

FAN THE HOT BLUE FLAMES



A DYNAMIC METHOD TO
JUMP SPARK YOUR
CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

DAN COLEMAN

PRAISE FOR FAN THE HOT BLUE FLAMES

Fan the Hot Blue Flames helps leaders, teams and individuals dramatically expand their vision and perspective in solving complex issues, challenges and opportunities facing organizations today. At Rinnai America, the Sales Leadership Team has applied many of the practical, but creative methods outlined in this book to develop breakthrough strategies and initiatives to accelerate our sales growth in the North American Market.

Tim Wiley, Vice President of Sales
Rinnai America Corporation

Sometimes you just need a little push to break out of your old habits. Dan's new book helped uncover my biggest barriers to creative thinking. On the solutions side, hours in the day for creative thinking feels like a shrinking ice cube. The idea of combining exercise and with creative thinking is a practical and executable winner.

Todd Brezler, Vice President of Marketing
Mitsubishi Power, Inc.

I really love the style and content of *Fan the Hot Blue Flames*! It uses clear language, is actionable, engaging, fun, motivating and right-sized - not too long, nor intimidating. The blend of content, the stories with historical quotes, followed by the fun of seeing it in action in the comic strip stories is great.

The flow is very well done and should work for all levels of experience and knowledge. The comic strip stories demonstrating the tools and value are nicely connected to real life situations and real business problems. I think the balance of substantial content + fun is just right.

Dan Coleman brings the energy – as usual – and makes the knowledge and tools actionable. Now it's up to us – the readers – to apply it and get creative in ways that advance against all of life's challenges!

James W. Arbogast, Ph.D.
Hygiene Sciences and Public Health Advancements VP

In his characteristic high energy style, Dan offers a unique approach to developing creative thinking skills. Using specifically crafted superhero characters created to represent the 'Beyonders' abilities of attitude, power and knowledge, he introduces the various concepts that research has shown lead to outstanding results. In addition to simply presenting and discussing each concept, he provides illustrated examples that underscore the key points he is making in an entertaining way. Truly a unique and effective way to learn new approaches and innovative solutions.

Ray Fisher, District Manager
Moen, Inc.

Fan the Hot Blue Flames is an action-packed culmination of the best creative thinking and innovation tools available today. The reader will clearly understand the power of creative thinking and how it can increase their ability to overcome challenges and accomplish goals they never thought possible in their professional or personal lives. If you are an emerging leader in a professional organization striving for the benefits of greater levels of innovation for your teams, this book is for you!

Jeff Kesler, Vice President Sales North America
Gerber Plumbing Fixtures

Dan shares his straight-forward actionable techniques to strengthen our **Beyonder Powers**. His creative thinking tools and techniques work in the real world to unlock growth.

Carla Kopyta, Director of Shopper Marketing
P&G

As a leader in new product development for over 40 years, I have been exposed to a multitude of creativity processes. Most are overly cumbersome and difficult to use in a fast-paced world demanding quick solutions. In his thought provoking and clever book, *Fan the Hot Blue Flames*, Dan utilizes a combination of content, real life examples, humor and comic strip characters to tell the story and demonstrate a simple way to teach and use creative process.

Robert L. Quinlan, Retired Director of Engineering
Executive of CPG companies

Dan provides clear, compelling ways to change the way you think about your creative output and your ability to *work out* with passion and purpose. Not only does he provide sound actions to help you reach that highest potential, his focus is tough minded growth with no excuses and an urgency to do it because that is what Dan has done for clients for decades. Dan's solid coaching and training expertise combined with his scholarly credentials in the field of creativity studies takes you not just to the next level but way beyond. You will be introduced to superheros whose powers propel you forward in your quest for exceptional leadership and guided step by step toward your greatness. You will learn what to focus on, what to watch out for and how to keep your momentum going to superior thinking and acting through the combination of creative endeavors and physical fitness, all weaved into superhero stories. As the author states, It's Your Time and your imagination will prevail!

Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers
Associate Professor, International Center for Studies in Creativity
SUNY, Buffalo State

The methods and tools that Dan discusses in the book have proven successful across my Sales, Product Development and Customer Support teams. His unique approach in the book provides an easy roadmap to understanding and cementing the behaviors into habits. With each of my teams, I saw marked improvements which resulted in new clients, reduced contract cycle time, quicker to market product features and better customer satisfaction. Each of my team members learned something new about themselves and was able to demonstrate success in their individual roles.

Louis Rose
Retired Executive, Asurion

Fan the Hot Blue Flames by Dan Coleman is an intriguing and insightful journey that will propel you forward to unlock your creative and innovative potential. I appreciated the novel use of storytelling and superheroes to illustrate how to daily integrate the behaviors necessary to create and master our pursuits. He firmly challenges us to soar, "look past barriers in your life (real or imagined) and reach for that shining star!" I am reminded through his use of best practices, tested concepts, models and tools that we all have music inside and we must "reach way down into our belly, pull it up and belt it out *time after time*." *Fan the Hot Blue Flames* is more than a good read, it introduces a new way of pursuing our most sought-after goals and fundamentally our ever-elusive purpose - CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!!!

Renita L. Jefferson, MBA, GPCC, PCC
Global HR Executive

This book provides an excellent roadmap to jump start your creative thinking individually or as a team and with a fun and memorable approach. I have personally used the concepts and applied the tools that are presented. I have been able to identify problems more effectively, generate more ideas, and in the end implement better solutions through the teachings in these pages. I highly recommend giving your creative juices a chance to exercise and strengthen through exploring this author's book. Dan Coleman is a competent, energetic, and dynamic leader that has conducted training sessions all over the country. I have seen multiple organizations benefit from introducing and implementing many of the concepts and tools he developed. "*Fan the Hot Blue Flames*" and strengthen your creative muscles!

Robb Struckel
Director of National Accounts, Retail, Turf & Irrigation
ADS

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Chautauqua Press
Williamsville, NY 14221

Printed in the United States of America

Publisher’s Cataloging-in-Publication data
Coleman, Daniel W.

ISBN 978-1-64184-589-2

Illustration by Donald Jackson and Mark Stoddard

Graphic design: Chris Laski and Julie Coleman

Cover design: Lewis Agrell

Print design: JETLAUNCH

Editing: Randy Wood and Katie Coleman

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although I conceived and wrote this book, it really is a reflection of my life and the collaboration, friendship and love from so many people. Yes, it is a combination book, creative thinking program and toolkit packaged together as one. And yes, it represents a culmination of experiences, interactions, collaborations and friendships that have taken place in my life over the past few decades that I must say I am humbled by and profoundly grateful for.

Early on, my mom and dad always had my back, always encouraged me to keep moving forward, to persevere, to get up and brush myself off after a skirmish, setback or disappointment, and most importantly to stay in the fight. Yes, they taught me to go after and stay after the dream. We all have dreams, all different, and we all need to give ourselves a good shot of calcium in the backbone, go and stay after the dream. Sure, along the way there are twists, sharp hairpin and sometimes wrong turns, stops and starts, steep inclines, some black ice and limited visibility because of the thick fog. But so what? Go after it, experiment, learn, adjust and persevere. Moving forward is what this book/program/toolkit is all about!

Along my journey I have been blessed to have worked with and collaborated with so many great clients and trained thousands of wonderful people in my workshops. At the risk of not mentioning someone I should, I'd like to give a special call-out thank you to Phil Burne, Dan Porter, Sean O'Donnell, Renita Jefferson, Carla Kopyta, Brian Grenfell, Ray Fisher, Kris Mason, Tim Wiley, Paige Giannetti, Jim Arbogast, Tim Dye, Argerie Vasilakes, Christine Hoffer, Robb Struckel, Mark Savan, Louis Rose, Bob Quinlan, Chris Banning, Jeff Kesler, Todd Brezler, Steve Beall, Terry Craig, Pat Virost, Ethel Vinson, Steve Smith, Kelly Loebick-Frascella, Tim Shearer, Inge Orendt, Rich Somplatsky, Grant Marquit, Dan Fisher, Moises Solis, Steve Cohen, Gerard Puccio, Mary Murdock, Susan Keller-Mathers, Roger Firestein and Mike Fox. Each one of them, in their own way, helped me to grow.

This book could not have been developed without the tireless and creative efforts of my editors Randy Wood and Katie Coleman; internal book designer Rae Cuddle, graphic designers Chris Laski and Julie Coleman, artist/illustrators Don Jackson and Mark Stoddard and book cover designer Lewis Agrell. I am grateful for their unique insight, talent and collaborative attitude.

Lastly, a special thanks to my beautiful wife Jan and daughters Jill, Katie, Julie and Samantha for their unwavering support, encouragement and love. I am truly blessed.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my Mom and Dad, my wife Jan,
and my daughters Jill, Katie, Julie and Samantha.

PREVIEW

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JUST WARMING UP

PR-

PURPOSE

It is with *good energy* that I welcome you! The very fact that you are holding this program in your hands right now is indicative of your willingness to step outside traditional means and methods to consider a new approach. From this first moment of openness you are now demonstrating—to where I believe this journey can take you—is nothing short of remarkable. I know because I've been *sparking* individuals and teams to think and act more creatively for over two decades and the results are among the most enlivening and energetic aspects of business life.

After having success in seminar environments for years, I began to wonder in what ways I might **X**celerate the use of creativity tools and techniques even further into the everyday lives of individuals and teams. This dynamic program is the result of that effort.

Program Alert: This program *is not designed* to be a casual bedtime read, plenty of other options for that. Rather it is designed for people who **dare to accept the challenge** – who very much want to sharpen their creative skills to a razors edge – to get *creativity fit* in order to fully embark on important challenges, solve tough problems and pursue opportunities in a fresh and energetic way. In this program you have access to a bottomless bag of tips, tricks, tools, techniques, Two-Board Adjustments (ways to anchor creative thinking as a habit) and **Workouts** (divergent and convergent creative thinking tools) to guide you through your previously uncharted regions of thinking, perceiving and acting more creatively. I guarantee that what you will discover on this journey will invigorate you as nothing else has. One simple ground rule – you must do the work! This program is 100% based on your effort, applying yourself, reflecting on your results and adapting. If you are willing to do the work, I am very confident you will be quite pleased with your results. The primary objectives of this program are to:

- Train your technique and strengthen your **B e y o n d e r Powers** (creative thinking skills). You will meet and learn more about the five **B e y o n d e r s** (superheroes with creative **Powers**) in the next section.
- Anchor creative thinking and physical exercise (a bonus) as repeatable, everyday habits.

- Increase your innovation productivity (the implementation of novel and feasible ideas/concepts) that were fueled by creative thinking.
- *Lean into Risk, Embrace Your Dream and Take Proactive Actions to go get it!*

How's that for Ennnnnnenergy? The good news is you don't have to take more stuff from the outside and shove it in. *Rather, it's to liberate more of the good stuff that's already in you, get it out and get it to action!* Did I mention *action*? You have the natural creative capabilities, the horsepower. The challenge at hand is to use the tips, tricks, tools, techniques, Two-Board Adjustments and **Workouts**, to strengthen and **X**celerate the good stuff to full power and anchor it as a repeatable, everyday habit!

Sure, there are **Resistors** to creativity (forces that inhibit creativity). You will meet and learn more about the five **Resistors** in the next section. They lurk in the shadows, the cowards. The required action is to shine a bright light on them and conquer these villains. After all, life is far too short not to. Yes, it takes attitude, calcium in the backbone, energy, persistence and smarts to *Lean into Risk, Embrace Your Dream and Take Proactive Actions to go get it!* There is nothing more powerful than a compelling *Dream*, even if it may appear to be somewhat out of reach at this moment. And a *Dream* without proactive, focused action is simply a group of nice happy thoughts—which are not the target! The target is to develop and combine your compelling *Dream* with proactive, focused action to *jump spark* your imagination, get traction and propel yourself forward now! You will forge a dogged determination. You will fight and persevere through the bumps, the battles, the doubts and the rough spots. Yes, you will prevail and triumph!

PROCESS AT A GLANCE

In this program you will liberate your **Beyond Powers**, conquer **The Resistors** to creativity and navigate the whitewater rapids of thinking, perceiving and acting more creatively. Following is the flow of the program:

- In What's Stopping You, you meet **The Beyonders** and **The Resistors**.

- In each of the three **Episodes** – **Episode i (Fight the Right Foe)**; **Episode ii (Imagination will Prevail)**; and **Episode iii (The Power of Speed)** you:
 - Establish a cadence and explore the *bursts* of content that describe the restraining forces of the **Resistors** and the liberating **Powers** of the **Beyonders**.
 - Witness a **Battle** in the comic strip where a **Beyonder** summons their **Powers** to conquer the restraining forces of the **Resistor(s)**.
 - Review a profile of a person that exemplified the content highlighted in the **Episode**.
 - Segue to the It's Your Time section (the idea sparked by Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers and Dr. Mary Murdock (2008) in their application of Step 3 - Extending the Learning from the Torrance Incubation Model) that follows each **Battle** and apply the **Divergent and Convergent Workouts** used in the comic strip to your specific Dream/Big Goal. Note: The source for many of the **Workouts** in these sections is The Center for Applied Imagination at SUNY Buffalo State College. They have been adapted to better align with the **Powers** of the **Beyonders**.

