

BLUE-COLLAR LEADERSHIP®



LEADING FROM THE FRONT LINES

MACK STORY
Blue-Collar Leadership® Series

Blue-Collar Leadership®: Leading from the Front Lines

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Mack Story

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DEDICATION

To those who make it happen on the front lines everyday.

You matter!

And, I believe in you.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the many blue-collar leaders on the front lines that have impacted my life in ways they will never know.

Two of the greatest lessons I learned from front line leaders:

- 1) Give credit to others when things go right.
- 2) Take responsibility when things go wrong.

Many of the best people I have ever met were wearing safety glasses, ear plugs, a pair of well-worn, dirty, greasy, steel-toed boots, and a smile. I'm glad to have met you all. You're an amazing group of hard-working, dedicated people that matter. You deserve to work with a great leader. It's my hope that you become one.

Each of you have played a small part in shaping my thinking and therefore my life. I will be forever grateful. Thank you!

1

I'M ONE OF YOU

WHO WE ARE MATTERS

*"A few start at the top, but most of us start at the bottom."
~ Mack Story*

Merriam-Webster's simple definition of blue-collar: requiring physical work; relating to or having jobs that require physical work.

I'm proud of the many years I spent on the front lines as part of the blue-collar workforce in various manufacturing plants. Those years, and the many outstanding people I worked alongside, shaped me and prepared me to be uniquely positioned to help you today. For that, I'm forever grateful. But, I'll never be satisfied.

If you'll learn and apply what I'll be sharing with you on these pages, you won't have to settle any longer. Like me, you should always be grateful but never be satisfied. You can become a lot more. It's a choice I hope you will make.

You have unlimited potential within you and can move far beyond your current circumstances. I want to help you increase your influence. When you increase your influence, you'll have more options no matter where you work or what work you do.

Those on the front lines have been overlooked for far too long. I've written this book for you. If you invest your time in reading it completely, *you will benefit tremendously* as a result.

*When you decide to accept responsibility for your future,
you will be able to define your future.*

My intent is to motivate and inspire you to climb to the next level and beyond. I want to help you go faster and farther by sharing what I didn't begin to learn until nearly 20 years after my first day on the front lines. I wish someone had given me this very book in 1988. Things would have been better for me. And, they would have been better much sooner.

I hope as you make your way through this book you begin to see things, including yourself, in a much different way. I hope you feel encouraged, empowered, and engaged to make a bigger difference in your own life and those around you. I believe you can do things you've never even imagined doing.

I want to take you back to my days on the front lines for a moment. I'm sure you will be able to relate in some way. You may not work in the manufacturing plants like I did. But, if you're a blue-collar worker, I know you work hard and long, no matter what type of work you may be doing: electrical, plumbing, construction, farming, mining, manufacturing, oil & gas industry, carpentry, service work, welding, assembly, etc.

There are many of us. We are everywhere.

The blue-collar workforce built this country, and they can and must help save this country.

I worked long, hard hours, in hot, cold, dirty, and sometimes, unsafe environments while being bossed by others who thought they were far above me because they had a position of authority and power or simply because they had a college degree. Most often, I only respected the position and not the person. They had to earn my respect.

They didn't listen to me. They didn't have to. They didn't want to. However, if I wanted to continue to get paid I had to do what they said, when they said it, and how they said it.

I didn't realize I had a choice. But, I did. You do too. This entire book is going to help you realize you have a lot of choices and a lot of untapped potential.

I'll never forget my first day on the front lines in 1988 at the age of 18.

It was the first time I had been in a manufacturing plant of any kind in my life. I was quickly taken from the front office and handed off to someone in front of a very, large, loud, and oily machine, a machine like nothing I had ever seen before. I had been in the plant for about 10 minutes at that time.

It was official. I was a blue-collar factory worker. I would stand in front of many machines for many years in many different plants before that would change.

I was shown how to load the machine, start the machine, unload the machine, inspect the parts, and repeat. Then, I was on my own. I was at work doing exactly what I was told to do.

When I got home from work, all of my clothes, even my underwear, were soaked with oil. It was that way for the next two weeks until someone finally told me I could purchase a plastic apron in one of the break rooms, for less than a dollar, that would help keep me dry.

This is how my blue-collar career started.

