

# About Poynter.

**70**  
Countries  
Represented by  
International  
Visitors



**100,972**  
Participants Trained  
through Poynter



**394**  
E-Learning  
Programs  
on NewsU



**6.2**  
Million  
Unique Visitors  
to Poynter.org



**129**  
In-Person  
Teaching  
Programs



# ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP

An optimistic and active approach to change



*October 10, 2018 – Nashville*

*SNPA*

**Poynter.**

# Poynter Trust Survey: Good news!

- 76% of Americans trust local television news
- 73% trust local newspapers
- 59% trust national newspapers
- 55% trust national network news
- 47% trust online-only news outlets



# Other upbeat signs

- ITC lifts onerous tariffs on newsprint
- Digital-only subscriptions are growing
- Growth in digital marketing and events



# “Change before you have to.”

— Jack Welch

Optimism >  
Resignation

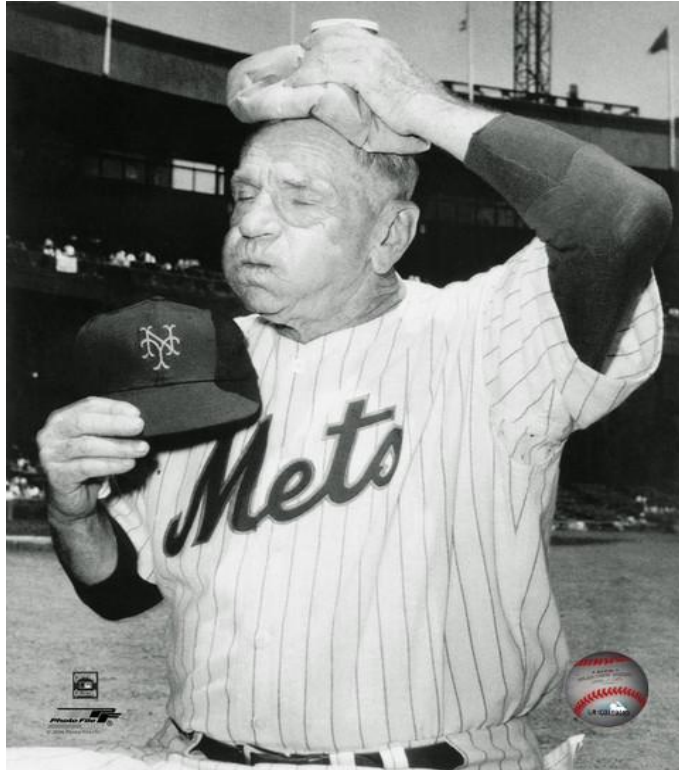
Imagination >  
Reaction

Possibility >  
Limitation



**Performance-Driven Change**  
**vs.**  
**Decision-Driven Change**

# The Zen of Casey Stengel

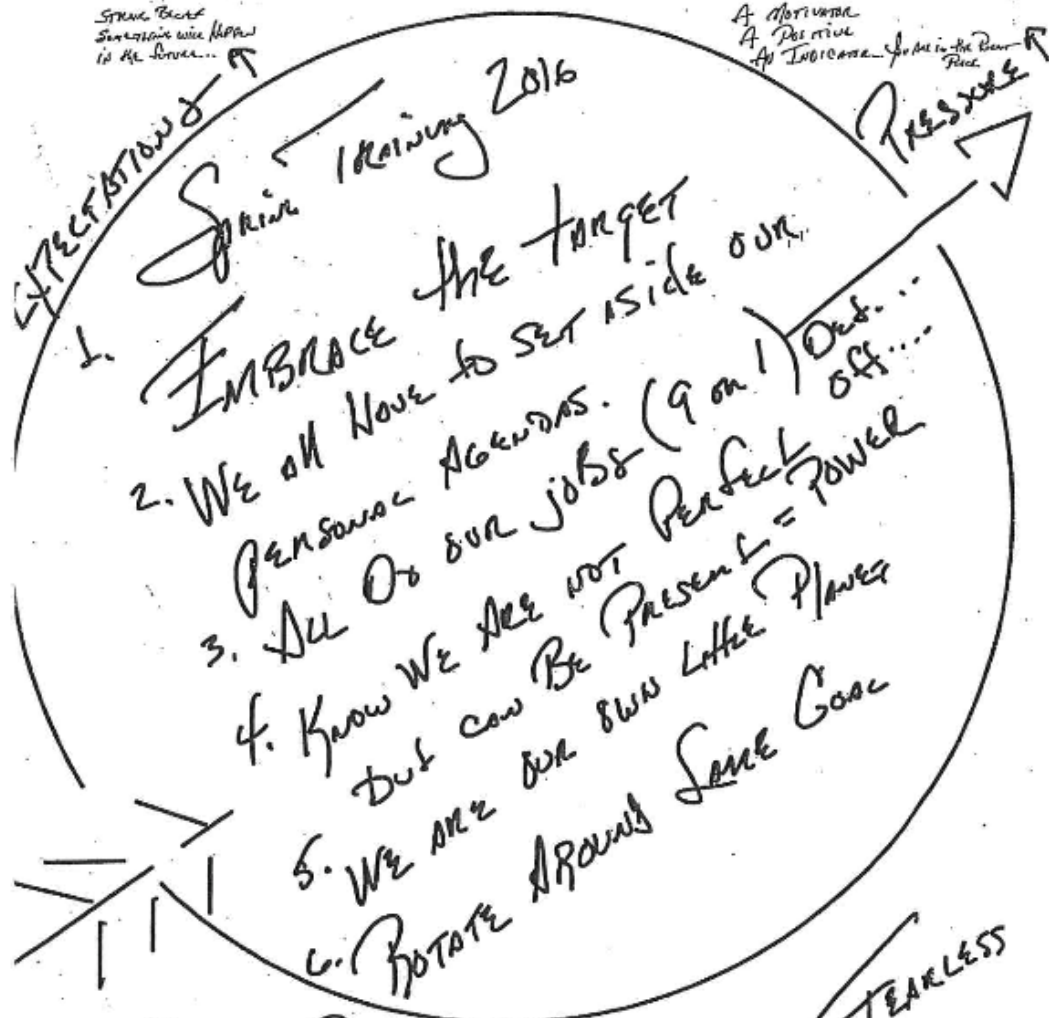


“The key to being a great manager is keeping the five guys who hate you away from the four who are still undecided.”



STRONG BEAR  
SITUATION WILL HAPPEN  
IS BE STRONG...

A MOTIVATION  
A POSITIVE  
A INDICATOR - Focus in the Bear  
Pace



DO SIMPLE BETTER

> CONSTANTLY REDUCE

\* MENTAL / PHYSICAL / TEAM MECHANICS

< VIDEO < DATA (OFFENSE)

= / > FOR PITCHING / DEFENSE

THE PROCESS IS TEARLESS

- > THE PROCESS LEADS EMOTION
- > THE PROCESS IS THE MANAGER
- > THE PROCESS IS THE SPARK DIRECTION
- > THE PROCESS IS THE TALK