The Appendix (Get Creativity Fit®) is organized as follows:

- Appendix A, **Upward**, contains two surveys to assess your frequency in using the fifteen **Beyonder Powers** and to baseline your current creative productivity.
- Appendix B, **Anchor the Creative and Physical Exercise Habits**, provides a 28 day framework for you to anchor creative thinking and physical exercise as repeatable, everyday habits. There are four weekly planning templates to use. The central idea is to *work out* with **Divergent and Convergent Workouts** every day for 28 straight days and apply them to your Dream/Big Goal. By doing this you will strengthen your skills and be poised to *Lean into Risk, Embrace Your Dream and Take Proactive Actions to go get it*. You will also increase your odds of anchoring creative thinking and physical exercise as a repeatable, everyday habit.
Note: The physical exercise component is optional, yet highly recommended. It is included as an extra bonus option for people who would like to do it. The primary reasons are that physical

exercise is good for the body; it builds muscle and conditions the heart and the lungs. It also builds, conditions and influences the brain. The brain is an adaptable organ that can be shaped similarly to the way muscles can be strengthened. The more we exercise the stronger and more versatile the brain becomes.

HOW TO SQUEEZE THE MOST JUICE OUT OF THIS PROGRAM?

There are many paths you can take to squeeze the most **fresh-squeezed juice** full of sweet pulp out of this program. You work the program the program doesn't work for you. Following is one of the recommended paths:

- Read the **What's Stopping You Section**.
- Go to Appendix A, take the *Beyonder Powers Survey* and the Creative Productivity Snapshot Survey. Assess your starting point and establish your goals for your creative thinking and physical exercise before you really get going. Review the planning sheets and set your 1st cut goals. Note: The *Dare to Dream Workout* located in **Episode I, Battle #1** is designed to help you define and establish your Dream/Big Goal.
- Enough of getting organized. Return to **Episode I**, start the 28 day clock, and Xcelerate your pace with unbridled enthusiasm!

What's Stopping You?



THE BEYONDERS FACE OFF WITH THE RESISTORS

ONWARD & UPWARD

*Every renaissance comes to the world with a cry,
the cry of the human spirit to be free.*

— Anne Sullivan Macy, teacher and lifelong companion of Helen Keller

A cornerstone of this program is the belief that we were all born with a resilient creative spirit and an innate ability to think, perceive and act creatively. The natural capacity is in you, always has been and now it's time to rekindle it and *liberate more of the good stuff*. My guess is you don't remember learning how to walk or talk. You used your natural abilities, aided by encouragement from loved ones to accomplish these tasks. Unfortunately, we've gotten away from consistently using our natural creative capacity. No more — we're going to develop our ability to make the skills available on demand, any time, any place.

The Beyonders and **The Resistors** were created to help *jump spark* your creative **Powers**. I must confess, there is not an exact, early-detection system that will predict which **Resistors** will appear whenever and wherever you may be in your creative effort. They don't care; they just want to derail you. They may come at you solo or in tandem, but at least one of them is always there in the shadows where you can't see them (the cowards). Given this, the proactive action to conquer them is to have a good offense. Take it from a former field lacrosse defenseman: the best defense is a really good offense with the ball at the other end of the field in the attack zone where it belongs, away from my goal. And speaking of a really good offense....

THE BEYONDER CONCEPT

Paul Torrance (1999) was a pioneering creativity researcher and developed a rich body of materials to assess and teach creative thinking. He introduced the Beyonder Concept when explaining the achievements of people who were administered the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking thirty years prior, when they were high school students. He reported that a small number of people with many distinct creative achievements were worthy of their own category because they rated well above the other high creative achievers. He reduced the initial 35 characteristics down to the ten that distinguished The Beyonders:

Delight in Deep Thinking	Tolerance of Mistakes
Love of One's Work	Clear Purpose
Enjoying One's Work	Feel Comfortable as a Minority of One
Being Different	Not Being Well-Rounded
Sense of Mission in Life	Courage to be Creative

Torrance’s groundbreaking work sparked me to leverage The Beyonder Concept and develop a dynamic method for individuals and teams to be able to summon their skills on the spot, any time, any place. Sounds really cool, don’t you think? Let’s take an adventurous journey together!

BE A B E Y O N D E R

We’re all absolutely equal in having the opportunity to make the most of what we have.

— John Wooden, college basketball coaching legend

Be a Beyonder means to elevate your game in three areas:

- **Attitude**
- **Powers**
- **Knowledge**

ATTITUDE

A **Beyonder** has an attitude about living a creative life. Here we zero in on two *Beyonder* characteristics, with the tagline, “*Can’t worry much about what others think.*”

Be bold and break free from the herd. Author and humorist Lewis Grizzard said, “*If you ain’t the lead dog the scenery never changes.*” The lead dogs on a sledding team steer the team and set the pace, and clearly have the best, unobstructed view. Social conformity, the fear of not fitting in (remember junior high school?), is one strong **Resistor** that inhibits us from taking risks and *breaking from the herd*.

In his best-selling book *Influence*, Robert Cialdini (2009) described the principle of *social proof*: If many other people are doing it, it must be right. Translation: *the herd made me do it!* As the story (or fable) goes, Ernest Shackleton (Schultz, 2013) ran a newspaper ad in the early 1900s recruiting men for his endurance expedition to the South Pole:

Men wanted for hazardous journey to the South Pole. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.

Yes, this exhibits bold behavior that breaks from the herd. *Embrace experimenting, take risks (many small ones are welcome), quickly learn, adapt and tolerate failure.* Ahh, the dreaded enemy—*failure*! How about we reframe how we think about *failure*? In 1941, Ted Williams hit .406, the last professional baseball player to reach that elusive milestone; no one has hit .400 since. He was a six-time batting champion with a lifetime .344 average. His *failure rate* in 1941 was .594 and .656 over his nineteen-year, hall-of-fame career. Many baseball historians recognize Williams as the best hitter in the history of major league baseball. His career was not a failure, not a *lack of success*—it was just the opposite!

Nothing big happens without an attitude of experimenting. Without it, the training programs, innovation processes, bumper sticker declarations and good-looking PowerPoint presentations fall way short and deliver dismal results. Maintaining the status-quo, playing it safe, being overly risk-averse is simply not an option. In fact, it's annoying, and downright boring! *You're boring me!* Grant yourself the freedom *today* and adopt this attitude to significantly improve your current situation. Your innovation altitude will be determined by the sheer force of your *forward-leaning B e y o n d e r Attitude!* How's that for *energy*?

POWERS

A *B e y o n d e r* has *highly developed divergent and convergent thinking Powers*. In this program the term *Powers* is used interchangeably with skills (it's just more powerful). The creative muscles must be readily available to produce novel and feasible thinking. With our skeletal frame, muscle growth occurs when the rate of muscle protein synthesis is greater

than the rate of muscle protein breakdown. You’ve got to use them and rest in between because that is when muscle growth occurs. The same is true for divergent and convergent thinking. *Divergent thinking* facilitates going beyond current boundaries, drawing out specific meanings and producing an abundance of novel ideas. *Convergent thinking* is necessary to tame the novel thinking, to strengthen and select ideas and options to be feasible. The growth occurs when you transition between alternating divergent and convergent thinking and separate it with some time in between.

Successful sports teams have well-conditioned athletes, specialized coaching, game strategies and a playbook for different game situations. The elite teams have an additional, elusive element that separates them from the pack. They have the players with superior skills to consistently execute the plays, time and again. These athletes continually train and perfect their technique to maintain their skill and fitness edge. Same principle holds true here: you have to train and perfect your divergent and convergent thinking skills. Following are the fifteen *Beyond Powers* (adapted from Torrance, 1999).

THE B E Y O N D E R POWERS

Find It	Be Fluent	Borrow It	Put Ideas in Context	Be Optimistic
See It	Be Novel	Elaborate	Evaluate and Select It	Use Humor and Intuition
Be Versatile	Stay Open	Make New Combinations	Strengthen It	Act on It

Additive to the *Powers* are personality traits. A host of creativity researchers (Amabile, 1996; Davis, 2004; Sternberg, 1999; and Torrance, 1999) among many others have identified the following personality traits that correlate with increased levels of creative behavior. Not all people possess all the traits (a pretty tall order). And some of the traits conflict with one another.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Awareness of Creativeness	Original	Independent	Risk Taking
High Energy	Curious	Sense of Humor	Capacity for Fantasy
Attracted to Complexity and Ambiguity	Artistic	Open Minded	Thorough
Needs Alone Time	Perceptive	Emotional	Ethical
Self-Disciplined	Focused	Persevering Work Style	Intrinsic Focus on Excellence

KNOWLEDGE

A **Beyonder** becomes knowledgeable in the areas where they are pursuing their *Dream/Big Goal* and need to produce more innovation. This includes a familiarity with the facts, technical knowledge, information, principles and opinions of subject-matter experts in the targeted area. For example, if you want to generate new ideas in the area of molecular biology it's a prerequisite you have a baseline knowledge of molecular biology—better yet, a keen insight about molecular biology. Yes, it's possible you may get lucky and be struck by a spontaneous idea—the right place at the right time (even a blind squirrel can find a nut from time to time). However, hope is not a good repeatable strategy. You are most likely to gain unique insight and knowledge and generate novel ideas when you are familiar with a subject, immerse yourself and study it intently. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi (Carson, 1965), a Hungarian biochemist who won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1937, discovered Vitamin C, the components and reactions of the citric acid cycle. He said, “Discovery consists of looking at the same thing as everyone else and thinking something different. A discovery is an accident meeting a prepared mind.”

Combining the key ingredients of **Attitude**, **Powers** and **Knowledge** make for a powerful creativity brew to identify and solve the right problems; pursue the best opportunities; generate novel ideas; strengthen and make the best ideas feasible; and catapult them to action... now! Just need to give the brew a real good stirring every day.

A **Beyonder** has a striking resemblance to *Superheroes*, don't you think? In his book, *Superman On The Couch: What Superheroes Really Tell Us about Ourselves and Our Society*, Danny Fingeroth (2004) provides

a history of superheroes and why they have captured the imagination of people of all ages, backgrounds and from different generations. He identifies a few key characteristics:

- They have fantastic powers (whether magic or science-based) and battle their antagonists with advanced technology.
- They possess skills and abilities normal humans don't have. For example, on a daily basis Batman leaps unarmed into gunfire and mutant-powered muscle and comes out with nary a scratch.
- They represent the values of the society that produces them. The most obvious things are strength of character, some system of positive values and a determination to protect those values no matter what.
- The hero does the right thing. In fact, they know what the right thing is.
- They have a never-say-die attitude.

A ***Beyonder*** does possess *Superhero Powers* with three caveats. Like you and me:

- Even though they're blessed with individual ***Powers*** they gain a good deal of their strength by working together.
- They are fallible and because of this they take steps to compensate for it by leveraging their individual and collective ***Powers***.
- They are most formidable when they use available resources and consistently engage in Divergent and Convergent Thinking.

More on this in a bit but for now let's meet the forces for good and give a BIG shout out loud like we mean it hello to...

THE B E Y O N D E R S

...**BLACK DIAMOND**

has a built-in compass to consistently navigate the competing challenges, **Fight the Right Foe**, outsmart and outmaneuver them. Most often it's not even a fair fight. He uses facts, data and logic to choose which foes to fight. He prioritizes the challenges that he has the energy, passion, expertise and resources to pursue, and those that will deliver the greatest impact. With his ability to laser focus he prevents expensive false starts that consume valuable time, resources and energy. To successfully **Fight the Right Foe**, he takes these **Key Actions**:



- **Explore the Challenge**
- **See the Future**
- **Get the Facts**
- **Clarify the Problem/Opportunity**

The outcomes are well clarified and prioritized challenges/problems/opportunities!

His **Powers** are:

- **Find It**
- **See It**
- **Be Versatile**

...MICRO-BURST

is revered for her explosive power to **Rain and Select Ideas** in short, compressed time periods. By collaborating with her sidekicks **Prism** and **Plusser**, she knows that by working together, **Imagination will Triumph**. She's a sprinter and gets out of the blocks mighty fast. She quickly transitions between novel divergent thinking to feasible convergent thinking, creating her own *momentum* in the process. Novelty and abundance are her trademarks as she uses four *white-hot* diverging principles to **Rain Ideas**:



- **Defer Judgment**
- **Make Quantity of Ideas Your Friend**
- **Build off, Combine, Piggyback and Synthesize Ideas**
- **Seek Wild and Unusual Ideas**

To ensure **Imagination will Triumph** she takes these **key actions**:

- **Rain and Select Ideas**

The outcome is an abundance of novel and feasible ideas to solve the prioritized challenges, problems or opportunities.

Her **Powers** are:

- **Be Fluent**
- **Be Novel**
- **Stay Open**

...PRISM

has the unique ability to **Take a Break and Incubate** on ideas, generate additional ones and put together new combinations. Being a student of physics, he has keen insight and realizes that ideas have varying frequencies and can flow and refract in different directions — to expand wide beyond current boundaries and to contract in between the lines. By integrating his ideas with those from his sidekick **Micro-Burst**, he develops a host of new idea combinations.



To ensure **Imagination will Triumph** he takes this **key action**:

- ***Take a Break and Incubate***

The outcome is a set of new and revised idea combinations and alternatives to solve the prioritized challenges, problems or opportunities!

His **Powers** are:

- ***Borrow It***
- ***Elaborate***
- ***Make New Connections***

...PLUSSE

takes the ideas generated by her sidekicks **Micro-Burst** and **Prism**, uses her unique **Power** to cobble them together into an actionable concept, and then **Strengthens the Concept** to be a Best Concept/Prototype. She first finds the plusses and affirms the potential of the concept. Second, she employs 'goal wishing' to identify the drawbacks of the concept. Third, she generates ideas to overcome or minimize the drawbacks. Only the strongest concepts move forward to ensure the highest probability of success.



To ensure **Imagination will Triumph** she takes this **key action**:

- **Strengthen the Concept**

The outcome is a Best Concept/Prototype that solves the prioritized challenge, problem or opportunity!