For the next 10 years on the second and third shifts, I often worked seven days a week, 10 to 16 hours a day for months at a time to make ends meet. When overtime was available, I was always quick to volunteer. I didn't want to. I needed to.

I was greedy because I needed to be greedy. Life was tough. I could never get ahead regardless of how many hours or days a week I worked. I'm sure not much has changed today for many who are still making it happen day in and day out on the front lines of the blue-collar world.

There wasn't much respect for us then, and there's not much respect for many on the front lines today. I know the potential that lies within you. It was also within me, but I didn't know it. I want to help you realize it sooner rather than later.

Everything changed for me in 1995 because one person believed in me and shared that belief with me.

It will be my privilege if I can be that person for you.

I want you to know: I respect you.

I want you to know: Who you are matters.

I want you to know: I believe in you.

2

I BELIEVE IN YOU

MOTIVATION COMES FROM THE OUTSIDE, BUT INSPIRATION COMES FROM THE INSIDE

"The dictionary defines belief as trust, faith, and confidence. However, that definition is selfish and requires judgement. I think we need to change the way we believe in people. We need to redefine the way we believe in people. We should redefine belief as encouragement, empowerment, and engagement. This definition is selfless and doesn't require judgement." ~ Joshua Encarnacion

You may be wondering, *"How can Mack believe in me? He doesn't even know me."* Well, my intent on these pages is to express my belief in you in the way Joshua defined belief in the quote above, as selfless and without judgment. I like to refer to this type of belief as "unconditional" belief which is similar to unconditional love.

When we believe in someone or love someone unconditionally, it simply means we believe in them or love them because they are people, not because they behave or act in a certain way. *I do believe you can make your life better.* Believing in someone unconditionally is a choice. It's a choice that builds trust and strengthens relationships.

Since I don't know you, I can't trust you, have faith in you, or have confidence in you based on what I know about you. That would be based on conditions or "conditional" belief. However, I can easily have unconditional belief in you. But, when we work with others and depend on others to get the job done, it's too easy to become selfish, judgmental, and base our

belief in them on specific *conditions* being met first.

I want to share a real example from my life where a stranger *unconditionally* believed in me. It not only changed my direction, but it also changed my life. I share this story in more detail in my first book, *Defining Influence*.

It was 1995. I was 25 years old. It was around 2am. I was wearing old, dirty jeans, an old t-shirt, greasy steel-toed boots, safety glasses, earplugs, and an old, dirty blue jean apron hung around my neck. As usual, I was at work in the middle of the night when most people were home sleeping soundly with their families.

I operated a large drill press and a CNC lathe machining holes in steel parts. It was a dirty, boring job, but it paid the bills. I was in the middle of what would become a three month streak of working 12 plus hours a day for seven days a week without a day off. Long hours and weekend work were a normal part of my life on the front lines.

On that particular night, there was a corporate industrial engineer from our headquarters observing me. He was there to do a time observation study. I was surprised because he could have done what he had to do on the day shift.

He informed me the Plant Manager (PM) had asked him to work with me because I consistently recorded high production. As I worked, the engineer observed me. After we got to know each other a little, he told me the PM believed I had the potential to be more than “just a machine operator” if I would apply myself and get some additional education.

The stranger had no idea I barely graduated high school.

Throughout the night, he expressed his belief in me and continued to do his best to get me to see my potential. He had no idea. I wasn’t interested in going to college. Not me!

I didn’t plan to ever go. I knew who I was and what I wanted. I didn’t need anyone, especially a stranger, telling me what I needed to do to advance in the company. What did he know about me? He knew I had potential. He knew it. I didn’t.

I had never seen him before and never saw him again. He has no idea how his words impacted me. He inspired me to

become intentional about changing my life.

I thought it was just another night in the grind on the front lines. But, something happened. I started thinking differently. He had planted a seed of *possibility* inside of me. I hope to plant that seed in you.

I began to ask myself many questions: What if I went to college? What would change? Should I do it? Could I do it? How could I do it? When could I do it?

I took action and enrolled in the local community college the very next semester. I decided to officially rescript my life simply because a stranger had believed in me unconditionally.