\* CHANGE BEFORE YOU HAVE TO... JACK WELCH

\* WISDOM IS THE RESULT FOR A LIFETIME OF LISTENING WHEN YOU KNOW HAVE PERFORMANCE TO TALK

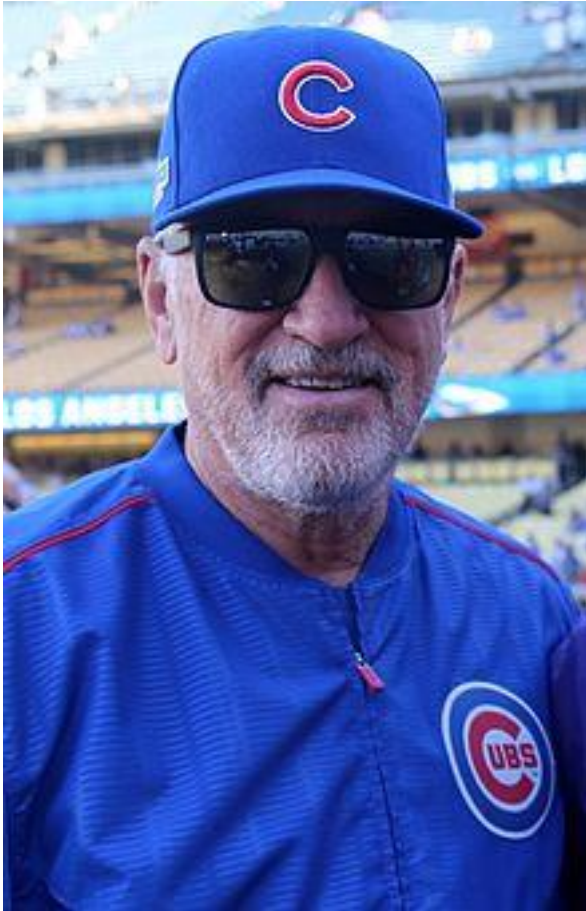
\* COMMUNICATION CEMENTS COLLEAGUESHIP

\* BIG EARS ARE BETTER THAN BIG EYES

\* BIG EARS ARE BETTER THAN BIG EYES



# The Zen of Joe Maddon



- “The process is fearless.”
- “The process lacks emotion.”
- “The process is the present.”



**“Culture eats strategy for  
breakfast.”**

**— Peter Drucker (or Adam Playford’s mother)**



# What change agents might need to know

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**Why do about 50 percent  
of change efforts fail?**

# Too much

- Leading with culture change
- Analyzing, deliberating
- Commanding: Be more digital!
- Pushing training
- Waiting for big results

# Too little

- A focus on performance, metrics
- Doing, learning, adjusting
- Focusing on behavior, skills
- Create hunger for training
- Celebrate incremental wins



# What creates climate for success

- Specifics
- Testing and tracking experiments
- Clarity and accountability
- Repetition
- Understanding the nature of change



$$D \times V \times P = \text{Change}$$

**Dissatisfaction x Vision x Process**

**The multiplier matters**

# When one element is missing...

- $x \vee x \wedge P$  = Bottom of others' inboxes
- $D \wedge x \vee x \wedge P$  = Fast start, but fizzles
- $D \wedge x \vee x \wedge P$  = Frustration, conflict, cynicism

M. Beer, adapted from R. Beckhard and R.T. Harris



# Their dissatisfaction, not yours

- Stability, security
- Market context
- Retention, acquisition of talent
- Professional competence



# Vision: Make them see



- Specifics: Look and feel
- Digital expertise
- Comparisons; competition
- Data (audience, revenue) where we should be
- A win toward our mission



# The balcony and the dance floor

# On the dance floor

- See day-to-day interactions and decisions at work
- Experience what it's like on the front line: The habits
- Take a near term perspective: today, this week, this month



Table Stakes: Doug Smith and Quentin Hope



# Balcony views

- What are the patterns?
- Who might resist?
- Wider view of players, interests and actions
- Another opportunity?
- Longer-term perspective