Her **Powers** are:

- **Put Ideas in Context**
- **Evaluate and Select It**
- **Strengthen It**

...**MOMENTUM**

is peerless in embodying **The Power of Speed**. He has an irrepressible bias for action to move ideas and concepts that are solid and viable forward to implementation. He is optimistic, intuitive and enjoys humor (especially his own). He tunes into what his head, heart and gut are telling him by staying versatile, learning and adapting quickly! Once a concept or prototype has passed the mustard test from his sidekick **Plusser**, he wastes virtually no time and advances it quickly. No time for delay, not now, not ever!



To ensure **The Power of Speed** he takes these **key actions**:

- **Xcelerate the Momentum**
- **Catapult the Energy**

The outcome is an implemented Best Concept/Prototype.

His **Powers** are:

- **Be Optimistic**
- **Use Humor and Intuition**
- **Act on It**

RESISTORS THAT INHIBIT OUR CREATIVE SPIRIT

It's not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.

— New Zealand mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary and
Sherpa mountaineer Tenzing Norgay
First climbers to reach the summit of Mount Everest

It certainly is noble to talk about rediscovering our creative spirit, strengthening our creativity muscle, increasing our productivity, anchoring creative habits and catapulting our best ideas to action. Sure, these are good outcomes, goals of what we want to happen. However, unlike in *The Wizard of Oz*, no one has built a yellow-brick road for us to skip along till we reach the Emerald City and meet up with the Great and Powerful Oz. **Resistors** to creativity are real (and perceived), they do exist, we face them every day and they can and do inhibit our natural creative productivity. Merriam-Webster defines *resistance* as refusal to accept something new or different. **Resistors** are internal and external barriers/blocks that impede and slow down our creative productivity and inhibit taking risks and positive action on our best ideas.

In collaboration with many great clients over the past twenty years I have worked to identify barriers that slow down and stifle creative productivity. I ask the foundational question, “**What’s Stopping You?**” The question is powerful—it can stop you in your tracks—because when you think and get clear about the answers, you have effectively identified the **Resistors**. Aghghgh, sometimes they are visible, yet many other times they aren’t. But they are always lurking in the shadows, they are most always present, and they need to be conquered.

Our challenge in conquering the **Resistors** is threefold:

- Shine the light on them—bright and wide.
- Call them out loud and clear, name them and laugh at them.
- Galvanize our energy and engage in proactive actions to significantly reduce their impact.

Or better yet, to eradicate them entirely from our thinking. This is by no means a tiny challenge. In fact it’s big enough that to be victorious will require galvanizing and calling on our **Beyond er Powers**. More on this in a bit, but the time has come; the time is now to meet these sneaky and very irritating **Resistors** and to shine the light on them bright and wide.

THE RESISTORS

THE DELAYERS

Personal Resistors

- Self-Doubt
- Rationalization
- Procrastination

If you want to get downright personal, then let's meet quite possibly the most stubborn and close to home **Resistor** of them all. One that is quite personal, don't you think? *'If only...I had gone for the gold... had the nerve and taken the risk...studied more...worked out more... been luckier and gotten the breaks...'* and the beat goes on, the beat goes on. These beats hit the nail right on the head because there is no one else to blame, no place to hide, really no good excuses. The **Personal Resistors** of **Self-Doubt, Rationalization and Procrastination** collaborate really well, taking us in the wrong direction. Together they are a debilitating *triple threat*!

The Delayers are in business because we are fallible human beings, heaping up a whole lot of *coulda, woulda, shoulda*. And we most likely have come down with a good ol' severe case of *The Gottas*—with a long list of *gotta, gotta dos*...that shield us from leveraging our creative strengths and hunting the good stuff! We can be awfully busy, making lists, multi-tasking with a whole *lotta gotta, gotta dos*. And while we will always be fallible, our goal here is to be a whole lot less fallible. You may very well want to change the beat, but **The Delayers** are continually scheming so that you don't change the damn beat. They don't want it to be the dawning of a new day...they don't want you to declare you aren't going to do it that way anymore...they want your good old days of **Self-Doubt, Rationalization and Procrastination** to continue and go on beating forever!



CHAMELEON

Rules, Traditions & Cultural Resistors

- An Overemphasis of the Status-Quo
- Social Influences and Conformity Pressures

Wikipedia defines chameleons as a distinctive and highly specialized clade of old world lizards with 202 species. These species abound in different colors and many have the ability to change colors.

Some species, such as Smith's dwarf chameleon, which live in South Africa, adjust their colors for camouflage in accordance with the vision of the specific bird or snake predator species that are threatening them. This adaptive capability is quite mandatory in the Reptilia world and has contributed to the staggering fact that chameleons have roamed the earth for at least 80 million years.

Switching from Reptilia to the world of Homo sapiens, when we are threatened, we should certainly borrow the chemical capacity of the Smith's dwarf chameleon and conform. But that's it! When you are overly concerned about preserving the status-quo and conforming, the norm is to:

- Follow all rules, traditions and customs that guide personal, team and organizational behavior.
- Go along to get along. Stay on your well-groomed trail, don't traverse into someone else's trail—or get in their 'sandbox.'
- Overemphasize status-quo thinking because it is *safe*.
- Prematurely criticize new ideas. After all, new ideas are far too *risky*.

Chameleon makes sure she conforms and fits in, keeps her head low, follows the rules, stays in her lane—her territory *where she is supposed to be* and doesn't challenge assumptions, the status-quo or why we do things the way we do. At a minimum, she sounds really boring...quite stifling in fact.



THE JUNK YARD DOG

Thinking and Perceiving Resistors

- Thinking, Perceiving and Responding in Habit-Bound Ways.

The Junk Yard Dog barks long and loud at everybody and everything he isn't familiar with, doesn't recognize and doesn't know. Who the heck said variety is the spice of life? I must have been absent that day. Unless forced to do so, we become quite comfortable and accustomed to experiencing the world in predictable and non-enriching ways. We stay in our comfort zones, thank you. We perceive, think about, evaluate problems and ideas, and respond to people in very familiar ways. Consequently, *we experience little variance*, which is the lifeblood of creativity. *Varied and new stimuli spark novel thinking and perceiving*. Limited and homogenous stimuli are a very dull mixture. In craving predictability, we unwittingly block seeing new alternatives, applications, idea combinations, meanings, patterns, relationships and uses. We think, perceive and respond with limited imagination.

The Junk Yard Dog simply isn't interested in learning new ways of approaching problems or opportunities, or deviating from the routines and habits he has spent a good deal of time perfecting. He is a creature of habit in how he learns, goes through his day, interacts with people (*oh, he cherishes his checklists*). He learned the majority of what was needed way back in grammar school: write down what the teacher says, don't really question it, memorize it, speak only when called on and study by the book. No need for any experiential, guided discovery or reflective learning methods here. Just the way the world is supposed to work, according to the script of this highly structured and habit-bound **Resistor!**



THE 3 HEADED GREMLIN

Emotional Resistors

- Fear of Failure
- Fear of Ambiguity
- Fear of Rejection

The 3 Headed Gremlin is certainly a sly, secretive and slippery **Resistor**. Most always present and frequently not talked about (can't talk about fear; that would be too real). Many relationships and team collaboration problems have their origins rooted in the need for power, control and status hierarchy—with fear close by. The **Emotional Resistors** play out very deviously:



- *If I must win, I fear failing*—or someone else winning, or even worse yet, someone else getting the credit. Translation: only play the games you know you can win—the easier, safe ones. Paired together, if I must be right, I fear being wrong. *Playing not to lose vs. playing to win here?* Probably not uncovering any new terrain or discoveries with this puppy.
- *If I must be in control, I fear ambiguity.* Does anyone else see a good, old-fashioned turf battle brewing on the horizon with this one? No need for any substantive, cross-functional collaboration here.
- *If I must fit in, I fear rejection.* And yes, I am a team player (or at least want to give the **appearance** of being a team player). If we're wearing green uniforms and I have a purple idea, I'll take one for the team and let go of that purple idea—only green ones are welcome here. Now that you mention it, I never really liked purple much in the first place.

Is it an understatement to say these three *Fatal Fears* stymie creativity and innovation? You caught me; that was a pseudo question (a statement disguised as a question). I'm just attempting to appear to be a good team player here.

THE VICE

Workplace Pressure Resistors

- Extreme Time Pressures
- Unrealistic Expectations for Creative Productivity
- Distractions from Creative Work

It sure would have been more profitable if I had collected a shiny silver dollar every time someone said to me, “Dan, these creative-thinking practices and tools are interesting BUT I live in the real world and I think you only visit it from time to time. I just don’t have the luxury of time on my side to think about new ideas. I’ve got to focus on the fundamentals, the blocking and tackling, and I can’t be distracted from my day job.”

And the beat goes on...the beat goes on. All of those shiny silver dollars sure would be weighing me down right now.

The Vice and his **Workload Pressure Resistors** are in play, most places, big time! **Extreme Time Pressures, Unrealistic Expectations for Creative Productivity and Distractions from Creative Work** are darn good, logical-sounding rationales; so good they are quite rational and believable. After all, people are quite busy doing the work they are paid to do, and with all the distractions *who the heck has got time to be creative? Just not enough hours in the day!* And to be held accountable for novel thinking and creative output? *Not volunteering for that one, no way, not now, not ever.* Well-meaning smart people will look you straight in the eye, not flinch, and give you a boldfaced proclamation, oftentimes using a self-righteous and indignant tone to boot. *“If only there were more hours in the day; If only I wasn’t so busy; If only there weren’t so many distractions.”* If ifs and buts were berries and nuts we’d all have a Merry Christmas! Who the heck brought the fruit cake? Maybe you’ve met some of these people yourself—hmmm?

Ahh yes, **The Vice** gets us in his iron grasp and squeezes us hard twice; first, he steals our precious time for creativity and then gives us logical-sounding excuses to boot. And speaking of time, it’s time to get to **Episode i**.



EPISODE I

FIGHT THE RIGHT FOE

BLACK DIAMOND



THE DELAYERS



THE TIME IS NOW

The chance will stand before you only once.

— Sandra Day O'Connor, former associate justice of the
Supreme Court of the United States

When we **Fight the Right Foe**, we *zero in on and identify the Challenge/Dream*. In essence, a primary **Foe** is a list of good and worthy challenges, problems or opportunities we could spend our valuable time and resources on. However, *they are not necessarily the best or right one(s)* for you. We're not talking about small potatoes here or focused on incremental and modest goals. On the contrary, life's greatest accomplishments are fueled by a *DREAM*. There is nothing more powerful than the magnetic pull of a *DREAM*. When we are truly zeroed in on it and are fully motivated and committed to realizing the *DREAM*, it cannot be taken from us; it cannot be broken and cannot be beaten. When we **Fight the Right Foe**, we move purposely forward toward our *DREAM* and don't become distracted by other shiny objects, competing interests or other foes.

This is analogous to the sport of mountain climbing. The world offers many diverse mountains to climb and each mountain has its unique adventures, obstacles and risks. Each imposes demands on the skill, preparation and experience of each climber and team that attempts to reach its summit. Reaching the summit provides satisfaction and rewards for each climber and expedition team. However, it isn't feasible to attempt to climb a large number of mountains. They have to choose which one is the right one for them to climb. **Fight the Right Foe** and Climb the Right mountain are on the same side of the coin; they are interchangeable.

Therein lies the good fight. We can't be scattered, unfocused or undisciplined with our time and other vital resources because it's paramount to be clear on our summit. When we put ourselves in the place of highest potential, we make our own luck and we *see the right summit*. We are then positioned to map out the best routes to get there as efficiently as possible. Each mountain has its own topography and facts to study and consider. Similarly, *different Challenges/Dreams* have varying degrees of adventure, difficulty, risk—and payoff. We need to select the one(s) that are right for each of us. We don't have the time or the resources *to Fight the*

Wrong Foe and let them sap our precious energy, optimism, enthusiasm or determination.

Sure, there are obstacles (real and perceived) that stand between where we are right now and where we want to go. **Self-Doubt, Rationalization and Procrastination** stand at the front of the line. Got it! How about today we adopt a new fight song that goes something like this: **That was then, now is now!** What do you say? Let's unleash your **Black Diamond Powers** and *Lean into Risk, Embrace your Dream and Take Proactive Actions to go get it.*

However, **The Delayers** delight in wanting us to *Fight the Wrong Foe* for two reasons:

- It is their mission to prevent us—to *delay us* (possibly forever) from zeroing in on, *embracing* our *Dream/Big Goal/Shining Star/Wish*—what we really want to accomplish!
- They can infiltrate our creative spirit if we let them. They unleash three debilitating forces to undermine our creativity and do everything in their power to get us to *Fight the Wrong Foe*:
 - **Self-Doubt**
 - **Rationalization**
 - **Procrastination**



SELF-DOUBT

If you think you can fall, you're more likely to.

— Nick Wallenda, acrobat, high wire aerialist and daredevil

In my workshops I ask the participants, “*Who here sees themselves as creative?*” Sadly, far too few people raise their hands. The unfortunate reality is many people don’t see themselves as creative because they believe creativity is the sole domain of the arts: artists, writers, musicians and comics. And yes, the arts certainly have a good market share of highly talented and creative people, and so do many other professions including education, business, medicine, counseling, and raising a family to name a few.

A better question is, “*In what ways does your creativity surface?*” You have a natural capacity to generate novel ideas *and to act on them*. I will continue to stress this central point and another point is to *get them out of your head, on paper and catapult them forward!* **Smell my vapor fumes, baby!** A nasty thief that chips away at our confidence daily and fans the flames of self-doubt is our *Internal Voice of Judgment*.

Internal Voice of Judgment (IVOJ)

Comedian Groucho Marx began his career in the 1920s and made people laugh with his slapstick comedy routines. He had snappy one-liners and a sharp wit, always poking fun at himself. Groucho’s comedy routine could have made him the poster child of self-doubting our ability to be creative, e.g. **The Groucho Marx** brainstorming method. It would go something like this:

“How could it be a good idea? I thought of it.”