"We already live with many scripts that have been handed to us, the process of writing our own script is actually more a process of 'rescripting,'... As we recognize the ineffective scripts within us, we can proactively begin to rescript ourselves." ~ Dr. Stephen R. Covey

I started college, as a single parent, while working long hours and weekends to make ends meet. I didn't enjoy high school, so volunteering for more schooling was a big sacrifice.

It took me nearly five years to get my first two year degree, but I did it. I was paying the price to change my circumstances. *I did have potential.* I did not have to keep doing the same thing for my entire career. When I began to change my thoughts, my life began to change. I was slowly moving away from being a reactive person and was becoming a more responsible person.

If you want things to change, you must change the way you think. And no, you don't have to go to college to live better.

"The reason so many people never get anywhere in life is because when opportunity knocks, they are out in the backyard looking for four-leaf clovers."
~ Walter P. Chrysler

3

YOU'RE IN THE PERFECT PLACE

YOU'RE EXACTLY WHERE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE BUT NOT WHERE YOU HAVE TO BE

"An educated person is not the one with the most knowledge, an educated person is the one who is willing to reflect, evaluate, and modify his most cherished beliefs when a new idea comes along." ~ Christian Simpson

There's a story about a tourist who paused for a rest in a small town in the mountains. He went over to an old man sitting on a bench in front of the only store in town and inquired, "Friend, can you tell me something this town is noted for?"

"Well," replied the old man, "I don't rightly know except it's the starting point to the world. You can start here and go anywhere you want."

The same is true for you and me. No matter where we are, we can start and go anywhere we want. Will it always be easy? No. Will it always be possible? Absolutely, *if* we're willing to pay the price.

Obviously, very few people start at the top. But, we don't all have that in common with those lucky few. However, what we do have in common is that if we want to move forward from wherever we are, we all must start.

*"Most people fail in the getting started."
~ Maureen Falcone*

I agree, some do “fail in the getting started,” but I think the bigger issue is *failing to keep going* once you have started.

If you’re on the front lines like I was when the engineer believed in me and inspired me to get started *again*, that’s where you start if you want to get to the next level and beyond. You’re in the exact place you need to be. You’re at the starting line. Getting to the starting line in life is easy. All you must do is wake up. Then, you must choose to run the race.

*It’s much easier to go from failure to success
than it is to go from excuses to success.*

This book is going to help you think in a way that will allow you to get started or, if you’re already started, keep going. It will also accelerate your thinking.

You had to get started at some point to be where you are. It didn’t just happen. You didn’t end up there by accident. Like it or not, you ended up there by choice.

If you want to move up in the company or move forward with your life in general but feel stuck wherever you are, I’ve got good news. You haven’t run out of choices. You’re simply not making the *right* choices.

Why? I have no idea. Only *you* can answer that question.

When you think of why you’re stuck, don’t make excuses. Excuses are like exits when you’re traveling along the highway to success. Excuses don’t take you where you want to go, they take you someplace you don’t want to go.

*An excuse is simply a choice
not to do what you know you should do.*

I want to give you something to think about whether you’re stuck or not. If you’re not stuck, use it to help someone that is.

Most of the time people quit growing and going when the *price* gets too high. What I mean is that people are not willing to part ways with the toxic people in their lives or sacrifice their time and/or their money to continue moving forward to the next level. Growth usually requires a lot more *time* than

money, so *not having the money is just another excuse*. And most often, it's not even about our time. *It's about our choices*.

Before you get too deep into this book, I want to help point out a few key choices I hope you will make as you're reading and thinking your way through it.

I encourage you to look at this book as a *tool*, not a book. A tool you can use immediately to identify areas in your life you may need to change. A tool you can use in the future when reflecting on changes you have already made or changes you weren't ready to make initially but will be ready to make eventually.

Whatever you do, ***DO NOT GIVE IT AWAY!*** I made that mistake when I first started reading leadership books. I didn't realize the value of keeping them and revisiting them, especially my highlighted key points. Today, no one gets any of the hundreds of leadership books I've read. I may give away new ones, but not the ones I've read and marked up.

You should personalize this copy by marking it up in a meaningful way, underline key points, fold the pages when something on a page really has something meaningful you want to revisit and reflect on. And most importantly, write down some of your own thoughts about what you are reading and what you may need to do differently.

