ Be responsible for creating value for myself and others.
- ★ Make it safe for each other and myself.
- ★ Be present - stay in the game.
- ★ Take myself lightly.
- ★ Declare that there is nothing wrong or broken - *here and now*.
- ★ Declare that each person's contributions are valid and valuable.

## Exploration Listening and Speaking

- ★ Listen newly, be intentionally slow to understand.
- ★ Own my perception and my participation - use "I" statements.
- ★ Explore *truths* - mine, theirs and ours.
- ★ Confront and deal with the real issues.
- ★ Be direct and sensitive.
- ★ Be responsible for what gets heard.

## File Cabinet Brain Metaphor

The File Cabinet Brain is used as a metaphor throughout *Accelerate*. It represents the way a brain operates as an information management and storage system to perceive, filter, file, retrieve, and use input. The metaphor is then used to demonstrate the source of our mental and emotional barriers to productive interactions.



# Introduction

Our first intention in writing *Accelerate* is for you to become able to sustainably expand your reach and impact and that of the people around you, whether individually, in your work in teams, or in your personal lives, to levels you never thought possible.

We have no idea what the ideal level is for you. That is rightfully your concern and, by the way, we are confident that there is no right answer, other than yours. Our own vision for our reach and impact has grown to be 25,000 miles, the world around, and seven generations. Two of our longest, dearest friends are, on the other hand, fully expressed in their lives, mostly within the city limits of Corona Del Mar, California. The extreme difference in focus has no bearing on the quality of our relationship.

Our view is that there is an intention that wants to use your life, a self-expression that's dying to get out, and that it's your job to reveal it and live it as fully as you can for the rest of your life. Make it the core element of your life's work.

Our second intention for *Accelerate* is that you become able and use the opportunity to access a whole new level of self-expression in your interactions with others and theirs with you. If this calls to you, take on the principles and methodologies with a vengeance. Life will become so much more meaningful and satisfying than you can now imagine.

Our third intention is that you and those around you increase your collaborative skills and thereby your creativity, agility, and effectiveness to the levels that will be required for leadership in our world of unrelenting change. Your new ability to be present to the facts and data about the world around you, to address fear directly, and to move through resistance, whether your own or from others, will cause your performance to jump to the level required to be extraordinarily successful and grow rapidly from there.

Our fourth intention is that you be well. We have long questioned behaviors, whether economic, political, or personal, that diminish the soul's expression. We expect that the new freedom you will find as you begin to own the mental models and Operating Principles offered here will unleash you. The newfound peace that goes with that can, in turn, express itself in a healthier body and lifestyle, healthier relationships with your co-workers, and healthier relationships throughout your family and community life.

Given our commitment to reach and impact, we intend that, as you and others adopt and practice this material in your own lives, the new way of living that evolves will spread far and wide and will eventually allow human beings to find new ways to relate and live peacefully and sustainably across our earth. We invite you to join us in adding this commitment to your way of being as you lead your life at new, high levels of effectiveness, productivity, contribution, and satisfaction.

Suzanne and Dwight Frindt  
Co-Founders and Principals, 2130 Partners  
[www.2130partners.com](http://www.2130partners.com)

# Setting the Stage

## Unrelenting Change

Our world is rapidly reshaping in many amazing ways:

- As the video *Shift Happens* has pointed out to the millions of YouTube viewers who have seen it on the Internet, “We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t exist, who will be using technology we haven’t yet discovered, to solve problems we don’t even yet know about yet” (*Shift Happens* video, created by Karl Fisch and modified by Scott McLeod).
- The quantity of information and its availability and speed of delivery are increasing at an exponential rate as costs are approaching zero.
- The number of people accessing and using this information and the many ways it is disseminated has exploded since the advent of personal computers and the Internet - which in turn exponentially speeds up the rate at which new technologies are developed.
- Women are stepping into leadership roles at all levels, in diverse venues and in unprecedented numbers all over the world.
- Awareness that our global environment cannot continue to withstand a collective human consumption race is spreading quickly.
- Our children are being born into and growing up in a world so different than the one we grew up in that it requires a new way of being for them to lead successful lives.
- More people over 65 are alive today than have ever lived to that age, so that group will be looking for whole new models for leading healthy, successful lives.

# Essential Notions

**B**efore you begin redesigning your thinking and interactions from the Operating Principles presented in this book, it is essential to understand some of our foundational concepts and terms. These Essential Notions provide the context for applying the Operating Principles and for the new leadership practices you will be able to develop.

To use a construction analogy: consider the old paradigm of command and control leadership as a building foundation. Over time, leadership and management practices and communication styles have been built on that foundation to accommodate and fit in with the initial foundation design. In most cases, as with the foundation of most buildings, the foundation itself is no longer visible. To build new leadership and management practices for the emerging new world, it would be insufficient to leave the foundational structure and simply replace the walls, windows and roof. New practices that work will not fit on top of an obsolescing foundation. The old foundation will most likely cause the practices to be reshaped to fit the old design.

