

Chapter One:

REMOVING THE BLINDS



The Leader is Often In the Way

Company founders are typically the most passionate about their business, are usually the best salespeople and almost always have a deep technical knowledge that far surpasses anyone else in the company.

During the opening stages of growth, the founder's skill set needs to change, sometimes at remarkable speed. This often occurs in a way that the leader is not prepared for, or at least does not have experience with. Most leaders have a difficult time recognizing this and then getting out of the way to either a) grow these new skill sets, or b) enroll new talent to come on board.

The Enemy Is Us

Recall Walt Kelly's famous 1971 quote: "**We have met the enemy and he is us.**"¹ I have never witnessed a significant business problem - including my own - where the leader did not also play a major role, either in how he viewed the problem or in being the "enemy within." Awareness and acceptance that he or she may be a big part of the problem is often a moment of striking clarity and the beginning of an opportunity to overcome ANY obstacle.

Abraham Lincoln once said: "**Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?**"²

The opportunity to turn your enemies into aligned collaborators exists. Making your enemy your friend can be the start of a major turn-around for your business.

So, to the extent you that are open to your 'enemies within,' consider what you can do to reshape those ideas, aligning them with better business practices.

What remains are external forces, such as competitive pressure, rising costs of production, and changing technology. They are all real and an

integral part of the game. These external challenges are ‘dragons.’ We all encounter them and they are simply part of the business game.

Dragons need to be slayed. But in order to slay your dragons with the utmost impact, consider first addressing your enemies within.

Pulling Back The Blinds

Leaders are often blind to their own barriers, weaknesses, and, in particular, decision-making practices that may hurt their business. An essential first step to being a successful leader is to acknowledge and find ways to overcome them.

The question is: “How do you come to know the mysteries about yourself that might be causing you to stand in your own way?” If you don’t know that your point of view and subsequent actions are in the way, how can you possibly avoid them?

Don’t Be the Smartest Person In The Room



**IF YOU’RE THE SMARTEST PERSON IN THE ROOM,
YOU’RE IN THE WRONG ROOM.**

Coachable people, including entrepreneurs, leaders and key decision makers, are constantly surrounding themselves with smarter people and abundant resources, in an attempt to be the ‘*dumbest person in the room.*’

Even so, the leader still contributes to the conversation and decisions. A leader brings a certain skill set and knowledge base. While ‘smarter’

people may also have that knowledge, they will bring their unique insight to other areas of the business.

Why wouldn’t you want smarter people around you, people that have had real world experience in areas you don’t? Often, these same people want you to be the best you can be and are honest about your blind spots.

When I launched my internet marketing firm in 1996, the web was the ‘wild west,’ and many of us were literally making up the rules as we went along. For example, I was on the ground floor of search engine optimization (SEO) and saw an opportunity to generate long-term recurring revenues well before SEO specialists were a “thing.”

We also ventured into website hosting, first by leasing and reselling hosting services. And then, seeing the opportunity to dramatically increase our profit margins, we built a hosting data-center, owning and maintaining the hardware (servers, cables, etc.).

For a few years, this was a great profit center. Then the costs of maintaining and replacing obsolescent hardware and software began to creep in. It became harder and harder to find technicians who could support our ‘dying’ technology and was extremely expensive to maintain. As new technology appeared, other data centers emerged, providing higher quality service for much cheaper. Eventually, the entire hosting industry was overtaken by mass service providers such as GoDaddy and Amazon.

A few years into this venture, I began to realize the enormous risk I had put my company into. As an entrepreneur, I was naturally risk-tolerant, however, this decision was one that, if it went wrong, would have had severe consequences on my business. As a management decision, it was a bad one. And, it was not one that I saw coming because I was so focused on the near-term profit potential.

It was not until I had a very wise and experienced mentor to bounce ideas off, when I saw how some of my decision making was impaired. On reflection, we did not have an exit strategy for the data center and

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I learned late in the game that “obsolescence planning” was a critical skill I needed to learn.

There are many avenues to becoming more aware of your weaknesses, from mentors to personal development books and 360 degree surveys through to self-awareness programs. For me, absorbing as much as I can, finding out what works for me and then sticking to it until it no longer serves my purpose, works well.

Fortunately, I had to look no further than myself as the contributor to many problems. Unfortunately, it took me years to figure this out. I had a cunning ‘enemy within’ that I had not seen. However, once I recognized it, I immediately took action.



**ENEMIES CAN ONLY BE ALIGNED AND PUT
IN THEIR PLACE ONCE YOU RECOGNIZE AND
ACKNOWLEDGE THEM.**



Chapter Two:

HOW TO HYPNOTIZE YOURSELF



Sigmund Freud³ - the founder of psychotherapy - is credited with looking at the past for answers about ourselves. **Victor Frankl**⁴ - the founder of logotherapy - is credited with looking to the future to help us find meaning in our lives.

In between the past and the future lies the present or “living in the moment.” No one yet has been credited for demonstrating how we live our lives to the fullest, though there are plenty of contenders like **Deepak Chopra**⁵ and **Zig Ziglar**⁶.

Werner Erhard,⁷ who helped pioneer a breakthrough **collaboration initiative**⁸ dedicated to lasting peace between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom, wrote about “self awareness” and practical models for helping us to become effective leaders:



“YOUR POWER IS A FUNCTION OF VELOCITY. THAT IS TO SAY, YOUR POWER IS A FUNCTION OF THE RATE AT WHICH YOU TRANSLATE INTENTION INTO REALITY.”

WERNER ERHARD⁹

Having focus, knowing what you want, and setting the speed at which you move towards your goals are essential elements for making your dreams a reality.

It’s not a ‘glass half-full’ mentality. Neither is it “**The Secret**”¹⁰ method of envisioning something you want and having the universe deliver it to you. Rather, it’s an intentional and deliberate way of creating your own reality.

One of Werner’s premises is that humans have two states of consciousness, the one we call ourselves and the other that we constantly hypnotize ourselves with - the ‘man inside our head’ - talking to us,