Once you've finished it, if you know someone else that will benefit from reading it, and you believe in them, show them by buying them a copy as a gift, but don't give them your copy. Sure, they could read it and give it back. But, to get the most out of it, they will need to personalize their copy, make it their own just like you, and be able to reflect on it later.

Have you ever wondered why people don't do the things that seem to be common sense? Things like we've just covered like *get started* or *keep going*. It seems like common sense to me.

"If we refuse to become a leader because we don't believe we can get to the top, we are limiting ourselves from reaching our potential; and we are limiting the impact we can have on others." ~ [Ria Story](#)

4

COMMON SENSE IS NEVER ENOUGH

COMMON SENSE MEANS WE UNDERSTAND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE, BUT ACTUALLY DOING IT OFTEN REQUIRES UNCOMMON SENSE

*"We only truly know something—that is, have personal knowledge of it—when we can apply it to get results."
~ Polanyi*

As you continue reading, I'm sure you will often find yourself thinking, "This is all just common sense." It is commonly *understood*. However, when it comes to human behavior, what's commonly understood, often referred to as common sense, is most often not commonly practiced. If it was, there would be no market for leadership and people development, and everyone would be amazingly happy and tremendously successful.

But, leadership is a *HUGE* industry! Many people are unhappy at work and at home while struggling to make ends meet. Nearly all of them know something they should *stop doing* to improve their lives and know something they should *start doing* to improve their lives. But, they don't do it! Why?

Common sense alone will not lead you to success. It will help, but it's not enough. Knowing and doing are two very different things that will lead you to very different results. Knowing how to lose weight doesn't mean someone who wants to lose weight will lose weight. We all know how to lose weight. We watch our calories in (what we eat) and exercise (calories out). It's common sense. Everyone knows that!

*To know something and not do it is not truly knowing it.
To understand something and not apply it is
not truly understanding it.*

Everyone seems to know common sense is not common practice. However, most people don't seem to know why.

Knowing why common sense is not common practice requires an intellectual level of understanding far beyond common sense. In other words, you need to be an above average thinker.

When I speak on the subject of common sense in my leadership development seminars, everyone in the room always realizes the leadership principles I speak about are common sense. They also know they are not commonly practiced by most people.

Why isn't common sense always common practice?

I've come to understand the problem is found in the definition of common sense which leads to our expectations sometimes not being met. When someone says something is common sense, they mean it is commonly understood.

What most people are missing is this: There's a huge difference between *understanding what should be done* and *doing what is understood*. And, it often takes more smarts to do something than it does to understand something.

*Doing what is commonly understood
often requires uncommon sense.*

Here's a simple example to prove my point:

It's common sense to understand you should invest your time and money into your own personal growth and development if you want to become more effective and successful at work which will also improve your life when you're at home. Do you agree? If you want to be better, you need to get better. Common sense right? Of course, it is.

But, are you doing it frequently and regularly? You're doing it now as you read this book. Is this your first personal development (leadership) book or one of hundreds? Do you

think the person reading a leadership book for the first time is getting the same results as someone that has read hundreds of leadership books? It's *highly* unlikely.

Leadership is influence. The more influence you have the more options you will have at work and at home. Who will get the promotion, the person with the most influence or someone else? Who will have a more enjoyable day at work or at home, a person with more influence or less?

"The top 5 percent of achievers invest an average of \$3,000 per year on personal growth while the other 95% average only \$7 per year." ~ Les Brown

If we invest in ourselves and become intentional about moving ourselves forward, we *will* move forward. Our personal and professional lives *will* get better. Most people will instantly agree. But, most people don't do it. Most people won't do it.

Instead, most people will choose to waste more money on a weekend hanging out having a good time than they will invest in their own personal growth and development in a whole year.

Why is this the case? Because common sense means we understand what we should do. However, doing it requires *uncommon sense*. I'm sure by now you get the point. After all, it's common sense.

I added this chapter because I want to be sure you realize up front ***it will take much more than common sense to apply what you will learn in this book***. You will have to develop and use uncommon sense to get the results you deserve and are capable of achieving. Don't just zip through the pages. Think deeply about what you're learning and the impact applying it will have on your life.

You can apply it. But, will you apply it? I hope you do!