Reframing your thinking and conversations through application of the Operating Principles is similar to designing and constructing a new foundation for your new building. The building then represents the new leadership thinking, communication structures, and behaviors appropriate to the new world and its reshaped marketplaces.

Our phrasing and the way we use terms in this text are not designed to be conventional or necessarily grammatically correct. Our selections are based on our experience of what works—on what plays out powerfully in the action when our clients and students engage with the language and each other. If we find ideas and ways of expressing them that produce and advance something new and interesting, we are excited. If we just see more of the same old types of interactions, then bye-bye terminology! Consequently, we have revised our terminology and our individual principles over time, adding and subtracting as we have gone along.

Note: In this Excerpt, we are featuring two of our four Essential Notions. See pages 20-21 for the Full Contents of *Accelerate*.

# New Nature of Leadership: Replacing Commands with Vision

*In this evolving new reality, successful leadership will have a very different nature than traditional approaches.*

It was quite different to be a leader in simpler economic times and when the world moved at a slower pace with less connectivity. There were successful models and practices in place as well as more easily identifiable and attainable goals. Patterns of entitlement offered at least the illusion of security, and there was more time and predictability in producing results. However, now—when previous business models and assumptions have been turned on their heads, when people’s livelihoods are changing and disappearing regularly, and when successful businesses are being transformed for the new realities—the leadership required is radically agile, proactive, and creative.

Leaders who will be effective in this time of incredible opportunity are those that lead as if they are in a dance with reality—that is, they look to create exciting new paradigms, processes, and even companies based on creating the next game while being responsible for the current and unfolding global economy. They are not simply waiting until the economy gets back to normal or using past experiences to map out current pathways.

Being in a dance demands conversations appropriate to dancing. Think about it—when you get out on the dance floor, do you tell your partner, “I need these four steps from you in the next minute, followed by a repetitive pattern until I tell you otherwise”? If you have done that, perhaps you have found that it leaves you with very few dance partners. How then do you engage with others in this new reality?

## **Vision-Focused Leadership™**

We call the management model we use to replace the old “command-and-control” paradigm **Vision-Focused Leadership**, which is an approach grounded in shared vision and built through collaboration. When we first started talking about this foundational shift in our thought process, it was fairly novel in the business world. This process of developing plans based on a shared vision has become more accepted. Its success in facilitating cultures that can adapt quickly and creatively to changing conditions has made it attractive for businesses and leaders committed to thriving in uncertainty.

A still unique characteristic of how we use Vision-Focused Leadership with clients, however, is our focus on the design of the particular human interactions necessary to effectively and sustainably fulfill vision. The material in this book has been created to allow you to increase your ability to have those types of interactions, whether you are working with a whole team to fulfill an overall corporate strategic vision or simply sharing a vision for a great relationship with a special person in your life.

**Vision:** A mental image produced by the imagination

Vision-Focused Leadership as a mental model shows how thinking, listening, speaking, and actions—most importantly those that you employ to lead others—are focused and informed by a shared vision. Focusing on your shared vision allows you to make choices; orient your creativity, energy, and resources; and correlate your thoughts and actions and the actions of people working with you on your shared intention. In the absence of shared vision, it is easy to become victims of or be distracted by circumstances, worries, and fears, and to react based on instant, automatic, unconscious, and unexamined thoughts, beliefs, and judgments stored in your mind. Without necessarily realizing it, the past winds up driving your bus.

When we talk about leadership here, our intention is to stress that leadership can be evoked anywhere in an organization—that is, every person can exhibit leadership qualities, no matter what his or her job description may be.

There has been much experimental research in the field of social psychology to demonstrate the benefits of a “shared social identity” as a precursor to team development and effectiveness. The process of developing a shared vision and working toward fulfillment creates an opportunity for powerful shared social identity—a deep feeling of “us.” In addition to benefiting from a shared vision as a navigational beacon (a contextual and directional icon) it also serves as the social glue that binds a group together. This is critical for our work together since, in today’s world, we are forming groups that are more and more diverse in geography, language, background, and life experience. The homogeneity or sameness that once held groups together can also lead to being insular, exclusive, or narrow minded and can limit possibilities without your awareness.

If you and your team members have done a good job developing and sharing the vision, then creating powerful actions will flow much more naturally. People will be able to individually source their ideas, actions, and interactions from the shared vision. If you replace commands with shared vision and broaden the *source and responsibility* for creativity to the entire team, you will maximize creativity, ownership, collaboration, and velocity in fulfilling the shared vision.

