

Breakthroughs in Leadership

**A presentation given by
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May 23, 2002**

Robert K. Cooper, acclaimed educator and pioneer in the practical application of emotional intelligence, is the author of *The Performance Edge*, *Executive EQ*, *Excellerating*, *Reach's Rules*, *Leadership is Relationships: the Five Keys*, and *The Other 90%: How to Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life*.

Part I: New Keys to Success in a Changing World

"Everyone can find a way to unlock their hidden greatness," says Cooper. The pathway has nothing to do with money or position. It's right there before all of us; the laboratory for greatness is all around us. He cites examples of people at the end of their lives who realize they've missed what was important, and it was right in front of them. Cooper provides tools based on science and instinct that offer a different way to approach life and reach success.

Throughout his presentation Cooper teaches "Leadership Mechanisms," which exemplify small structural changes that can make a big difference. Small actions, rather than plans or ideas, help people maximize effort.

Leadership Mechanism # 1

Use a check-in with a group to self-rate energy and focus.

People will all start to self-manage. Energy and focus go up. At this moment what is your self-rating for:

Energy: 0-1 2-3 3-4 5-6 6-7 8-9 10

Focus: 0-1 2-3 3-4 5-6 6-7 8-9 10

Experts have told us that on average we use less than 10% of our potential brainpower, energy, or capacity. Long ago Cooper's grandfather taught him Five Keys to Success that help us identify and elicit our untapped capabilities. They

are based on the fact that Leadership is Relationships. Most people see their workplace as "a sham, a place for Hollywood theatrics, where we play a game and please the right people." Star performers won't play the game.

The most trusting relationships are with people who are willing to pay a premium for your products or services (even when they don't have to); forgive you, instead of firing you if you make a mistake; invite you to help shape the future success of their team, organization, or community.

Leadership Mechanism #2

Briefly describe the best working relationship you have ever had mentor, teacher, peer, customer . . . We need to constantly remember the best working work relationship we ever had, and then teach those around us what we need to succeed.

Five Keys to Success in a Changing World

1. Use Your Brains, All Four of Them
2. Race Your Own Race, Together
3. Individualize Everything
4. Extend Your Trust Radius
5. Know What It Takes to Go Roaring Off the Face of the Earth

Leadership Mechanism #3

The Strategic Pause: Commit 30 seconds each half-hour to increasing your energy and focus.

- Breathe
- Re-balance Your Posture
- Sip Ice Water
- Find Some Humor
- Turn Toward Brighter Light

· Make a Mental and Visual Shift

Ideal performance state can be sustained all day

1. Use Your Brains, All Four of Them

Brain researchers tell us that the neuroplasticity of the brain means that it is constantly changing, and "surprisingly small shifts in the brain can change us greatly." However, the brain resists change. The amygdala in the brain's limbic system tries to maintain status quo. When we see a positive change to be made we can bypass the amygdala, by telling the brain, "I'm going to change anyway," putting it on hold. We must also learn to use all four brains: Gut, Back, Heart, and Head.

1) Gut (gut feelings) - Gastroenterologists often call it the second brain, as it has more than a million neurons. Many famous leaders, such as Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, and Bill Hewlett, had to overcome dyslexia and/or other significant learning problems. They used their gut brain for decisions. In a survey, leaders reported 85% of their best decisions were gut-feeling based.

Leadership Mechanism #4

Imagine a very important task, person, problem or possibility. Think of it in your head. Feel it in your gut.

What is the difference?

2) Back (position, relation to the world around you) - Your posture can elevate your mood and increase your effectiveness. Do not collapse forward; only 5 of 684 muscles in your body hold you upright. We are a "head forward" society. Sit up straight (not rigid) and hold your head up not out.

Leadership Mechanism #5

Uplift Your Posture. Adjust sitting and head position. Pull chin in slightly and nod head. Do this 10-15 times a day.

Leadership Mechanism #6

Imagine a very crucial task, person, problem or possibility. Think/feel it as you slump. Think/feel it as you sit/stand tall. What is the difference?

3) Heart (emotions) - The heart has 40,000 nerve cells and radiates so strongly, sometimes people can feel what you feel. Common theory is "Let's keep emotions out of it." This is wrong. Look deeply and sense the heart of a person, the heart of a situation. Rudi Gulliani Mayor of NYC is a good example. A leader's emotional quotient (EQ) can lose clients (70% EQ related), derail careers (75% EQ related), improve trust and believability (93% EQ related), create smart teams, and make new ideas profitable. A leader's moods are contagious. Feelings must be managed and guided. A leader's primary task is to drive emotional energy in the right direction to inspire others to do their best.

Leadership Mechanism #7

Imagine a very important task, colleague, loved one, problem, or possibility. Think of it in your head. Feel it with your heart. What is the difference?

4) Head (thoughts) - Neuroscience is continually finding new information. The brain is a "three-pound universe." Use the head brain to integrate with the other three. Develop exceptional attentiveness. Avoid "space outs" and "tune outs," which dominate daily interactions. An average of less than 5% of attention is applied effectively. Begin every interaction by focusing on what is unique, bypassing the tendency to categorize. The tendency is to solve new problems with old solutions (crystallized intelligence) rather than solving new problems with new solutions (fluid intelligence). Develop the brain by using the hands. The hands and fingers have large maps within the brain. Exercising them can expand brain capability. Manage your mood, as it affects everyone around you. If it drops, lift it with movement, light, ice water, shift of focus, snack, etc.