"The critical skill of this century is not what you hold in your head, but your ability to tap into and access what other people know. The best leaders and the fastest learners know how to harness collective intelligence." ~ Liz Wiseman

5

THERE IS AN “I” IN TEAM

EVERY TEAM IS MADE OF “I”NDIVIDUALS

"I'm just a plowhand from Arkansas, but I have learned how to hold a team together – how to lift some men up, how to calm others down, until finally they've got one heartbeat together as a team. There's always just three things I say: 'If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, then we did it. If anything goes real good, they did it.' That's all it takes to get people to win." ~ Paul 'Bear' Bryant

Paul “Bear” Bryant was one of the greatest college football coaches to ever lead a team of young men down the field. He was also a “plowhand” from Arkansas. A blue-collar worker. The blue-collar world has produced some of the greatest leaders of all time, so you should be proud and hold your head high. *Without them, the world as we know it would not exist.*

There’s nothing holding you back but you. As my blue-collar friend, Donovan Weldon, stated so well, *“The only person between you and success is you. MOVE! The only person between you and failure is you. STAND FIRM!”* Those are strong words of wisdom. Donovan started on the bottom just like you and me. But today, he’s the CEO of Donovan Industrial Service in Orange, TX near Beaumont.

Donovan’s success didn’t happen by accident. He made it happen. You can make things happen too! He’s a blue-collar leader that believes in and develops his team on a regular basis. I know because my wife, Ria, and I had the privilege of being brought in to speak to his team about leadership in 2014. They are making it happen on purpose for a purpose!

It's time for you to stop playing small and start playing tall. A college degree is not required for you to play at a higher level. Not having one is simply an excuse some people use to continue playing small. If you want a college degree, use what you will learn on these pages to find a way to get one. If you don't want a college degree, use what you learn on these pages to make it happen without one.

You are the key to your success. You must believe in yourself. You must grow and develop yourself, which is what you're doing as you read this book. Do not stop growing! And when the time is right, you must bet on yourself.

Understanding your role as a team member is another must. Those on the front lines often underestimate themselves because they can't see the big picture. They can't see the value they have to offer. Far too often, their boss isn't a high impact leader and needs a lot of growth and development too. Bosses are often given the title without any formal development.

When I write about the front lines on these pages, I'm not only talking about the people in entry level positions. Sure they are obviously on the front lines, but they also have leaders that are on the front lines with them and various team members that support them too. They can all learn from these pages.

This book was written specifically for anyone at any level that visits, interacts with, or works on the front lines.

The principles I share with you must be applied if you want to make a high impact and be recognized for leading from the front lines. Regardless of your position, the more you apply these principles, the more options you will have, and the more positions you will be offered as you climb even higher.

Teams are made up of "I"ndividuals, so there are many I's on every team, regardless of how many times you hear, "There is no 'I' in TEAM." As a matter of fact, *you are one of them*. Every person on a team is an "I" and has the potential to lead (influence) the team, positively or negatively.

"Leadership is influence. Nothing more. Nothing less."

~ John C. Maxwell

You must understand there are many official and unofficial teams in the organization where you work. They are very dynamic and constantly changing.

When most of us think of which team we are on, we immediately think of our peers, the ones on the same crew, in the same department, or working on the same job. This is our core team, but it only represents the smallest team we're on. We also support other teams too, as others support our team.

When we choose to contribute beyond our immediate team, we are choosing to be part of a bigger team. Often, this only requires a choice to do so. Your choice to get involved in other areas sends a clear message to the high impact leaders.

When you play tall, you choose to contribute because you know it will increase your influence and your impact on the front lines. If you want to play tall, you should want to be noticed, to be selected, to volunteer, to share information, to accept more responsibility, and ultimately, to make a contribution at a higher level.

As a direct result of your choice to step up, your influence increases. You're demonstrating you can lead from the front lines and will be seen and respected by all high impact leaders as a high impact leader. Your actions will not go unnoticed.

When you play small, you choose not to contribute because you don't want to do more. If your goal is to coast until pay day, it won't be a secret you can keep. When you make every effort not to be noticed, not to be selected, not to volunteer, not to share information, not to accept responsibility, and ultimately to not contribute, *you will absolutely be noticed.*

As a direct result of your choice not to step up, your influence decreases. Your influence on the front lines and with your leaders will be diminished. You are more likely to become reactive and frustrated blaming others for what you have chosen. Blaming others will further reduce your influence.