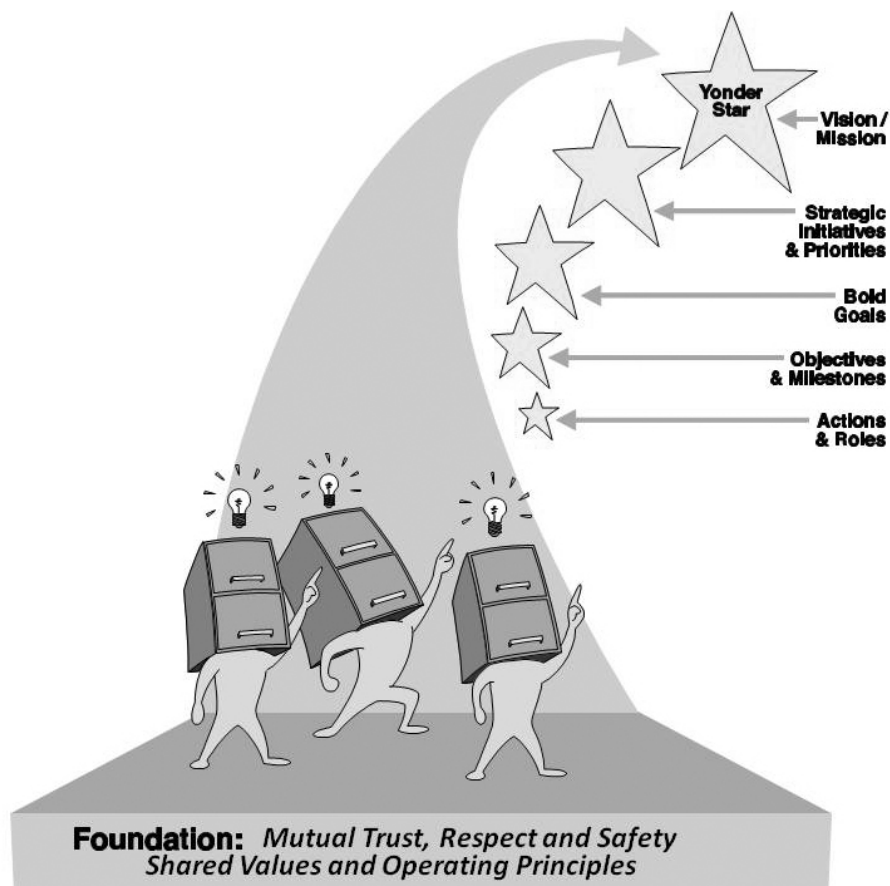


## Yonder Star – Shared Vision

We use the term **Yonder Star** to include shared vision, goals, objectives, and strategies to obtain it. It can be applied at any level from a strategic corporate vision to your vision for the outcomes you intend to produce in a single conversation or meeting. The Yonder Star is the ideal, *out* in front of you and *up* above the path you are currently traveling, that provides a common focus and inspires your actions. Rather than hanging onto sacred past-based activities and processes (e.g., “what did we do and how did we do it last year?”), priorities, plans, and milestones are designed from a focus on the Yonder Star.

From this mind-set, actions are prioritized by their value in fulfilling the Yonder Star. All members of the team are inspired to explore their own integration of the goal with their passion to contribute and the specific role their work will play in its fulfillment. From shared dedication to the overall outcome, a pervasive attitude of “I’ve got your back” naturally develops within each member of the team. Dissent, one-upmanship, and agendas fueled by self-interest tend to fade to the background.

### ***Vision - Focused Leadership***



The graphic above is our shorthand illustration of this notion. Here we show a group of people who are interacting from a solid foundation of mutual trust, respect, and safety to reach their mutual Yonder Star. In this case, a collection of aligned Yonder Stars, shown in a stack of different sizes, depicts the many intermediate goals that lie between your current situation and fulfillment of your Yonder Star.

To sort out which actions will be most productive on your route to your Yonder Star, look back from your fulfilled Yonder Star and ask, “What’s missing in our current reality that, if we work on it, will accelerate fulfilling our Yonder Star?” From your list, determine the decisions and actions that will be most leveraged in closing the gap. By *leveraged*, we mean the actions that produce the greatest impact while requiring the fewest resources and taking the least amount of time to accomplish.

Get started, monitor results, recalibrate with new position updates, and continue on your path or make adjustments as necessary to stay on course.