“If it’s such a good idea, somebody else would have thought about it already.”

Using his comedy as a metaphor, the Groucho Marx brainstorming method personifies our *IVOJ*—the voice in our heads that tells us not to move forward with an idea or initiative and says things like:

"It'll never work!"	"Quit dreaming and get practical!"	"No one would ever want to buy it!"
"Where will you get the funding?"	"Keep your head low!"	"Don't rock the boat!"
"You have a family to support!"	"You can't pay for your children's college education on a whim!"	"I've never been that creative!"

One cause of self-doubt is our perception of new ideas contrasted to what we know. We often perceive existing ideas and ways of doing things to be good and we perceive new ideas with suspicion. Why is this? One cause is that existing ideas and ways of doing things conform to our *existing nine dots of reference and experience* because we recognize them. Big, new ideas challenge our status-quo thinking because they fall outside of our nine dots frame of reference and experience. Essentially, they disrupt our expectations and our world view. As a result, we often view them as *bad* because we are not familiar enough with them. Old, nasty self-doubt is rearing its homely head again.

The ability to laugh at one's self is a strength; however, when the *IVOU* rears its ugly head, it becomes a debilitating force and pushes against our creative productivity. It can prevent you from moving forward, but only if you let it. And if that isn't enough to raise the anxiety level of self-doubt, how about we take it up a notch or two and add to it the *External Voice of Judgment*?

External Voice of Judgment (EVOJ)

If our *IVOU* wasn't potent enough, the *EVOJ* is alive and well. Many people audition for this part and are ready willing and able (bless their hearts) to share their well-meaning criticisms about your ideas and concepts. This really helps us to put the brakes on. Speed bumps have always irked me. Who is the knucklehead who put that one here?

Taking a brief look back at American history, many new ideas were met with resistance, even ridicule. The bigger the idea the greater the resistance. People generally don't like big, new ideas until they prove to be successful. A few startling, incorrect predictions:

Everything that can be invented has been invented.

— Charles Duell, Director of U.S. Patent Office, 1899

Sensible and responsible women do not want to vote.

— President Grover Cleveland, 1905

Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?

— Harry Warner, Warner Brothers Pictures, 1927

There is a worldwide market for about five computers.

— Thomas Watson, President of IBM, 1949

We don't like their sound and guitar music is on the way out.

— Decca Recording Company on declining to sign the Beatles, 1962

There's no chance that the iPhone is going to gain any significant market share.

— Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO, 2007

Following are my seven favorite (not) *EVOJ Personalities*. My guess is you have previously met many of these people:

- **The Bottom Liner** without missing a beat will parrot back their blather of, “it’s not in the budget; let’s get back to basics; it’s time for lean and mean; we don’t have the resources; and cost out at any cost.” This appears to be quite pragmatic on the surface but isn’t.
- **The Yes Butter** is sly with their false praise to include phrases like, “It’s such a fabulous idea, but...” and of course, once you hear *but* everything before *the but* just got dismissed.
- **The Pushy Pragmatist** with their sleight-of-hand, logical-appearing commentary that “the operations people won’t go for it.” Sure, trying to save us from pursuing something that just won’t happen.
- **The Salty Old Sage** pretends to be on your side, yet they don’t let you forget this isn’t their first rodeo and want to keep you from making the same mistakes they made before electricity was discovered.
- **The Doomsayer** wouldn’t know a good idea if it bit them in the you know what, but they will sure tell you what’s wrong with your idea and how the world as we now know it will come to an end if you persist.
- **The Bring Back the Good Old Day-ser** longingly waits for the present to pass—it surely will—and the good old days will return so we can get back to normal and deal with this the way we always used to.
- **The Grinner** will look you directly in the eye and with a straight face tell you a bold-face lie because it is what they think you want to hear. Without missing a beat after you’ve left, continue to do what they have always done with no intention of adopting your idea.

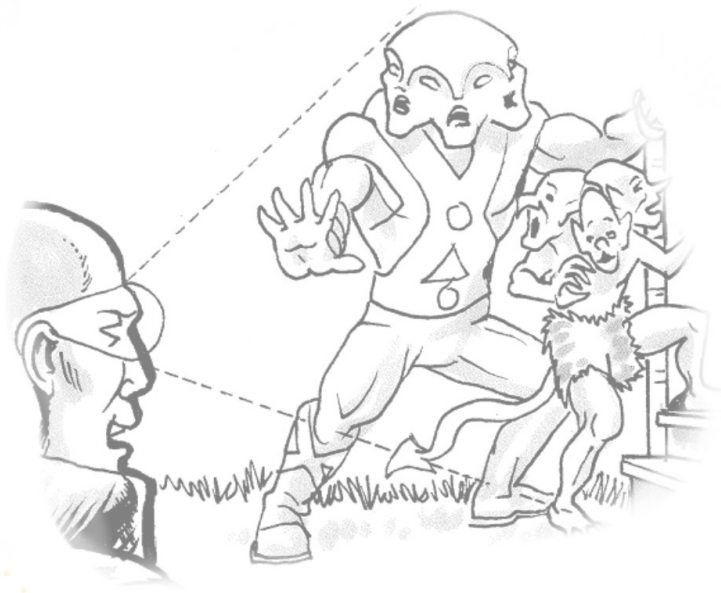
The *IVOJ* & *EVOJ* are debilitating forces that contribute to self-doubting our capacity to consistently generate novel thinking...only if we let them!

RATIONALIZATION

*Only remember west of the Mississippi it's a little more look, see, act.
A little less rationalize, comment, talk.*

— F. Scott Fitzgerald, American novelist

Merriam-Webster defines rationalization as, “to think about or describe something (such as bad behavior) in a way that explains it and makes it seem proper, more attractive.” It can be insidious. Not only can we rationalize just about anything, we can also rationalize why we rationalize. Now try to rationalize that! For example, “I wasn’t born creative, heck, my parents weren’t creative, and the fruit doesn’t fall far from the tree. You don’t get avocados when you plant potatoes.” Many children weren’t encouraged to be creative at a young age, and that’s where habits and interests are formed. I can be darned creative when I can come up with some really good whoppers rationalizing why I don’t think creatively, and why my creative production is anemic. If you don’t see and think of yourself as being creative, this thinking becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. This prophecy plays out similarly to how the ladder of inference (Senge, 1994) works. If I don’t see myself as creative my self-fulfilling prophecy begins on the bottom rung of the ladder and climbs upward, and I basically only look for data that supports and reinforces my self-fulfilling prophecy.



The Ladder of Inference



We go through life not testing our assumptions, biases or beliefs. We reach conclusions based on what we observe and infer from our experience. By not taking time out to challenge these conclusions we are prone to replicate patterns of behavior. These patterns are so imbedded in our thinking that if unchecked we can believe that *our views and beliefs are accurate. Our views and beliefs are based on facts. The facts that we have selected are real and true. And this is quite obvious.*

So as a result, if I don't see myself as creative...

- I take actions based on my belief about how things are.
- I adopt and reinforce beliefs about how things are.
- I reach conclusions.
- I make certain assumptions based on the meanings I have added.
- I think about what I observe and add meaning to the data.
- I have experiences, observe and record data.
- I select data from my interpretation of what I observe.

At the root of this thinking is the anxiety associated with uncertainty, of not knowing and the social pressure of needing to have our ideas accepted. Thinking positively, if you provide yourself with reassurance and affirmation, it helps to alleviate both fears of uncertainty and acceptance of one's ideas.

PROCRASTINATION

You make your mistakes to get to the good stuff.

— Quincy Jones, jazz musician, producer and composer

Procrastination is the **Personal Resistor** that most everyone can relate to. Merriam-Webster defines procrastination as, *"to put off intentionally and habitually; be slow or late about doing something that should be done; to delay until a later time because you do not want to do it."* It is quite devious, especially when working with its cohort, **Rationalization**. It's not that we

don't want to generate novel ideas for our business, life, and family. We simply say, "*gonna, gonna do that tomorrow.*" It sounds so rational. The nonproductive habits of the **Personal Resistors** are tricky to counteract, yet procrastination may be in a class by itself. The crime isn't that we put some things off until tomorrow or next week, it's that sometimes *we put them off for a lifetime*. And when we're sitting on our deathbed it's too late if we procrastinate our life away (ouch!). One reason we procrastinate is to avoid or postpone some form of pain. If, for example, I need to generate some novel ideas, there can be pain associated with that—fear of drawing blanks; of not having imaginative ones; of being questioned about them; of having to decide on them; of having to take a different course of action. So, I put it off. No need to feel that pain today—or anytime soon for that matter!

Another cause of procrastination is that we frame things too big, e.g., national health care, writing a book this weekend, generating 50 ideas in five minutes to solve a problem. These are too big to solve, so why start? You don't roll out national health care, you start with a component like focusing on prevention. You don't write a book, you write three pages a day. You don't generate 50 ideas in five minutes; you begin by generating 15 ideas and build from there.

When in the throes of everyday life, we are busy accomplishing the tasks directly in front of us, getting things done today, this week. It is somewhat rational to put off or delay thinking about or taking action on our life's dream. Heck, I may not have even clarified what the dream is, let alone take steps to pursue it. It just seems to be out of reach right now and not practical to focus on. I am quite busy, and I tell myself there will be time for it, just not now. And I pat myself on the back for being practical and put my head back down to tackle the pile of stuff that is right in front of me, seemingly demanding my attention.

RED PIN BOWLING ANYONE?

Say hello to **Two-Board Adjustments**. Their purpose is to help anchor creative thinking as a repeatable habit. Growing up 30 miles south of the Canadian border, the winters were long and cold, so to take it on we skied, skated, played basketball and bowled. Of all the sports I found bowling demanded that you make small adjustments in real time. Each lane has 39 one-inch boards between the left and right gutters, with board #20 in the center and the center arrow and dot placed on it. Each arrow and

dot to the left and right is placed on the fifth board from board #20. This means there are three arrows and dots on each side of the center arrow and dot, spaced about five inches apart from each other, providing a close-in target to aim at.

In a match, each team of five bowlers share two lanes, bowling on alternating lanes every other frame. The two lanes often have varying lane conditions (e.g., one lane hooks more, requiring adjusting the ball speed; using different balls made from various materials to grip the lane; or aiming at another lane arrow). You learn to adjust your approach to the lane conditions **now** because it will be the fifth frame and you will be sucking eggs. Making small adjustments early is the difference between winning and losing (and also having a little luck with the crossover Brooklyn strikes, my specialty).

And speaking of not self-doubting, rationalizing and procrastinating, how about we summon and enlist **The B e y o n d e r** who is uniquely qualified to conquer **The Delayers** and any other **Resistor** that may try to pile on for that matter...

MAKE A TWO-BOARD ADJUSTMENT

Develop and Implement Daily Tests

Ask, "What is the specific skill or technique I'm trying to isolate to improve, to perfect?"

"How best to measure it?"

"How to make a game of it?"

...**BLACK DIAMOND**

is consistently able to **Fight the Right Foe** by taking these **Key Actions**:

- **Explore the Challenge**
- **See the Future**
- **Get the Facts**
- **Clarify the Problem/ Opportunity**



With a built-in navigation compass, he stays zeroed in on the current, real-time challenges, problems or opportunities and avoids costly stops and starts. His legendary focus is unmatched in the modern era. The outcomes are well clarified challenges, problems or opportunities!

His **Powers** are:

Find It

- Define a variety of challenges/problems/opportunities that could be pursued or solved.
- Find many problems/opportunities, uncover missing or incomplete information and zero in on the most pertinent facts.
- Analyze and clarify various elements of problems and opportunities.
- Demonstrate genuine curiosity and ask insightful and provocative questions.

See It

- Fantasize about things that don't yet exist.
- Use vivid and varied mental imagery to see the future.
- Identify potential barriers that could prevent achieving a future vision.
- Draw a sharp distinction between the present and future vision to create a tension that stimulates proactive action.

Be Versatile

- Use different approaches to problem-solving.
- Simplify problems/opportunities without losing essential details.
- View problems/opportunities through various lenses, different frames.
- Persevere when facing complex or ambiguous issues and problems.



EXPLORE THE CHALLENGE

By endurance, we conquer.

— Ernest Shackleton, polar explorer

To successfully **Fight the Right Foe**, it's paramount to gain crystal clarity on *the Challenge/Dream that we really want to embrace, reach for and accomplish*. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (2020), an American poet, said:

"Many people die with their music still in them. Too often it is because they are always getting ready to live. Before they know it, time runs out."

Dying with our music inside us sounds morbid, kind of a drag. That's not what we want. Professor William Purkey (2020), author and professor at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, is credited with coining the phrases: *"You gotta dance like there's nobody watching; love like you'll never be hurt; sing like there's nobody listening; and live like it's heaven on earth."* Yes, that's the attitude! Find your music, reach way down into your belly, pull it up and belt it out time after time! And if you are a little off key, who cares? Sing even louder!

A good \$64,000 question is, *"What is the Challenge/Dream I should reach for and pursue?"* Sometimes it's obvious, staring us in the face. Other times it's not as clear, and there appears to be a seductive number of worthy *Challenges/Dreams* to chase, reach and wish for. We don't have the passion, time, resources or expertise to chase them all, let alone even a few of them. Therein lies the point. We have to identify, explore and prioritize the *best one(s)*. In his book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins (2001) argued that *good* is the enemy of *great*. There are a number of good challenges to go after, however far fewer great ones. If we find ourselves spending precious time and energy just chasing the good ones, we will never summon enough courage, resources and energy to go after the big ones.