Table Stakes: Doug Smith and Quentin Hope





# Balcony views of the larger scene



Table Stakes: Doug Smith and Quentin Hope

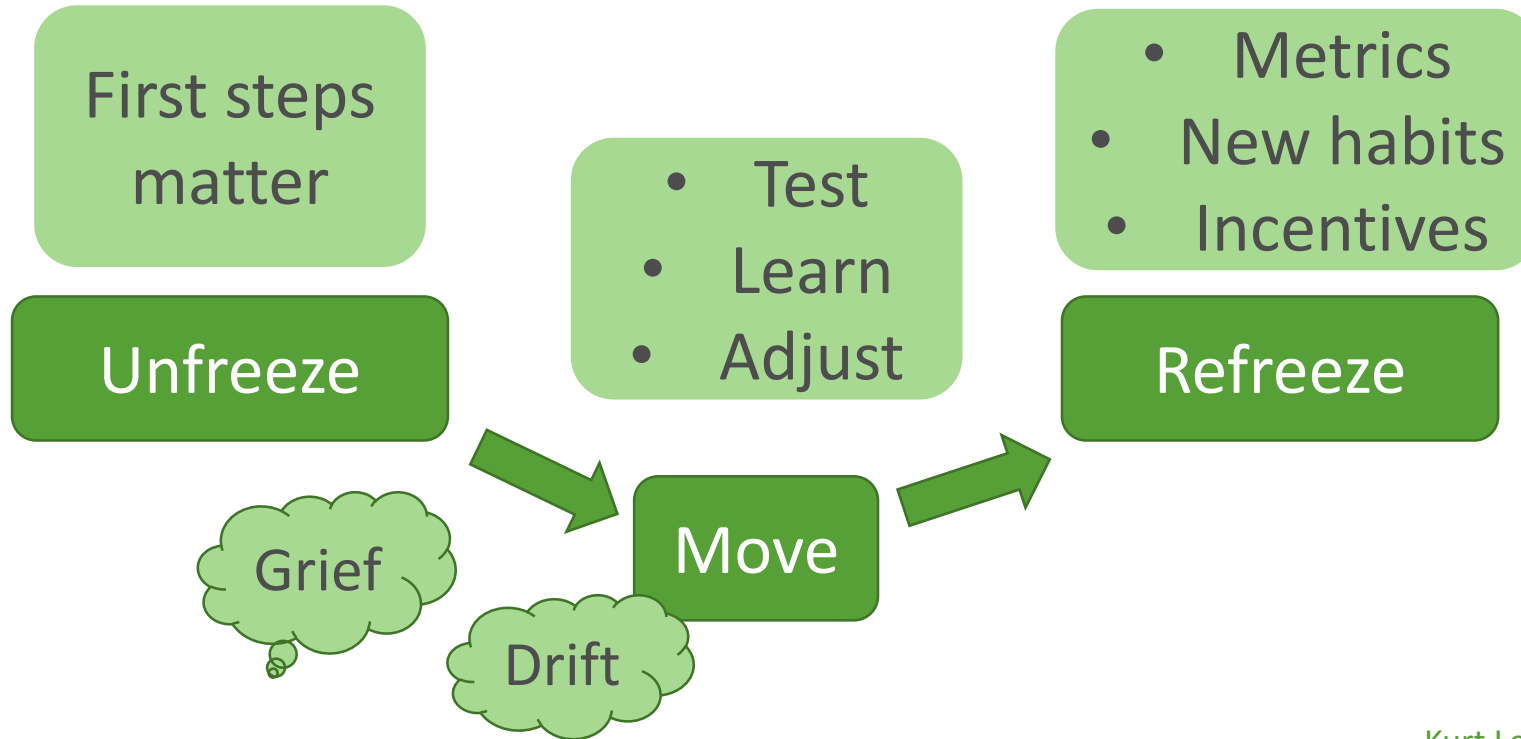


**The Process is where it gets  
hard**

**How do you clear the path?**



# Managing the Process



Kurt Lewin

# The trouble with new systems



Dissatisfaction

Vision



## What they decided to do

“We will drive revenue as a result of our **engagement efforts**. We will passionately connect with our audiences and business communities by interacting with them online and in person, hosting purposeful events to stimulate community conversations and showcase the pulse of our community.”



# The process: Reconnect through events



## Phase 1

- Develop partnerships
- Timeline for planning
- Aligned audience with event
- Developed social plan
- Assigned a staff-member time

## Phase 2

- Subscription services
- Set a revenue goal
- Assign a sales person
- Ticket sales?