*He turns not back who is bound to a star.”*

**Leonardo da Vinci**

Italian Painter, Sculptor, Architect, Inventor and Scientist

In the Productive Dialogues discussion in this book, we will suggest how to move your interactions and conversations “up and out,” continuously resourcing and reconnecting at least one level up from the current situation to create better solutions or resolve issues more effectively. Be sure to check out the recommendations and outline in the Practical Application—Section Five: *Finding Alignment—Moving the Conversation and the Focus “One Up.”*

# New Ways of Working Together

*As we go forward, those who lead will be the ones taking advantage of the creativity and productivity gains available by focusing on the human, collaborative dimension, while laggards will suffer in the face of unrelenting change.*

The extremely affordable and nearly instant access to vast amounts of information and ways of interacting with whole communities that are becoming available, combined with a productive attitude toward change and the new realities it brings, creates huge opportunities for you and your leadership. However, leading *effectively* will require a new mind-set to unleash potential and creativity and to capitalize on opportunities.

The challenges lie in strengthening your ability to choose the direction, form the goals, and then communicate and enroll others so that you build groups and organizations that can collectively navigate shifting realities. This means improving your ability to communicate, work together collaboratively, and lead others to do so as well. If you learn how to identify and utilize the navigational guides to traversing this uncharted territory, you will experience higher productivity, more rapid innovation, and greater organizational agility. Additionally, responsiveness to the needs of customers and other stakeholders in the organization and more rewarding relationships will become something you can rely upon.

The new array of technologies gives you ways to connect to information and to each other via machines, yet can lessen your need to connect on a personal basis. As a result of personal digital assistants (PDAs), voice mail, and Internet access around the globe, you can receive and transmit messages without ever hearing a live voice or seeing a live face. This constant dealing in cyberspace can easily result in social isolation, where interpersonal and collaborative skills are relegated to the sidelines or, even worse, begin to disappear.

Daniel Goleman, in his book *Social Intelligence*, talks about “creeping disconnection” that has produced a two-decade decline in social capital. In a survey of 4,830 people in the United States, he found that for many, the Internet has replaced television as the way free time is used. For every hour people spent using the Internet, their face-to-face contact with friends, co-workers, and family fell by twenty-four minutes. He further comments, “To the extent that technology absorbs people in a virtual reality, it deadens them to those who are actually nearby.”

This personal isolation, combined with the increasing rate of change and immediacy of deadlines, has exacerbated an already challenged workplace where people have difficulty working through often relatively simple situations with each other. An inordinate amount of productive time, payroll dollars, and opportunities are lost daily, monthly, and annually to the distraction caused by unresolved or nonproductive interactions.

In today's world, if a company saw the same kind of losses in a manufacturing or supply process, it would be forced to quickly shut down and retool or risk becoming another in the growing list of "has-been brands."

When asking our executive clients a simple question, "What time could you go home if everyone in the company simply came to work, did their jobs and went home?" the answer used to surprise us until it kept being repeated. On average, our clients say, "Between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m."

If so many executives perceive that they could go home before lunch (or get twice as much work done every day) if everyone just showed up, did their work, and went home, what's taking up so much of their time? Our clients tell us it is dealing with all the upsets, push-back, miscommunications, broken promises, failed intentions, and frustrations with their interactions. They feel that one of the most time-consuming parts of their job is managing distressed interactions—between their team members and with customers and vendors—so that the important work actually gets done, promises are kept, the organization's values are honored, and the business stays on its strategic course.

While not necessarily new, the pace of unrelenting change and the constant media hype around economic and global uncertainties have exacerbated this issue. This whole mess of friction and waste that occurs in an organization's daily communications produces high levels of stress and its associated health risks and makes work incredibly inefficient.

Let's assume there's exaggeration at play here. Even if you will never be able to consistently leave by noon or double your effectiveness, it is entirely reasonable to gain at least two hours of your time every day through minimizing dealing with distress in yourself and your team members. That's nearly five hundred extra hours a year that can be devoted to creative thinking, visioning, and strategizing rather than on repairing, to say nothing at this point about the increase in morale and well-being. That amounts to substantial savings—and the same can be said for everyone throughout the organization.

It's clear that a dramatic increase in a team's productivity is available through getting much, much better at communicating and working collaboratively. Just as lean manufacturing and supply chain compression have increased competitiveness and lowered cost by eliminating waste in processes, leaders and leading firms will be taking advantage of these human dimension gains in productivity and laggards will suffer as we go forward in these unprecedented times.

## Self-Generated Accountability

*One of the differentiators of the material in this book is the emphasis on personal responsibility.*

When leaders and managers tell us that they would like to be able to hold their people more accountable, we often hear that they would really like them to be “obedient,” follow the orders or instructions, *and* be willing to take the blame if things don’t work out. The whole concept of buy-in or shared ownership is missing. Inside a command and control environment, buy-in and ownership have been twisted to be something “required.”