And it's quite seductive to be in a constant state of motion, like the Tasmanian Devil constantly whirling like a tornado, very busy multitasking and proud of it. This has the trappings of equating being busy and efficient with being productive and effective. Being busy does not equal being productive. It is a far lower score. Being productive is a good thing, but that isn't really all that energizing. It isn't the real deal either. How about we take the elevator up to the 103rd floor of the Empire State Building! How about we *Lean into Risk! Embrace and Chase our Dream! Pursue*

Happiness (wasn't there a movie about that?)! Be Really Prosperous! Strive for Great! Become Fulfilled! Reach for your Bright Shining Star! 'Leave it all on the Field'! Now we're talking real turkey; we're cooking with gas and firing on all 16 cylinders! When you **Explore the Challenge** you go after, reach for and embrace *your Challenge/Dream and Take Proactive Actions to go get it!* You can't hit a round-tripper if you're slapping for singles! Nor can you drive a spike with a tack hammer!

SEE THE FUTURE

*Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember,
you have within you the strength, the patience
and the passion to reach for the stars, to change.*

— Harriet Tubman, abolitionist, conductor on the Underground Railroad

Author Lewis Carroll (2020) said, “*If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.*” **Black Diamond** takes the output from *Explore the Challenge* and puts in the effort to *See It*, to see the desired future he is genuinely excited about. He is restless with the gap that exists between current reality and the future vision. To *See It* you produce a visual image of the journey that is possible by putting yourself in the place of greatest potential. You create your own luck. You cannot accomplish big feats without a big idea; you can't sustain a strong ascent without a solid trail guide; and you can't fully harness your energy without first *Seeing It*. In essence, you transport yourself *to the future*, to where you want to be, and look at the past, which is the present of course. You then see and tell the tale of the journey you took. You want a clear view of your destination and ensure you are genuinely excited about the vision and all of its possibilities.

And it is emotions first baby! It's about being emotionally engaged and *then the logic will follow in good time*. It's unbridled energy...*live steam*. How 'bout going for a ride to the ocean in my vintage Jaguar? Heck, it's only a few hundred miles away. If the energy regenerates and your heart is still racing, then and only then do you engage the logic and outline the steps necessary to achieve your vision. You have to have a *really hot vision*, because if you don't, it's inevitable the flame will flicker and then go out. The climb will become too intense and you will tire. You will become too distracted. You won't grow dissatisfied nearly enough with your current reality. With a *really hot vision* full of possibilities and belief in being able to

achieve it, you've created a powerful magnet where you are pulled forward to get going and bridge the gap between where you are and where you want to be! In his book, *The Path of Least Resistance*, Robert Fritz (1994) described **creative tension** as an intense tension between your current reality and your destination that compels you to take the action, to lean into risk. With creative tension you have seen it and experienced the journey you now need to take! **Time marches on and waits for no one!**

GET THE FACTS

The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he/she contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose your curiosity.

— Albert Einstein, Nobel Prize winning physicist

In the TV show *Dragnet*, Sgt. Joe Friday, a detective in the Los Angeles, CA police department, is well-remembered for one of his famous lines: “*Just the facts, ma’am.*” Except that isn’t factually accurate. What he actually said was, “*All we want are the facts, ma’am.*” Minor detail, and the essence is the same.

After **Seeing It, Black Diamond** does not become distracted by shiny new objects. He is a cool operator and prefers to get **Just the Facts** (data, details, information and facts). He is clear-eyed on the destination, the summit, **The Right Foe**. The challenge at hand is to discover the important data, facts, details and information required for a successful ascent. There often are a variety of trails and tactics available to navigate the journey. Data and facts come from a variety of sources including literature reviews, interviews, excursions, new observations and experiments. It’s important to develop a solid data collection plan to cast a wide enough net, yet not so wide to boil the ocean.

Logical, methodical *and also versatile* in his approach, he is adroit at maintaining his balance, cool and composed when confronted with ambiguity, new information or complexity. He discerns the critical information and facts early on and discards those that are tangential and of little importance. Based on what he learns, he may need to adapt, ask revised

questions or adjust the plan by integrating specialized resources, modifying the timeline or reallocating financial resources.

With the facts in hand, **Black Diamond** zeros in to **Clarify the Right Problem/Opportunity**. Every problem and opportunity have unique characteristics and it's critical to choose the ones that suit the interests, skills, resources and energy of the explorer. Ideas follow the way problems/opportunities are framed. That's why it's important to frame them wide, narrow and in-between—and then choose the ones to pursue that, when solved, will deliver the greatest impact.

CLARIFY THE RIGHT PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY

If we spend our time climbing the ladder, and we find out when we get to the top that the ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step we took just got us to the wrong place faster.

— Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*

APPROXIMATE AND PRECISE THINKING

Merriam-Webster defines *approximate* as, “early correct, close in value or amount but not precise.” *Precise* is defined as “exactly or precisely defined or stated; minutely exact.” As a rule of thumb, we are often better served to be approximate early on in problem finding and clarifying, and to generate many *approximately right* problem statements. This is especially true when it isn't apparent what is the *exact problem* to solve or opportunity to pursue. Frame the problems in unique ways and look at them through different lenses (narrow, broad and in-between). We need to be more discriminating and precise downstream because errors later on are darn expensive (*i.e., solving the wrong problem, that's expensive!*). With precise thinking we look to *define the right problem, the right opportunity, the right answer and the right solution*. It's not an either/or decision, it's more of a both/and/when decision. There is an ongoing tug of war tension between precise thinking and approximate thinking. So, think approximate until precision is required and meaningful. Insistence on precision too early eliminates all except exact matches. Similar to playing poker, the key is to have the insight and wisdom to know which card to play, and when. Kenny Rogers had it right when he sang, “*You gotta know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run.*”

MAKE A TWO-BOARD ADJUSTMENT

Establish Weekly Problem-Finding Quota

Sales managers use selling quotas to motivate people. In my programs I ask my audience, "If you are in sales, and going to a sales meeting and aren't at quota, what do you need at a minimum?" The answer that tickles me most is, "a damn good story." Let's borrow the use of quotas to increase our productivity by establishing a weekly problem statement or question quota. Hold yourself accountable to meet it and don't make it too easy. Also, don't make it so arduous that it brings non-productive pressure on you. I find generating 20 problem statements or questions weekly against a challenge is a workable quota.

Yes and speaking of having no time, the time has come for **Black Diamond** to use his **Powers** in **Battle #1** because he has no time for **The Delayers...**or **The 3 Headed Gremlin!**

BATTLE #1

...BLACK DIAMOND HAS NO TIME FOR THE DELAYERS



His *Powers* are:

- *Find It*
- *See It*
- *Be Versatile*



Personal Resistors

- Self-Doubt
- Rationalization
- Procrastination

BLACK DIAMOND HAS NO TIME FOR THE DELAYERS

THE JONES FAMILY SPEND THE DAY LOOKING AT COLLEGES FOR THEIR DAUGHTER.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN GOOD WITH MY HANDS, I LIKE DRAWING, ARTS AND CRAFTS, I LIKE DESIGNING AND BUILDING THINGS.

I AM ALSO INTERESTED IN PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT, SPECIFICALLY IN SUSTAINABILITY.

I'M NOT SURE WHAT THE BEST PATH IS, BUT I KNOW FOR SURE THAT I DON'T WANT TO BE A LAWYER.

WHY DON'T YOU LISTEN TO US? WE ONLY WANT WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU?

THE CAREER PATH YOU TAKE IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS OF YOUR LIFE!

NOW WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING THROUGH THESE COLLEGE CATALOGS TOGETHER FOR MONTHS.

JESSICA, YOUR GRADES ARE EXCELLENT, WHY DO YOU WANT TO WASTE YOUR LIFE WORKING IN AN INDUSTRY WHERE THERE IS NOT A GREAT INCOME, NO JOB SECURITY, NO RETIREMENT ... WHEN YOU COULD BE AN ATTORNEY?

JESSICA, THE BEST CAREER IN ART IS TO BE A TEACHER. YOU CAN PAINT ON YOUR SUMMER VACATIONS. NO DAUGHTER OF MINE IS GOING TO BE SOME WEIRDO ARTIST.

THE ARTS?! ARE YOU CRAZY, THERE'S NO MONEY IN IT KID!

YOU ARE NOT REALLY SURE YOU CAN BE A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST.

YOU ARE JUST ONE IN A MILLION THAT ARE TRYING TO MAKE IT,

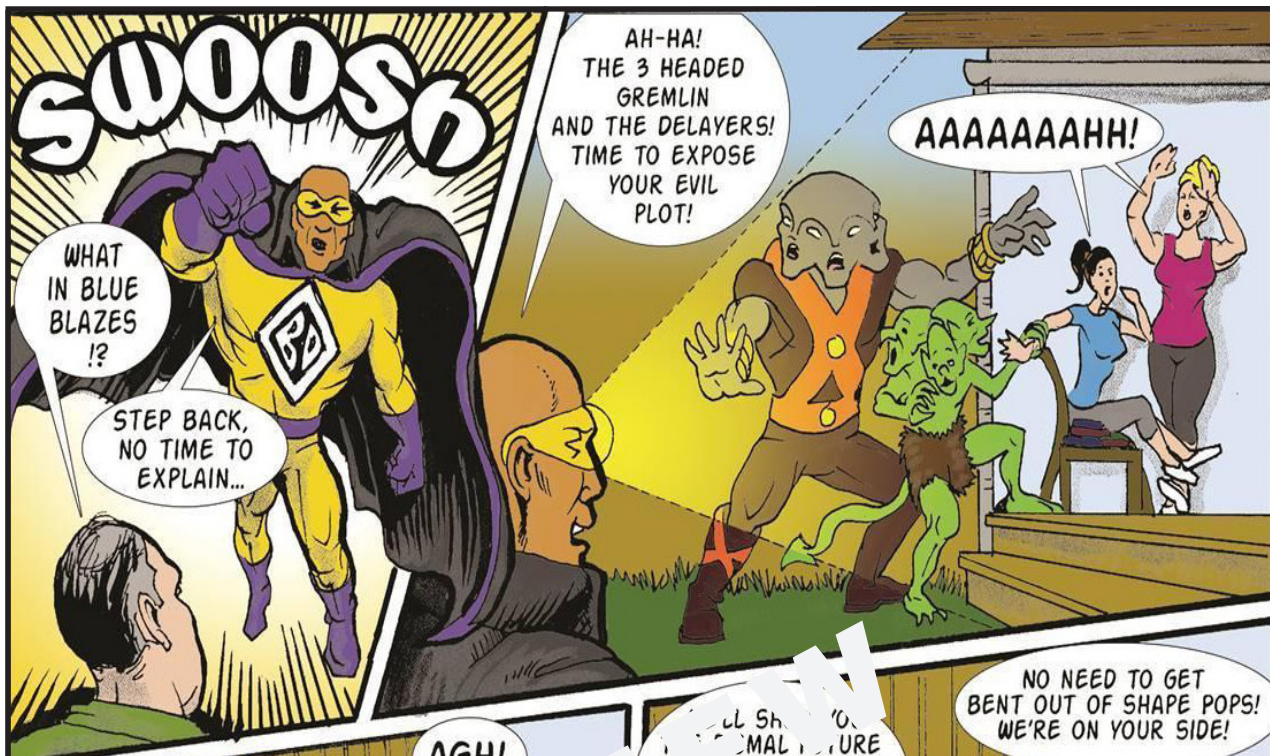
WE'VE DISCUSSED THIS FOR A WHILE, IT'S TIME TO GET CLEAR ON A CAREER DIRECTION.

YOU GONNA SPEND ALL THAT MONEY ON A DEGREE THEN END UP WORKING AT A COFFEE SHOP. WHO'S GONNA PAY FOR ALL THIS?! WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT YOU'LL BE TO YOUR PARENTS.

NOBODY IS GOING TO RESPECT A NEW KID WITH NO EXPERIENCE AND HER HEAD IN THE CLOUDS.

YOU SURE YOU CAN HANDLE THAT COMPETITION? ONE DAY YOU LIKE PAINTING, NEXT DAY YOU ARE BUILDING A MODEL FOR SOMETHING, WHAT'S NEXT? YOU'RE A JAQUELINE OF ALL TRADES AND MASTER OF NONE. WOULDN'T YOU RATHER GO PLAY VIDEO GAMES RIGHT NOW?

STOP RIGHT THERE!!!



SWOOSH

WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES !?

STEP BACK, NO TIME TO EXPLAIN...

AH-HA! THE 3 HEADED GREMLIN AND THE DELAYERS! TIME TO EXPOSE YOUR EVIL PLOT!

AAAAAAHHH!

BLACK DIAMOND!

STAY BACK OR WE'LL CRIPPLE THEM WITH FEAR AND DOUBT!

AGH!

LET GO!

GO MY DAUGHTER, I'LL CALL THE POLICE.

NO NEED TO GET BENT OUT OF SHAPE POPS! WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE!

ALL SHE NEEDS IS A SMALL MATURE YOU DAUGHTER WILL HAVE SHE DOESN'T FALL IN LINE WITH YOUR PLANS.

MAGIC MIRROR I SUMMON THEE!

SHOW US THE POSSIBLE FAILURE... ER, I MEAN FUTURE...

THAT AWAITS THIS YOUNG WOMAN...

BEHOLD YOUR FATE.
THIS IS YOU IN
TEN YEARS.

AND YOUR
DESIGNS, YOU'LL
BE WORKING EVERY DAY
LIKE THIS.

ONCE YOU'VE
CHASED THE DREAM
AND DISCOVERED THAT
NOBODY CARES
ABOUT YOU...