2. Race Your Own Race, Together

You must figure out who you are and what you want; this is racing your own race. You have to be who you are. No two people climb the mountain the same way. Working with others, you must also know their race and align your direction whenever you can.

An individual or a team must know what they are committed to and how they will honor those commitments.

Leadership Mechanism #8

Use the following questions as an individual or a team to clarify your race:

1. Above all, I (we) am committed to the value and importance of . . .
2. How, exactly am I (we) taking action to honor those commitments?
3. Do the people I work with -or live with-understand these priorities?

Leadership Mechanism #9

Don't judge, learn. Own your views as your own, but give room for others' views, feelings, and ideas. "I could be wrong. Here's my view. . . What's yours?"

Most people react to problems too quickly. About 93% of decisions are made without considering long-term priorities or conferring with colleagues. Haste increases the likelihood of being wrong, causes missed opportunities, hurts your health, and increases stress, which interferes with new learning. Follow the 12-second rule, allowing a reflective pause before acting. Consider the following during the pause:

1. Stay calm and quiet; breathe. Listen first, and talk later.

2. Pay exceptional attention to the person, problem or possibility in front of you.
3. Tune in to all four brains.
4. Think gray.
5. Think near and far.
6. Think free.
7. Ask and clarify.
8. Build on what's right instead of getting stuck on what's wrong.

Practice perfectly to achieve the results you want and to facilitate new pathways in the nervous system. Keep in mind that no one has to lose for you to win. An emphasis on competition means you're running everyone else's race. You can't compete your way there; you have to excel your way there. Even thinking competitive thoughts can interfere with your performance and increase negative stress hormones. Avoid thinking "harder, better, faster, win" and think "calm, steady, relaxed, flow, excel."

Leadership Mechanism #10

Whenever you get competitive, lighten up . . . and excel.

Change the view. Compare yourself to the best in yourself.

3. Individualize Everything

We tend to categorize people, putting them in boxes, yet no two humans who have ever lived are identical. Look at everyone as a genius in hiding, rather than a problem needing to be fixed. Peter Drucker says, "The number one practical competency for leaders is empathy." Almost 70 % of people quit their bosses not their jobs, and 80 % change products or services because of a person, not the product or service. People are feeling invisible, and we must change this. Technology has taken visibility and voice away from interactions. When a person feels genuinely seen or heard, the eyes moisten. Watch the eyes to know if a person feels valued. Follow the Tibetan idea: They greet everyone with "Tashi deley" which means, "I honor the greatness in you."

Leadership Mechanism #1 1

Individualize Human Value. Every person needs to feel genuinely seen and valued just for showing up. Give individualized valuing to others. See and acknowledge others no matter how busy you are. Give eye-to eye validation.

Leaders need to take the time to really know others, never guessing a person's motives or intentions; 90% of the time guesses are wrong. Don't assume anything, but instead ask and observe. Use the Cooper worksheets to share values in a group. Caring is what distinguishes successful managers.

People at work need to feel validated and recognized as unique individuals.

Leadership Mechanism #1 2

1. Value one unique person at a time every time.
2. Acknowledge other's efforts with hand-written notes or individualized talk, voicemail, email.
3. Every time you make a request say why you are asking, tell them you know they're busy, and offer to take something else off their list.
4. Group recognition fails because it makes individuals feel invisible. Use the right words at the right time.

4. Extend Your Trust Radius

Mistrust may be responsible for up to half of all daily business activities that are wasted or compromised. Each 5% increase in trust or loyalty is linked to an 85% increase in profitability. In listing those people whom they trust the most, rarely do people include people they work with. We need to expand our trust radius.

Leadership Mechanism #1 3

Be first. Don't wait. Demonstrate your trustworthiness to

others. Again and again.

Leadership Mechanism #14

When things go right, give extra credit to others. When things go wrong, take extra responsibility

Leadership Mechanism #15

Use feedback with special care. Earn the right to give it. Consider timing, clarity, and context. Provide support and resources for change, and follow through.

Design a protocol for email that insures the initial interaction emits warmth, genuineness, clarity and context.

5. Know What It Takes to go Roaring Off the Face of the Earth

Abraham Maslow to his students: "So what will it take for you to go roaring off the face of the earth?" Research shows that up to 55% of people show no enthusiasm for work. Fifty to 85% believe they could double their productivity, but they don't want to. Ask people at work to share their most compelling projects, greatest goals. Notice when people's eyes light up. That signifies they are passionate about it.

Those who pursue their greatest interests have a higher chance of becoming successful. People must find what excites them. If their jobs have no relation to what excites them, then it is not the job for them.

Leadership Mechanism #16

Notice the sources of greatest enthusiasm in others. Carry a small

notebook; make entries whenever you see a person's eyes light up. Change the way you observe, reshape your actions accordingly.

Have monthly and annual check-ins on the following question: How can you close the gap between the work you do and the life you're living and the difference it makes in the world?