In Dr. Stanley Milgram’s controversial and infamous experiments in the early sixties exploring obedience and responsibility, the Yale University professor conducted an experiment using residents of New Haven, Connecticut, and actors. The stated research objective was to determine whether learning is enhanced with the administration of pain through increasing electric shock. The real purpose of the study was to determine how willing ordinary people were to replace personal responsibility with obedience to (scientific) authority. When told to do so by the scientific researchers, 65% of the subjects were willing to give apparently harmful electric shocks to the “learners” (actors) who were pitifully protesting further shocks, in spite of the fact that the victims did nothing to “deserve” that level of punishment except give incorrect answers.

Later, Jerry Burger at Santa Clarita University in California conducted a partial replication of Milgram’s famous studies, which was featured in the January 3, 2007 broadcast of ABC News’ *Primetime*. Burger’s work on social influence and compliance showed similar results. What was different about the participants who stopped administering the shocks? In interviews of participants after the experiments, as reported in the *New York Times*, “Those who stopped generally believed themselves to be responsible for the shocks, whereas those who kept going tended to hold the experimenter accountable.”

Consider the experiment’s implications on your understanding and use of the concept of accountability. When individuals see themselves as the source of responsibility for their actions, their ownership of the project or task informs their actions in a productive way.

When individuals believe someone else is responsible, they follow instructions without engaging their own thought processes and discernment. It doesn’t really matter whether you tell them that you are “holding them accountable” or not. The shift only occurs with their choice of perspective. Which set of behaviors do you intend to foster in your team or in your organization?

To foster Self-Generated Accountability, a new model of leadership that replaces commands with vision and a collaborative culture is required. While some leaders and managers may, at times, simply desire obedience, the trade-off they make is to lose any natural Self-Generated Accountability from those doing the work.

In response to an environment requiring obedience masquerading as accountability, people who would normally thrive in a true accountability culture eventually leave, and you are left with those who simply want to be told what to do. Then, if the plan fails, they are off the hook since they were “just doing what they were told.” We call this “vicious obedience” or “malicious compliance”—a far cry from accountability. We discuss the Operating Principles that will guide you in upgrading your own mental operating system to this orientation in Section Two of this book, “It Begins with Me.”

## ***What Gets in Our Way?***

### **Mental and Emotional Barrier: Our File Cabinet Brain**

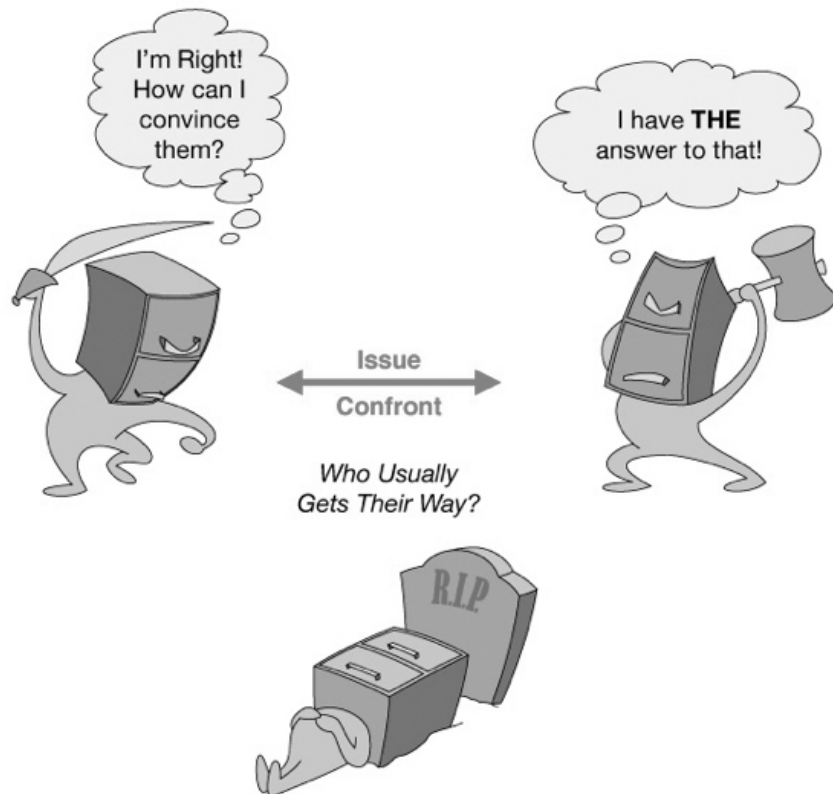
Your individual and unique brain is the storehouse for your lifelong memories, experiences, emotions, judgments, and beliefs that you access instantly and automatically to compare, assess, and process all current incoming data and experiences. We use the metaphor of a **File Cabinet** to symbolize the way minds operate like a filing system to perceive, filter, file, retrieve, and use input.