THERE'S NO SENSE
IN TRYING KID, THE
ODDS ARE AGAINST

OH JESSICA, PLEASE,
LISTEN TO REASON,
I CAN'T BEAR TO
SEE YOU LIKE THIS.

NO,
TH-THIS
CAN'T BE! I
WON'T LET IT
HAPPEN!!

THIS
IS NOT WHAT
I MEANT BY
WORKING WITH
MY HANDS.

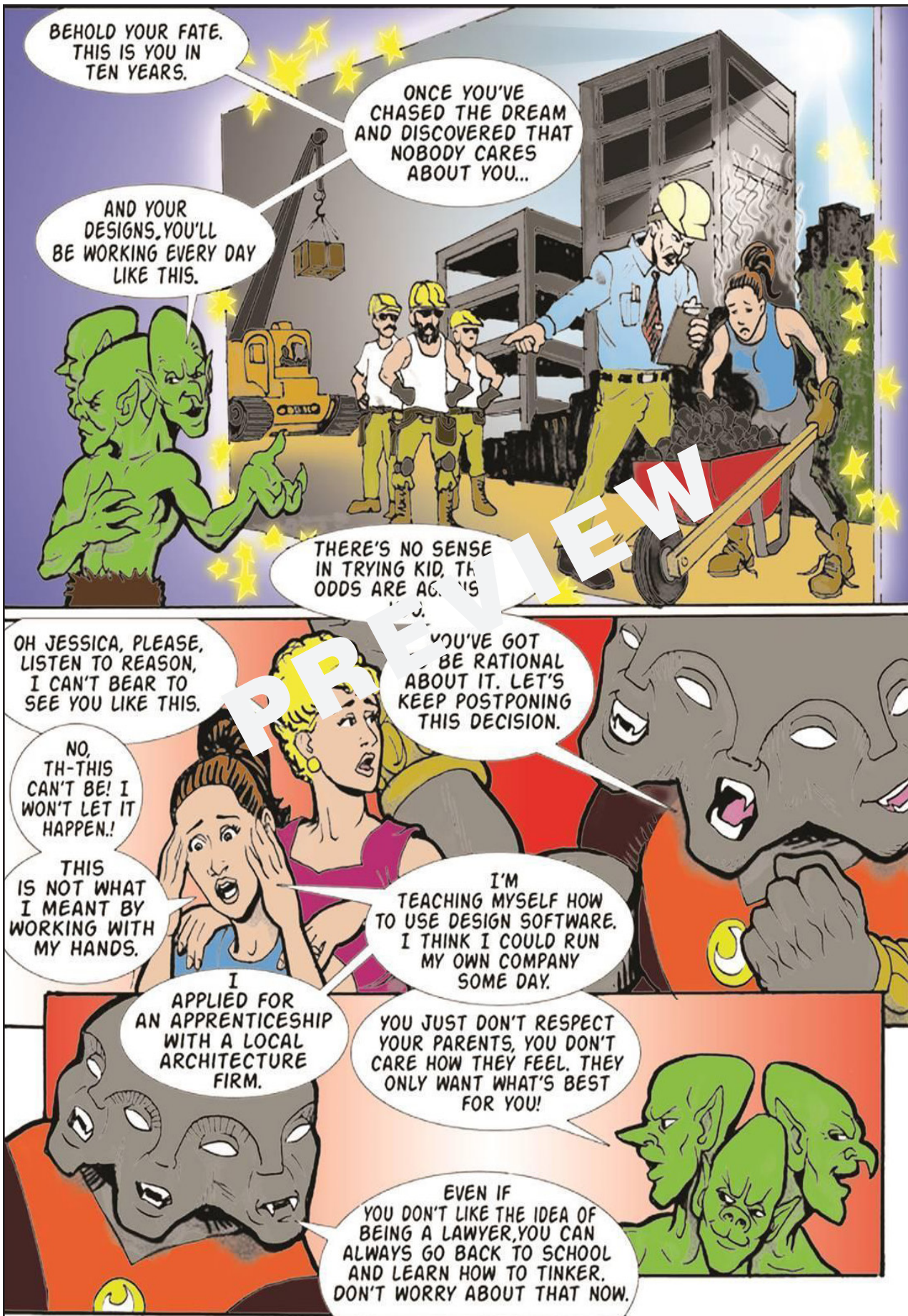
I
APPLIED FOR
AN APPRENTICESHIP
WITH A LOCAL
ARCHITECTURE
FIRM.

YOU'VE GOT
TO BE RATIONAL
ABOUT IT. LET'S
KEEP POSTPONING
THIS DECISION.

I'M
TEACHING MYSELF HOW
TO USE DESIGN SOFTWARE.
I THINK I COULD RUN
MY OWN COMPANY
SOME DAY.

YOU JUST DON'T RESPECT
YOUR PARENTS, YOU DON'T
CARE HOW THEY FEEL. THEY
ONLY WANT WHAT'S BEST
FOR YOU!

EVEN IF
YOU DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF
BEING A LAWYER, YOU CAN
ALWAYS GO BACK TO SCHOOL
AND LEARN HOW TO TINKER.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT NOW.



ENOUGH OF THE SHAMING, FIREHOISING, RATIONALIZING, POSTPONING... LET HER CHASE HER DREAM, REACH FOR HER SHINING STAR!

UP TO YOUR OLD EXCUSES, EH DELAYER? SHE JUST NEEDS TO CLARIFY EXACTLY WHAT SHE WANTS TO DO FIRST. SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO ACCOMPLISH EVERYTHING IN THE FIRST STAGE.

IT'S TOO LATE TO HELP HER NOW, SHE SHOULD HAVE HAD THIS WORKED OUT ALREADY!

SHE KNOWS HER INTERESTS, WHAT SHE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT, AND HER ATTITUDES AND SKILLS BETTER THAN YOU OR WILL.

I'LL SHOW YOU A CREATIVE- THINKING STRATEGY YOU CAN USE TO FIND YOUR CAREER PATH! FIRST YOU MUST SEE YOUR DREAM CLEARLY.

PRE

WHAM

WHEN IT IS CLEAR, YOUR DREAM IS STRONGER, FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN THESE RESISTORS!

HOW'S THIS FOR REALISTIC?
1ST, DEFINE THE DREAM.
2ND, GET THE FACTS SO YOU CAN SEE HOW TO MAKE THE DREAM FEASIBLE.
3RD, OUTLINE THE STEPS NECESSARY TO CHASE THE DREAM AND MAKE IT REAL.
YOUR DAUGHTER ALREADY HAS THE PASSION TO FUEL HER DREAM, SHE JUST NEEDS TO KNOW WHERE AND HOW TO FOCUS THAT PASSION.

Smash



LISTEN FOLKS, DON'T BE DISTRACTED, YOU MUST FIGHT THE RIGHT FOE IF YOU WANT TO REALIZE YOUR DREAMS. LET ME SHOW YOU A BRIGHTER VERSION OF THE FUTURE.

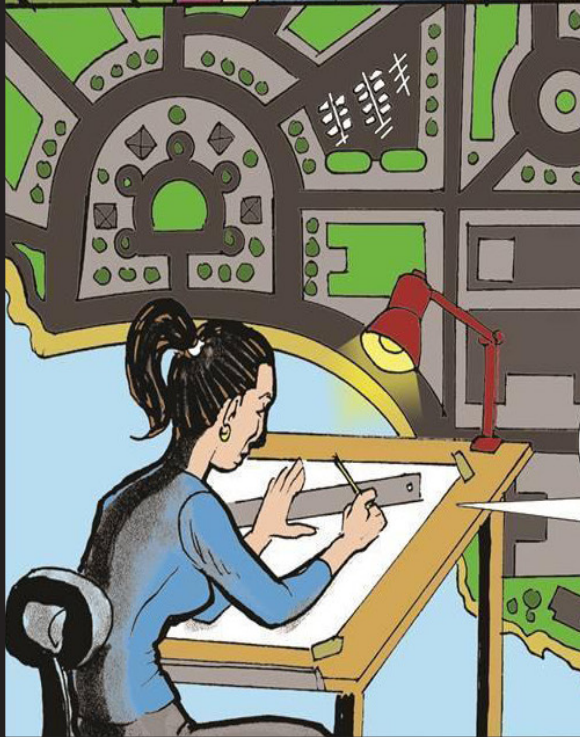


YOU SAID YOU WANT TO CONTINUE TO DRAW, DESIGN, WORK WITH YOUR HANDS, SOLVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES, AND RUN YOUR OWN BUSINESS.



ONE CAREER WHERE THESE INTERESTS INTERSECT HANDSOMELY IS IN URBAN DESIGN, URBAN PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE.

TELL ME THE FACTS AROUND THIS DREAM, THIS CAREER PATH.



THAT'S A GREAT VISION, IT SHOWS MY DREAM!



YES, YOU BOTH ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK. LET'S IDENTIFY A FEW OF THE QUESTIONS THAT WILL NEED TO BE EXPLORED ABOUT THIS DREAM, THIS CAREER:

IS THIS PROFESSION IN A GROWTH MODE? WHAT GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS ARE GROWING THE FASTEST? HOW MUCH MONEY CAN YOU EARN? HOW MANY JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?



THE U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS PROVIDES SOME KEY INSIGHT: CURRENT ANNUAL MEDIAN PAY IS \$63,480. ENTRY LEVEL EDUCATION IS A BACHELORS DEGREE FROM AN ACCREDITED COLLEGE. THE TEN YEAR JOB OUTLOOK IS PROJECTED TO GROW AT 6%.

THE PERCENT OF JOBS ARE LOCATED IN THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES:
ARCHITECTURAL, ENGINEERING, AND RELATED SERVICES: 53%
SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS: 20%
LANDSCAPING SERVICES: 12%
GOVERNMENT: 7%
CONSTRUCTION: 2%



LOCATING HIS LOCATION, SOME ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS INCLUDE:

WHAT IS THE BEST PATH TO GET THERE? HOW CAN YOU LEARN FROM PEOPLE IN THIS CAREER? WHAT ALTERNATIVE PATHS ARE THERE TO THIS CAREER? HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO REACH THIS GOAL?

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS USUALLY NEED A DEGREE IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND A STATE-ISSUED LICENSE, WHICH TYPICALLY REQUIRES COMPLETION OF AN INTERNSHIP.

THERE ARE TWO UNDERGRADUATE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT PROFESSIONAL DEGREES: A BACHELOR OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE (BLA) AND A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE (BSLA). THESE PROGRAMS USUALLY REQUIRE 4 TO 5 YEARS OF STUDY.

COURSES TYPICALLY INCLUDE SURVEYING, LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY, SITE DESIGN, AND URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING, HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, PLANT AND SOIL SCIENCE, GEOLOGY, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE, AND GENERAL MANAGEMENT.



AWESOME!
THIS HELPS
SO MUCH!

I STILL
THINK I AM
MOST ATTRACTED TO
PURSUING A CAREER AS A
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.

IT LOOKS
FEASIBLE
TO ME.

HMMM,
SOLID
FACTS!

WE LIKE
OUR DAUGHTER
TO MAKE FACT-BASED
DECISIONS REGARDING
HER FUTURE.

WE'RE
PROBABLY GOING
TO END UP PAYING FOR
MOST OF HER
EDUCATION.

HOW MANY
COLLEGES
OFFER DEGREES
IN LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE,
AND WHAT ARE
THE AVERAGE
FEES AND
EXPENSES?

ACCORDING
TO THE U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION MOST
RECENT SURVEY,
....

THERE ARE
APPROXIMATELY
100 COLLEGE/UNIVERSITIES
IN THE U.S. THAT OFFER
PROGRAMS IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE.

THE
AVERAGE
ANNUAL OUT-
STATE COST FOR A
BACHELOR PROGRAM IN
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
IS \$39,447. FOR A TWO
YEAR ASSOCIATE PROGRAM
THE AVERAGE ANNUAL
COST IS
\$17,923.

WE HAVE
DEFINED THE DREAM
GOT THE FACTS. IT'S TIME
TO LAY OUT THE STEPS TO MAKE THE
DREAM REAL. WHAT ACTIONS DO YOU
NOW SEE YOURSELF
TAKING?

THE STEPS I NOW SEE MYSELF TAKING ARE:"
CONDUCT A SEARCH OF THE ACCREDITED
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES THAT ARE WITHIN
THE MEANS OUR FAMILY BUDGET

DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT
WITH MY HIGH SCHOOL CAREER COUNSELOR
TO GET HER INPUT ON RECOMMENDED COLLEGES.
WITH THE REFINED LIST OF COLLEGES, CONTACT THEIR
ADMISSIONS DEPARTMENT TO IDENTIFY
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

AND
SCHOLARSHIP,
WORK STUDY AND
INTERNSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES WITH THEIR
PROGRAMS. SCHEDULE
APPOINTMENTS WITH A FEW
ARCHITECTS, LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS AND
CITY PLANNERS

IN OUR CITY TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT THE DAY-TO-DAY
REALITIES OF THIS PROFESSION.



STOP
PROJECTING ON JESSICA
OUR VISION OF HER BECOMING
A LAWYER, EMBRACE HER
DREAM AND GIVE HER
OUR SUPPORT.

REVIEW
THE FINANCES WE
WILL BE ABLE TO AFFORD
TO SPEND (ASSUMING
THE FEES TO ATTEND A
FOUR YEAR
COLLEGE)

GO ON COLLEGE
VISITS WITH JESSICA THIS
SPRING BREAK TO GET A FIRST
HAND APPRECIATION OF THE
DIFFERENT COLLEGE ATMOSPHERES.

TALK
WITH PEOPLE IN
OUR NETWORK THAT CAN
PROVIDE INSIGHT REGARDING
THIS PROFESSION

NO, NO, NO...
THAT'S ALL A
WASTE OF TIME,
WHY BOTHER! DON'T
BE FOOLED BY HIS
WIZARDRY, YOU'RE
JUST GOING TO BE
DISAPPOINTED
IN THE
END.