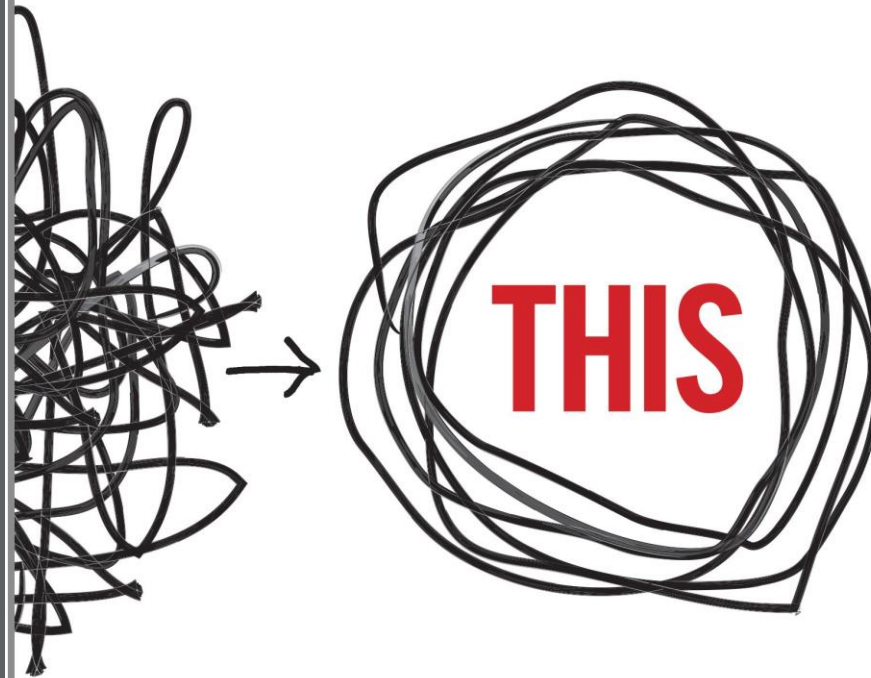


# Customers: Fix the system

- A team reevaluated their subscriber system.
- They scrapped it, and told their customers to stand by.
- Installed a new system that communicated better with other systems.
- Grew their digital subscriptions.
- “Our readers feel as if we did listen to them and their frustrations.”



# Being an Essentialist Leader



# essentialism

The Disciplined Pursuit of Less

GREG MCKEOWN

# Moving beyond familiar tropes

- “We have to do more with less...”
- “We’ll have to stop doing some things.”
- “We need people to step up....”





# An essentialist mindset

- Individuals choose how to spend their energy and time
- Our worlds are filled with noise, and a very few things are valuable
- Discerns the trivial many from the vital few
- Is comfortable with trade-offs (no matter the social pressure)



**A Non-  
essentialist  
thinks almost  
everything is  
essential.**

**An  
Essentialist  
thinks almost  
everything is  
nonessential.**

**An Essentialist  
produces more  
—brings forth  
more—  
by removing  
more instead  
of doing more.**

# Nonessentialist leaders

- Do the best we can with what we have
  - Hire frantically to fill needs as they arise
  - Default to ambiguity over clarity
  - Confuse ambiguity with agility
  - Talk in code
- 
- **Result:** Improvement/success is short-lived



# Essentialist leaders

- Do less but better
- Are ridiculously selective in hiring
- Unafraid to remove those who hold the team back
- Believe in “essential intent.” If we can do only one thing – what?
- Chooses clarity over ambiguity in assignment and performance

• **Result:** Success that breaks through to next level of contribution

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# Leadership: “Disciplined Pursuit of Less”

- Less but better
- Produce more by removing more
- Leaders – editors and publishers – use deliberate subtraction to add life or vitality to the ideas and the project



**Questions?**



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