The characters with the file cabinets for heads in the prior Yonder Star illustration that are all pointing to the Yonder Star graphically represents the way each of us draws on our mental File Cabinet, even when we are engaged in pursuit of a shared Yonder Star. In this case, the participants are sharing their ideas and experiences with an intention to contribute productively toward achieving the shared vision. In this mode, new ideas and solutions can emerge from outside any individual member of the group’s File Cabinet mind. They flow from and are a function of the collaborative interaction by the participants.

In this next illustration the File Cabinet characters demonstrate how we often use our past-based knowledge and beliefs to engage unproductively with fellow team members. Here they are busy spewing their own File Cabinet contents; opinions, perspectives, judgments and experiences out into the interaction in “convince and convert” mode without any regard for the other person or what they may have to contribute.

These characters have lost focus on the Yonder Star and are turning energy, creativity, and wits to winning the battle over who is right. Defense kicks in and the challenge is on. The best possible outcome, after a challenge between individuals based only on past-based experiences, is that *one* perspective will prevail, usually the person with the most power in the relationship.

## Dueling File Cabinets: Convince and Convert Mode



Once the volume or intensity of a dueling File Cabinet discussion gets turned up, unproductive emotions are often triggered on both sides, diminishing or destroying the opportunity for an environment of productivity, creativity, buy-in and ownership. Often the most elegant solution does not exist in either File Cabinet. It is sparked and developed through sharing and developing creative ideas, thoughts, and experiences.

Throughout this book, we will explore mental and emotional barriers that can arise from your own File Cabinet to keep you from being present and making choices consistent with your Yonder Star. We will offer solutions for observing and disengaging or untangling yourself from some of the traps associated with those barriers so you can be open to new ideas and new ways of interacting.

During those discussions, you may find yourself focusing on how you can fix your business associates, relatives, and friends with the ideas. Remember: give that up. The material is for *you* to practice, practice, and practice some more.

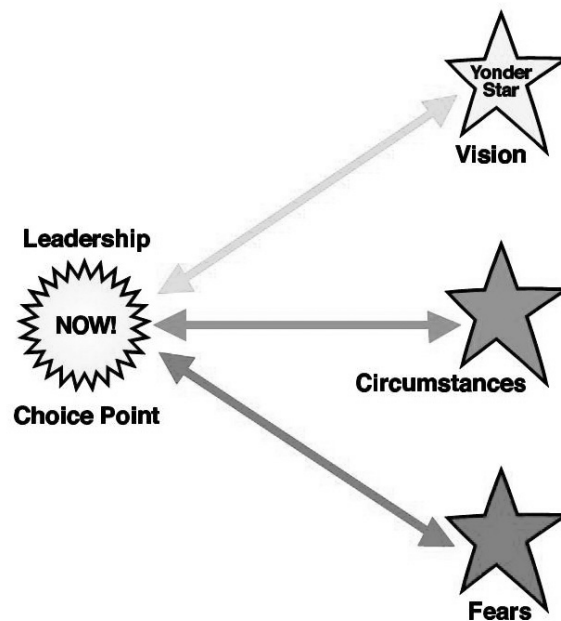
## Choice and Focus

*We think we live in the world. We think we live in a set of circumstances, but we don't. We live in our conversations about the world and our conversations about the circumstances. When we're in a conversation about fear...then that is the world we inhabit. If we're in a conversation about possibility...then that is the world we inhabit.*

**Lynne Twist**  
*The Soul of Money*

## Leadership Choice Point™

There are many unconscious and compelling influences on your actions in each moment. Your subconscious mind is always busy monitoring and reacting to your circumstances, comparing the incoming data to your past, checking for threats to your survival, and using your past as a basis to anticipate and control what may happen in the next moment. Meanwhile, other parts of your mind are busy checking for your emotions and your storehouse of possibly relevant concepts. If you are truly conscious and present in the moment, you can choose to access your Yonder Star and use it to guide your decisions, conversations, illustrated by the upper line in the graphic below).



When it sinks in that you really do have a choice in each moment, you will become able to regularly re-choose how to be, how to interact, and what to do next to reach your goals. The power and leverage in this idea is that you can think newly and reelect the source of your next thoughts and actions—The Leadership Choice Point!



The paragraphs that follow describe the impact of correlating our thoughts and actions with each of the three focal points illustrated in our Leadership Choice Point graphic: Vision/Yonder Star, Circumstances, or Fears.

## **Fear-Based Focus**

When fear is in charge, you are reacting to a real or perceived threat. Your brain compares incoming data with records in your File Cabinet and issues instantaneous survival commands, which severely limit your conscious thinking, and focuses your behaviors in a defensive mode. You are in *reaction* mode versus *choice* mode. Your reactions become limited to fight, flight, freeze, or appease, depending on your particular survival technique. Analysis, options, and perspectives are not available as your focus narrows and becomes limited to your survival. Productive connections with others are pretty much nonexistent.