HEY,
ISN'T YOUR
FAVORITE SHOW ON
TV ON NOW? IT'S
SO MUCH MORE
FUN THAN DOING
ALL THIS WORK.

THESE MONSTERS,
HEY HAVE BEEN PLANTING
DOUBTS, OBSTACLES AND
DISTRACTIONS IN OUR MINDS,
PLAYING OFF OUR FEARS.
NO MORE OF THAT.

I WANT
YOU BOTH
OFF OUR
PROPERTY

I'LL HELP
YOU THERE,
MA'AM.

IDENTIFYING
AND UNDERSTANDING
THOSE FEARS, DOUBTS
AND DISTRACTIONS IS HOW
WE WORK THROUGH
THEM.





GREAT WORK MOM, DAD AND JESSICA, YOU'VE DONE QUITE WELL. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THESE BOZOS.

Y'KNOW, WE WERE FIGHTING THE WRONG FOE ALL THIS TIME. THERE ARE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL OBSTACLES TO GOING AFTER YOUR DREAMS,

HOWEVER IF YOU TAKE THE TIME AND DEFINE THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO ANSWER, YOU ARE WELL ON YOUR WAY.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US!

JESSICA KNOWS WHAT HER FUTURE CAREER LOOKS LIKE AND WE ARE ON OUR WAY TAKING THE ACTION NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE IT.

HECK, I'M GOING TO APPLY THIS TO MY OWN GOALS!

THERE IS NOTHING MORE POWERFUL AND INSPIRING THAN A CLEAR DREAM, ESPECIALLY ONE THAT IS REINFORCED WITH FACTS AND A PLAN OF ACTION.

I DARE YA TO EMBRACE AND CHASE THE DREAM.

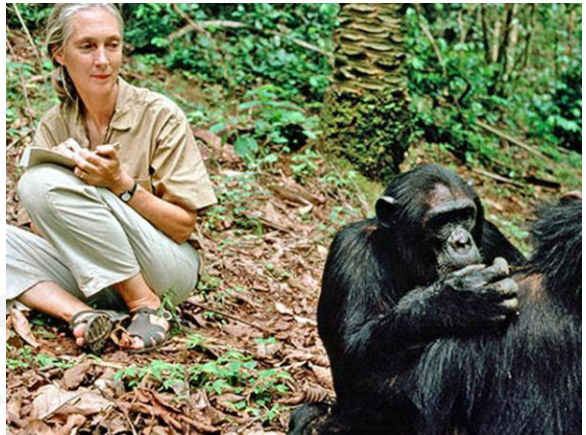
EPISODE PROFILE: DR. JANE GOODALL

*What you do makes a difference,
and you've got to decide what kind of difference you want to make.*

— Dr. Jane Goodall, Primatologist

Merriam-Webster defines trailblazer as “*a person who makes, does, or discovers something new and makes it acceptable.*” Say hello to a true trailblazer!

Her story has been told many times, and like a fine wine, it doesn't grow old, it only gets better with age. Dr. Goodall conducted scientific research on chimpanzees in Africa in the 1960s and revolutionized primate science. Her discoveries negated firmly held beliefs about chimpanzees, humankind's closest living relatives. In 1960 Dr. Goodall began her field research at the Gombe Stream Chimpanzee Reserve in western Tanzania where she made groundbreaking discoveries that were in direct opposition to the scientific community's accepted beliefs about chimpanzees:



Source, National Geographic

1. *They eat meat:* She observed chimps eating a bush pig and attacking, killing and eating a red colobus monkey. Prior to this it was thought they were vegetarians.
2. *They make and use tools:* She observed David Greybeard (she recorded observations of the chimps by names she gave them) using a blade of grass to catch termites from their mounds and removing leaves from a twig to use it to fish for termites.

These discoveries forced the scientific community to acknowledge that humans weren't the only *Homo sapiens* to make and use tools. At Gombe,

she persevered through natural threats, including malaria, parasites, snakes and storms. When she published her field research it was met with harsh skepticism by the male-dominated primatologist community:

- After presenting her findings at the Zoological Society of London's primate symposium in 1962, one society officer criticized her work as *"anecdotal and speculative that made no real contribution to science."*
- An Associated Press reporter wrote, *"A willowy blonde with more time for monkeys than men told how she spent fifteen months in the jungle to study the habits of the apes."*

Media executives hinged their support on her cooperation to be glamorized and scripted. One *National Geographic* executive wrote, *"Good shots of Jane washing her hair in a stream would be a big help."* If it served to sustain her work, she made sacrifices, humored fools, endured slights, made concessions and persevered. In 1965 *National Geographic* published its first cover story about her work and released *Miss Goodall and the Wild Chimpanzees* as a television special that highlighted the lives of chimps. An estimated 22 million North American viewers tuned in to see it. She continued her field research into the mid-1970s.

Since then, Dr. Goodall has authored dozens of books, spoken at hundreds of conferences and been a tireless ambassador in developing countries for animal protection, conservation, science and education. In 1977, she founded the Jane Goodall Institute to expand ways to create chimpanzee protection, conservation and environmental education. In 1986, Dr. Goodall shifted her focus to an animal-human conservation approach with the global mission: *to empower people to make a difference for all living things, for a future of green.*

The initiatives implemented include youth programs, a chimpanzee sanctuary and rehabilitation center, community conservation, science work and action plans. In 2017 the Institute celebrated its 40th anniversary, and noted the following accomplishments:

- 1490k+ acres of habitat protected
- 5000+ chimpanzees and gorillas living in the habitats
- JGI protects 130 communities supported worldwide

- 4900+ projects led by young people through Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots

Pay Attention to Your Unique Calling: *Think Big, Lean into Risk, Embrace Your Dream and Take Proactive Actions to go get it!* Persevere, never let it go or ever give up. Take the actions for the long run. You will encounter tough obstacles, naysayers, hostilities, quicksand and inclement weather. You have a number of options to include: charm them; kill them with kindness; barrel over them; collaborate with them; outsmart them; or outrun them. They will tire, you won't! What is the *Dream* that is in you? The one you need to go after with every passionate and enthusiastic fiber in your body?

MAKE A TWO-BOARD ADJUSTMENT

Anticipate Hitting a Plateau

Don't be surprised or dissapointed when this happens because it will. Plan in advance what to do and how you are going to shift when you hit a plateau. We get stuck when we go on autopilot and simply go through the routines.

Change your practice methods (e.g., speed up the repetitions, slow them down, do them in reverse, adapt them).

IT'S YOUR TIME

In the comic strip **Black Diamond** used his **Powers** of **Find It, See It** and **Be Versatile** to **Explore the Challenge, See the Future, Get the Facts** and **Clarify the Problem/Opportunity**.

He helped Jessica and her parents **Fight the Right Foe**, clarify the right problem/opportunity and leave **The Delayers** and **The 3 Headed Gremlin** in their vapor fumes baby!

It's your time to channel your energy, your powerhouse. When you start strong you finish strong. By taking this trailblazing step and *working out* with **Dare to Dream, Back to the Future, Just the Facts Please, Reframe It**, and **Evaluate and Select 'Em** you will be well on your way to *Lean into Risk, Embrace Your Dream and Take Proactive Actions to go get it!*

EPISODE I, FIGHT THE RIGHT FOE: BATTLE #1

BURST IN HERE WHEN...

You want a new way to improve, create or solve something and need to explore the data, details, facts and emotion surrounding the challenge, problem or opportunity that requires your attention....

AND FIGHT OFF THE DELAYERS...

- Self Doubt
- Rationalization
- Procrastination

POWER SOURCES

- Dream
- Big Goal
- Shining Star
- Wish

THE DELAYERS

...BLACK DIAMOND

VS.

POWERS

- Find It
- See It
- Be Versatile

KEY ACTIONS

- Explore the Challenge
- See the Future
- Get the Facts
- Clarify the Problem or Opportunity

WORKOUTS

- Dare to Dream
- Back to the Future
- Just the Facts Please
- Reframe It
- Evaluate and Select 'Em

OUTCOMES

CLARIFIED/PRIORITIZED
PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY
STATEMENTS

FIGHT THE RIGHT FOE

EXPLORE THE CHALLENGE

Burst in here when...you want a new way to improve, create or solve something, and you need to explore the data, details and emotions surrounding the challenge/opportunity/problem that requires your attention.

① DIVERGENT WORKOUT

DARE TO DREAM

When you **Dare to Dream** you diverge and leverage the strength and power of your dream. You wish for big things, set high goals, reach for that shining star and zero in on what matters most in your life! Take advantage of the westerly winds at your back and ask bold, provocative questions. Use the questions that follow to help chart your path forward!

Challenge/Dream Questions

What is your boldest, most daring dream?	Deep down, what is your life purpose?
--	---------------------------------------

<p>As you think about your future vision...</p> <p>...What is your head saying to you?</p> <p>...What is your heart saying to you?</p> <p>...What is your gut saying to you?</p>	<p>What are your goals?</p> <p>Personal?</p> <p>Professional?</p> <p>Relationships?</p> <p>Financial?</p>
<p>Looking back on your life, when were you the happiest/most energized? What were you doing that was so enriching?</p> <p>How can you re-stoke those fires?</p>	<p>What are you uniquely talented at, love to do and should be doing most of the time?</p>

List Your Dream/Big Goal/Shining Star/Wish Statements
'My Dream is...' 'My Big Goal is...' 'It Would be Great if...' 'I Wish...'

Converge, prioritize the best ones and put a check next to the ones that:

- Appeal to your head, tug at your heartstrings and kick you in the gut.
- Will demand novel thinking and are possible to achieve with a good stretch.
- You have ownership and decision-making authority.
- You are highly enthusiastic, motivated and energized to take bold, decisive action.

Bring your prioritized Dream/Big Goal/Shining Star/Wish Statements forward to **See the Future!**

FIGHT THE RIGHT FOE

SEE THE FUTURE

Burst in here when... you have prioritized your Dream/Big Goal/Shining Star/Wish Statements and want to see, feel and touch an ideal solution. Note: there is some overlap between the **Dare to Dream** and **Back to the Future Workouts**. The primary distinction is with **Dare to Dream** you visualize from the present to the future, and with **Back to the Future** you visualize from the future back to the present. In the comic strip we primarily used **Dare to Dream**, however one scene utilized **Back to the Future**

where Jessica saw her fate (courtesy of **The 3 Headed Gremlin** fanning fear). You can *work out* with both **Workouts** or use one in lieu of the other.

④ DIVERGENT WORKOUT

BACK TO THE FUTURE

When you go **Back to the Future** you diverge to see, feel and touch the future vision you want to create. You are standing in the future and looking back to today. You then outline the steps you took to get there and achieve it. Relive how you harnessed your energy and bridged the gap from where you are today to where you were one year ago. Transport yourself forward to one year from today and write down the date. A reporter from a prestigious organization wants to write a feature article on what you accomplished over the past year. She is interested in how you were able to Take the Risk, Embrace Your Dream and take Proactive Actions to go get it. Use the questions that follow to stimulate your thinking for the article:

Future Vision Looking Back Questions

What <i>Dream</i> did you embrace? What <i>Shining Star</i> did you reach for?	What did you wish for and create? Why did you feel compelled to create it?
What makes this so unique and special?	Why is this so important to you?

What barriers did you have to overcome to realize this vision?	How wide was the gap between where you started one year ago to today?
What are associates, customers, family and friends saying about it? How are they reacting?	How does it feel to have achieved your vision, to have realized your <i>Dream</i> ?
What words best describe what your success feels like and what is now happening?	Looking forward, where do you go from here?

Write your compelling story. Headline your article and use rich, vivid imagery. Draw out sharp contrasts between the future you've created, and the situation one short year ago. Have the reader feel the 'tension' that propelled your actions.

Headline:

Story:

With your compelling story in hand, propel forward and **Get the Facts!**

FIGHT THE RIGHT FOE

GET THE FACTS

Burst in here when...you have dared to dream and/or seen, felt, heard, and touched your future vision (from **Dare to Dream** and/or **Back to the Future**). Now it's time to discover and analyze the necessary data, details, facts and emotions to purposefully create tension and take the necessary action to close the gap between the current situation and the desired vision.

① DIVERGENT WORKOUT

JUST THE FACTS PLEASE

When you get **Just the Facts Please** you diverge to discover and analyze the details, facts and opinions about your Dream/Big Goal Statements. Use the following questions to get a clearer picture of the data, details, facts and emotions required to make your vision a reality.

The Data, Details, Facts and Emotions Questions

What is a brief history of the situation?	What is the central challenge/ problem/opportunity?
What is the urgency, the seriousness of the issue?	What approaches have you tried previously, and what were the results?

What data, details, facts and opinions need to be discovered and analyzed?	What are the most pertinent facts?
Who else could offer a valuable perspective, and shed new light on the issues and data?	What is the impact if the problem goes unsolved or the opportunity isn't realized?
What are the root causes of the problems and/or performance issues?	What does the data not tell you?
What do your gut feelings, hunches and instincts tell you to do about this issue?	Given this information, what actions do you need to take to reach an ideal outcome for this situation?

Review the information that reveals new insights into the situation and is important to consider as you move forward. With your data, details, facts and emotions in hand, propel forward and **Clarify the Problem/Opportunity**.

FIGHT THE RIGHT FOE

CLARIFY THE PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY

Burst in here when... you have discovered and analyzed the data, details, facts and emotions that are most pertinent to realizing your dream and achieving your desired vision. It's time to clarify, reframe and zero in on the specific problem/opportunity statements in order to transition and generate ideas to solve them.

① DIVERGENT WORKOUT

REFRAME 'EM

When you **Reframe 'Em** you diverge and restate your problem/opportunity from differing perspectives (wide and narrow). Ideas follow how problems/opportunities are framed so it's good to be working from more, not less. Some statements will be more useful than others, but you can only assess that after you have worked with them. Use the statement starters: 'How to...' 'How might I...?' 'In what ways might I...?' Give the problem/opportunity pot a darn good stirring!

- Turn the data you identified previously into specific problem/opportunity statements.
- Take each barrier (what's stopping you from solving/pursuing it – real and/or perceived) and turn each one into a problem/opportunity statement.
- Think about how other people might frame the issue. For example, ask:
 - "How would a highly skilled professional frame this issue?"
 - "How would a novice see it?"
 - "Who else had a similar challenge/problem/opportunity?"
 - "How might 007 or Wonder Woman approach this situation?"
 - "How could the problem/opportunity solve itself?"
 - "If you were working from a blank sheet of paper and weren't constrained by resources, how would you frame it?"

- *“What are your assumptions about this issue?” “Which ones will need to be challenged?”*

Problem/Opportunity Statements

‘How to...?’ ‘How might I...?’ ‘In what ways might I...?’

With your clarified problem/opportunity statements in hand, propel forward and **Evaluate and Select ‘Em.**

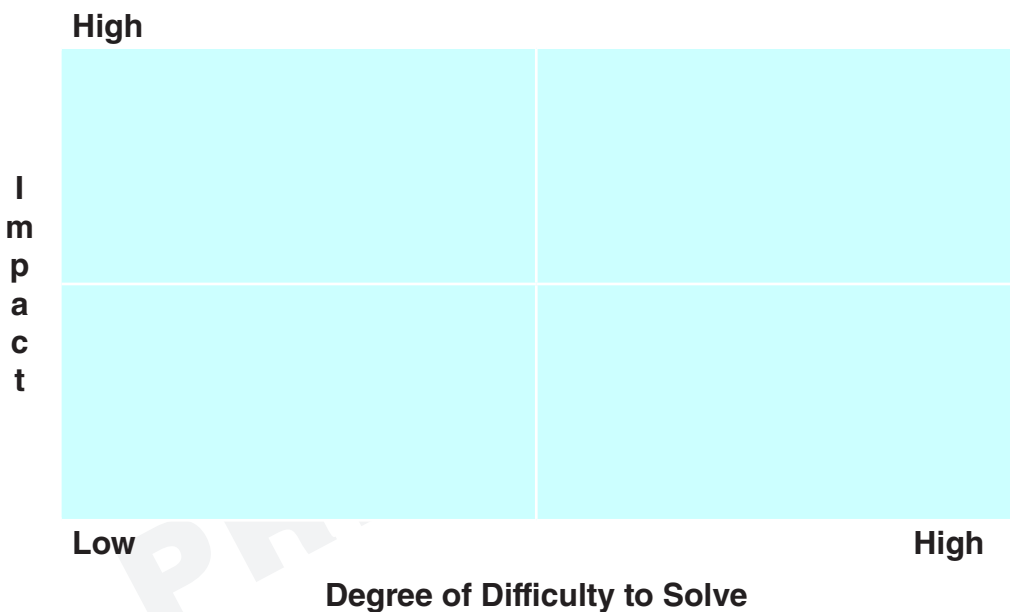
©ONVERGENT WORKOUT

EVALUATE AND SELECT ‘EM

When you **Evaluate and Select ‘Em** you converge and prioritize the most feasible problem/opportunity statements you have generated. Use the following steps:

- Review the problem/opportunity statements you generated.
- Give each statement a letter, e.g., A, B, C, etc.
- With each statement ask, *“What do I think the impact will be when solved?”* Then ask, *“What do I think will be the degree of difficulty to solve it?”*

- Populate the letter on the matrix.
- If you have problem/opportunity statements with a high impact and high degree of difficulty to solve, generate ideas to reduce the difficulty.
- Hit the problem/opportunity statements to move forward with in order to generate ideas to solve.



With your prioritized problem/opportunity statements in hand, you are ready to propel forward to **Episode ii, Imagination will Prevail: Battle #2.**

Summary of Episode i, Fight the Right Foe: Battle #1.

After priming the pump with many tips, tricks, tools, techniques and a comic strip to liberate your **B e y o n d e r Powers**, you burst in with your Dream/Big Goal, collaborated with **Black Diamond** and used your **Powers** of **Find It, See It** and **Be Versatile** to **Explore the Challenge, See the Future, Get the Facts** and **Clarify the Problem/Opportunity**. You *worked* out with **Dare to Dream, Back to the Future, Just the Facts Please, Reframe It** and **Evaluate and Select ‘Em** and your outcome was clarified/prioritized Problem/Opportunity Statements. You have constructed a solid foundation to build on – *good energy!*

Glimpse forward to Episode ii, *Imagination will Prevail*: Battles #2, #3 and #4:

- **In Battle #2 *Micro-Burst*** will Expose the True Colors of **Chameleon**. You will burst in with your Clarified/Prioritized Problem/Opportunity Statements, collaborate with ***Micro-Burst*** and use your ***Powers of Be Fluent, Be Novel*** and ***Stay Open*** to **Rain and Select Ideas**. Your outcome will be Hit Yes Ideas.
- **In Battle #3 *Prism*** will Quiet **The Junk Yard Dog**. You will burst in with your Hit Yes Ideas, collaborate with ***Prism***, and use your ***Powers of Borrow It, Elaborate*** and ***Make New Connections*** to **Take a Break and Incubate**. Your outcome will be More Hit Yes Ideas.
- **In Battle #4 *Plusser*** will Strike Fear into **The 3 Headed Gremlin**. You will burst in with More Hit Yes Ideas, collaborate with ***Plusser***, use your ***Powers of Put Ideas in Context, Evaluate and Select It*** and ***Strengthen It*** to **Strengthen the Concept**. Your outcome will be a Best Concept/Prototype.

MAKE A TWO-BOARD ADJUSTMENT

Reward Yourself

After you have successfully developed and implemented daily workouts and tests to strengthen your creativity, reward yourself. Money, chocolate and praise to name a few will work just fine.

A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS

Well there you have it. You worked through **Episodes i, ii and iii** and **Battles 1-5**. It took attitude, smarts, energy, persistence and calcium in the backbone! Along the journey you adopted a discipline and cadence. You made the concerted effort and put in the hard work. You:

- Trained your technique and strengthened your **Powers**.
- Anchored the Creative and Physical Exercise (bonus) Habits.
- Increased your innovation productivity.
- *Leaned into Risk, Embraced Your Dream and Took Proactive Actions to go get it!*

I congratulate you and I think it is great. More important, I bet you do too!

REDISCOVER

My logical and intuitive guess is you knew all along what was involved in this program. You rediscovered what you already knew. You have the capability, the creative fire power to navigate through the whitewater rapids of thinking, perceiving and acting more creatively. **The Beyonders** will *always be with you*. The challenge is to continue to liberate their **Powers... tap into and hunt the good stuff that's already in there...Get it out...and Xcelerate it to full power and action!**

I hope you enjoyed this journey at least half as much as I did in developing it. The principles are timeless: *Set challenging goals and go after them; forge a tough-minded optimistic attitude; train your technique; learn, adapt and move forward enthusiastically*. We learn nothing when standing at the summit. We learn everything during our preparation, conditioning, practice regimen, ascent and descent.

I trust you still share in my tough-minded optimism that it is **Your Time** to re-energize and continue the journey...to live an adventurous, fulfilling and inspiring life...*to Lean into Risk, Embrace Your Dream and Take Proactive Action to go get it*. And yes...to become the person you have always been capable of becoming!

With Energy,
Dan

MAKE A TWO-BOARD ADJUSTMENT

Developing Habits Means Doing

In an iconic speech, “Citizenship in a Republic,” also known as “Man in the Arena” (Morris, 2010), delivered at the Sorbonne in Paris, France on April 23, 1910, President Theodore Roosevelt thundered:

“It is not the critic who counts; not the person who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the door or deeds could have done better.”

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marked by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who, though he may often be defeated, knows in the end triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”

AN INVITATION

While the 28 Day Challenge comes to a close, the ascent up the creative thinking skill ladder continues - the climb is where the real action is. Yes, the learning, growth, skill mastery and exhilaration takes place during the journey.

When you get a few free minutes, drop me a note and let me know how your journey up the creative thinking skill ladder is progressing. I'm interested in learning about what you have adapted/developed to strengthen your **Powers**. Achieving skill mastery takes time...and taking time to share and teach good practices shortens the time...the ascent. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you in advance.

Dan Coleman

DAN COLEMAN

Dan Coleman, the founder of Excelsior Learning, is consistently praised by his clients as a knowledgeable and energizing speaker and trainer who brings fresh content, practical tools and unique experiential learning methods to deliver training that sticks. Prior to founding Excelsior Learning, Dan led national account sales and negotiation teams at AT&T and American Greetings and was a senior manager with Accenture. He is a leading authority on how to use creative thinking tools and practices to strengthen creative thinking and negotiation skills. Over the past two decades, Dan has trained thousands of people in his nontraditional, custom-designed programs.



Speaking & Training Topics:

Get Creativity Fit® and Jump Spark more Innovation is a fast-paced, hands on program (in-person or virtual) designed to foster novel thinking and taking action **NOW!** In this program you meet ***The Beyonders*** who use their ***Powers*** to conquer ***The Resistors*** who try to block novel thinking and taking action. By *working out* with powerful *Divergent and Convergent Thinking Workouts*, you encounter immediate learning, and generate novel and feasible ideas to solve individual or team challenges.

Anchor Negotiations @ Aspiration Point...or Nothing is a hands-on, energizing program (in-person or virtual) designed to accelerate the use of a potent mix of *Collaborative, Competitive, and People-Centered Negotiation Strategies*. Post-program, you engage in a 21 Day Challenge to anchor the use of strategies as a repeatable habit.

Dan has a B.S. from State University of New York at Plattsburgh and has completed course work towards an M.A. in Creative Studies at the Center for Applied Imagination at Buffalo State College, NY.

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- MTD
- Praxair
- P&G
- Progress Lighting
- Rinnai America
- ShurTech Brands
- Swagelok
- Therma Tru
- Thermo Fisher Scientific

Another Book by Dan Coleman

Bursts of Fresh-Squeezed Ideas

A Program To Ignite Your
Creative-Thinking Skills



Fan the Hot Blue Flames

A Dynamic Method to Jump Spark Your Creativity and Innovation

In *Fan the Hot Blue Flames*, creativity trainer and coach Dan Coleman jump-sparks us to action using his dynamic, results-focused method. Unlike any other book or program, he integrates a dynamic-duo combination of creative-thinking *Power Pack Workouts* and physical exercise to help us hunt the creativity that is inside us, Xcelerate it to full power and anchor its use as a repeatable, everyday habit.

The book is designed for people who *accept the challenge*, want to sharpen their creativity skills to a razors-edge and get creativity fit, solve tough problems and pursue opportunities in fresh ways. We strengthen our creativity muscle when we set goals, adopt a tough-minded optimistic attitude and establish a regimen and cadence to exercise them every day. When we work out, we liberate the creative-thinker inside us and conquer the Resistors to creativity. *Fan the Hot Blue Flames* will teach you to:

- ▶ Train your technique and strengthen your creativity skills.
- ▶ Anchor creative-thinking and physical exercise as repeatable, everyday habits.
- ▶ Increase your innovation productivity.
- ▶ Lean into risk, embrace your dream and take proactive actions to go get it!

Welcome to the challenge

"Conversations with Dan and using his approach in *Fan the Hot Blue Flames* ALWAYS re-energize and help me to come up with bigger ideas—professionally and personally. It always encourages me to reach for my dreams more productively, while growing through, and enjoying the "work out". I highly recommend his book for more effective ideation for solving problems and creating opportunities consistent with your dream!"

Paige Giannetti, Executive of CPG Fortune 500 companies

"*Fan the Hot Blue Flames* is a combination of the best creative thinking tools available today. The reader will clearly understand the creative thinking and how it can increase their ability to overcome challenges and accomplish goals to the very best thought possible in their professional or personal lives. If you are an emerging leader striving for greater levels of innovation for your teams, this book is for you!"

Jeff Kessler, Vice President Sales – North America, Gerber Plumbing Fixtures

"I really love the style and content of *Fan the Hot Blue Flames*! It uses clear language, is actionable, engaging, fun and motivating. The blend of content, the stories, historical quotes and seeing it in action in the comic strip stories is great. Dan brings the energy and makes the tools actionable. Now it's up to us – the readers – to apply it and get creative in ways that advance against all of life's challenges!"

James W. Arbogast, PhD, Hygiene Sciences and Public Health Advancements VP

"Dan shares his simple actionable techniques to strengthen our *Beyonder* powers. His creative thinking tools and techniques work in the real world to unlock growth."

Carla Kopyta, Director of Shopper Marketing, P&G

"I've had the opportunity to work with Dan over the last decade and have utilized his boundless energy and enthusiasm to challenge our paradigms, motivate teams and help us tap into the creativity and talent that lies within each of us and our teams! Dan's positive attitude, use of humor and playful spirit provide a combination that can unlock great power to achieve amazing things while enjoying the journey. Dan's book provides the reminders we all need to spark creative thinking in a really fun way!"

Tim Dye, Chief Commercial Officer, GOJO Industries

"The magic with Dan, which the book consistently reminds us, is the disciplined approach to skill development and the structured practices to do this. This was always what separated Dan from other consultants who many times just wanted to "preach" their concepts but had very little follow-up or specific actions to develop the new knowledge."

Brian Grenfell, Retired Sales Executive