A focus on our fears, worries, and concerns, this mode of thought, and the manner of listening and speaking that results, is represented along the lower line in the illustration. Since this reaction is instant and automatic, it is often unrecognized. You may be spending much more time in a very low-effectiveness, fear-based interaction mode than you realize.

## **Under the Circumstances**

Without even realizing it, most of the day you are automatically correlating your actions with your circumstances. One of the characteristics of circumstances is that they are fairly predictable, with some exceptions such as a vacation in a foreign country or a new job. Most of your day is filled with common activities, such as walking, driving, sitting in chairs, eating meals, engaging with others, and so on. Most of the time your brain can count on what will be required in the next moment because the majority of the incoming data matches the historical records in your File Cabinet—so it knows the signals to send to successfully negotiate the current circumstances.

You may drive safely down the road for extended periods, often without being consciously aware, because your brain recognizes the physical circumstances and knows the rules to apply as it issues commands to your muscles. Probably you have wondered, at least once, whether you stopped at that last stop sign or not. Fortunately, you didn't have to consciously think about it. Your brain works hard to match the current moment with the past even when the fit may be relatively poor, and then directs your actions in a manner consistent with that interpretation.

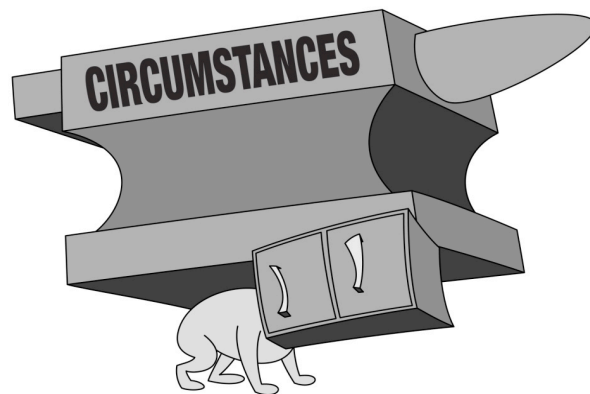
*Whenever you think that you are facing a contradiction, examine your premises.*

**John Galt** in *Atlas Shrugged*  
**Ayn Rand**

Unconsciously correlating your actions with your circumstances doesn't always work! When you are no longer able to produce outcomes that are desirable or advantageous or the circumstances are suddenly unrecognizable, it is time to face the fact that you may be hanging on to predictable, past-based notions and behaviors that don't apply or aren't productive now!

Unconsciously allowing circumstances to govern your actions is not the only unproductive maneuver. Some of our clients have justified *conscious* correlation of their actions with their circumstances by calling that behavior “being realistic” or “living in the real world.” Their wording may even include “under the circumstances.” When an individual or team insists that the circumstances they are facing are the defining boundaries and limitations of their thinking, they are truly “under the circumstances.”

***Most people live a circumstantial life.***



This conscious acceptance of current conditions as the limiting conditions is a setup for victimhood—being a victim of the circumstances. In day-to-day conversations it often shows up as a limiting belief such as “You know how Sally is...” which turns the “way they are” into a reality—a current condition that limits options and possibilities. If you are really good at these consciously created limitations, you will find proof, evidence, and collusion from others that the circumstances as you see them are right and that you are a victim of them—nothing can be done “under the circumstances.” David Whyte talks about a “Contingency Life”: as soon as all the circumstances can be arranged perfectly, then I can... “get a job” ... “go back to school” ... “have a great relationship.”

## **Yonder Star Focus**

Reactions based on fear and automatic behavior correlated with your circumstances are driven mostly from a subconscious level. While a focus on your Yonder Star requires conscious choice, it may also bring up a certain amount of fear for you or others. Yonder Stars, as we define them, are new creations, have less evidence or track record for support, and involve outcomes that can't simply be predicted from past successes. The unknown associated with this perspective can evoke doubts, which turn into fears quite readily.

The essential self-management skill here is to intervene in your own thinking and behavior and act from the Leadership Choice Point. In each Leadership Choice Point moment, you will be making a conscious and courageous intervention in your own thinking and behaviors to realign them with your goals. Perhaps the greater of these two is courage, as it is basically a way of being.

The conscious mind is geared to sorting concepts and may not give you access to the “juice” you must summon to trust your “gut feel” or “instinct” at critical moments. It is only in repeatedly re-choosing your Yonder Star, in the present moment, over fear or known circumstances that new pathways to your desired outcomes can emerge and you can develop the capacity to be comfortable with higher levels of uncertainty and unfamiliarity.

David Whyte, poet and author, defines courage as: *cultivating a healthy relationship with the unknown.*

We are not saying that correlating your actions with fear or circumstances is bad or wrong. Each can be useful at appropriate moments. The key takeaway here is to learn to be aware that you have a choice in each moment so that you are refreshing yourself in a way that your thoughts and actions are more creative, powerful, and collaborative. Your ability to be present and consider choices versus operating on cruise control will greatly impact your success. The Operating Principles are designed to help you do just that.

We have not yet seen anyone (including ourselves or among our numerous clients) who is able to remain focused and operating on the upper line at all times. There is nothing wrong with having your attention on circumstances or being afraid. In a normal situation, you will often have all three focuses occurring in rapid succession within a short period! In one moment, you are focused on your Yonder Star. Then you realize the *huge* gap between your vision and the present reality, start to worry, and *bam*, you’re on the lower line. You catch yourself and work on getting “realistic,” which generally means focusing on your circumstances. That action can then drive you right back down the lower line. Alternatively, you might deceive yourself into thinking the current circumstances will go on forever and get comfortable, pretending to be present. Then you remember what you are committed to and choose the Yonder Star path again.

The objective is not to keep an unblinking focus on your Yonder Star. Learn how to catch yourself, identify where you really are focused in the moment, and refocus. The payoff is less emotional and mental downtime and less friction and waste in your conversations and relationships. Learning to consciously choose in this way more frequently is an outcome of the paradigm shift to Vision-Focused Leadership and an essential ingredient of Self-Generated Accountability.

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## ***Praise for Accelerate***

The Dwight and Suzanne Frindt show business leaders who work in environments of pressure, stress, and fear how to live a meaningful, authentic and joyful life. This book guides so many of us to go from success to significance and to bring those we care about on the same journey.

- Rafael Pastor, Chairman of the Board & CEO, Vistage International, Inc.

The book you are about to read is a remarkably simple, elegant and insightful approach to creating the possibility of consistently producing extraordinary results.

- Steven H. Sunshine, Member-Management Committee, International Law Firm of Bryan Cave LLP

The two people I know who are most committed to their brothers and sisters on the planet are Dwight and Suzanne Frindt. The evidence of their impact and reach shows up in how they relate to friends, family and their efforts to provide opportunity for those in developing countries. Their continued selfless generosity has allowed so many people around the world to live a better life. I am one of those fortunate people. This book offers you an opportunity to share their ideas and commitments as I have.

- Steven J. Sherwood, CEO, CWS Capital Partners & Chairman of the Board, The Hunger Project

Dwight and Suzanne Frindt have written a truly masterful book on leadership. This book and its brilliant principles, clarity, accessibility, and deep wisdom are a reflection of their extensive experience and impeccable standards of excellence. But more importantly, "*Accelerate – High Leverage Leadership for Today's World*" is a complete match for the challenging times in which we live. Leaders today are facing problems and challenges that are complex beyond any previous era in history. Meeting those challenges takes extraordinary new ways of thinking and being that have been tested by the authors and made available to everyone in this absolutely stunning and brilliant book. For anyone who is truly up to something at this critical time in history—this book, *Accelerate* is a must read.

- Lynne Twist, Author, *The Soul of Money* & Co-founder, The Pachamama Alliance

The real life applications, examples, and worksheets that Dwight and Suzanne have included at the end of this book enable and empower the reader to immediately put the Operating Principles into action. For example, as a Human Resources executive, I found the information contained in "Making a Role Change" or "Closing a Performance Gap" extremely insightful and very helpful.

- Kristine Carter, VP, Human Resources, Kawasaki Motors Corporation, U.S.A.

Simple yet profound, provocative yet practical, *Accelerate* will take you and shake you and put you back into your life and work better able and ready to BE who you were put here to be - and DO what you are capable of doing. A must-read for anyone wanting to bring their life and work together in powerful ways that transform both! What a gift! Every word exudes the substance of Dwight's and Suzanne's decades of practical experience. Much more than a "how to" book, it's a "what's real" book!

John J. Scherer, Author, *Five Questions that Change Everything* &  
Founder, Scherer Leadership Center

A must read for those who want to increase their effectiveness muscle in collaboration and problem solving in their professional and personal lives.

- Linda M. Walker, Parker Aerospace, Parker Hannifin Corp., Human Resources VP (Retired)

The fundamental principles presented in this book provide real, practical access to the kind of collaboration that will be required to deal effectively and sustainably with the fear, resistance, and unrelenting change we all face in our daily work and lives. From creating a "Yonder Star" to call you forward, to confronting your own willingness to be 100% accountable for the quality of your interactions with others, the authors provide serious readers with deceptively simple access to meaningful transformation in your work and lives.

- Dr. Tom Hill, Founder of Eagle Goal Coach & Co-author, *Chicken Soup for the Entrepreneurial Soul*