You first make your choices, then your choices make you.

"The most valuable player is the one that makes the most players valuable." ~ Peyton Manning

6

BE BETTER TOMORROW

***WHEN YOU BECOME MORE VALUABLE,
YOU WILL BECOME MORE SUCCESSFUL***

"If you have too little confidence, you will think you can't learn. If you have too much, you will think you don't have to learn." ~ Eric Hoffer

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CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

"It is the capacity to develop and improve themselves that distinguishes leaders from followers." ~ Bennis and Nanus

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the [Blue-Collar Leadership](#) website for Speaking and Training/Development Info

Watch what our clients have to say on the [Blue-Collar Leadership YouTube channel](#)

Listen/subscribe to the [Blue-Collar Leadership® Podcast](#).

7

THE SECRET TO YOUR SUCCESS

YOU GET PAID BY OTHERS, BUT YOU WORK FOR YOURSELF

"When you take charge of your life, there is no longer need to ask permission of other people or society at large. When you ask permission, you give someone veto power over your life." ~ Albert F. Geoffrey

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"The key to moving beyond average is doing what exceptional people do, not wanting what they have."
~ Mack Story*

8

SOMEONE IS ALWAYS WATCHING

YOU ARE ALWAYS TEACHING WHAT YOU'RE MODELING, REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU ARE TEACHING

"Nothing is more confusing than people who give good advice, but set a bad example." ~ Norman Vincent Peale

"Nothing is more convincing than people who give good advice and set a good example." ~ John C. Maxwell

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"Example isn't another way to teach,
it's the only way to teach." ~ Albert Einstein*

9

YOUR POTENTIAL IS UNLIMITED

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL, BUT NEVER SATISFIED

*"When we fully develop our potential,
we create superior value for others – and that
in turn helps give meaning to our lives...Life is pretty
empty without passion for what we are doing. What a
tragedy to reach the end of your life and only be able to say,
'I got by without having to do too much.'" ~ Charles G. Koch*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to
be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it
make some difference that you have lived and lived well."
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

10

FOCUS ON THE MIRROR

THE FACE YOU SEE LEAST IS YOUR OWN

*"A man's environment is a merciless mirror
of him as a human being." ~ Earl Nightingale*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"The moment you take responsibility for everything in your
life is the moment you can change anything in your life."
~ Hal Elrod*

11

THE POWER OF THE PAUSE BUTTON

*WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU IS
IMPORTANT, BUT YOUR RESPONSE TO
WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU
IS MOST IMPORTANT*

"Self-mastery is the hardest job you will ever tackle. If you do not conquer self, you will be conquered by self. You may see at the same time both your best friend and your worst enemy, by simply stepping in front of the mirror."

~ Napoleon Hill

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

"If you do what is easy, your life will be hard. But if you do what is hard, your life will be easy." ~ Les Brown

12

THE FUTURE IS IN YOU NOW

*IF YOU DON'T CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE,
SOMEONE ELSE WILL*

*"There's nothing you have to do. We all have the power
to make a decision that will direct us to a new destination.
Each of us can make a choice that will change our life."*

~ John G. Miller

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"We are anxious to improve our circumstances
but unwilling to improve ourselves.
We therefore remain bound." ~ James Allen*

13

COURAGE IS CONTAGIOUS

COURAGE ALLOWS AVERAGE PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS

*"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."
~ Anais Nin*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"While one person hesitates because he feels inferior,
another person is making mistakes,
and becoming superior." ~ Henry C. Link*

14

YOU ATTRACT WHO YOU ARE

***THOSE WHO LIKE YOU THE MOST
ARE THE MOST LIKE YOU***

"The people with whom you habitually associate are called your 'reference group,' and these people determine as much as 95% of your success or failure in life."

~ Harvard Social Psychologist, Dr. David McClelland

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

"In the end, you may not be able to change the people around you, but you can change the people you choose to be around." ~ John C. Maxwell

15

CHARACTER COUNTS

WHO YOU ARE ON THE INSIDE IS WHAT OTHERS SEE ON THE OUTSIDE

*"Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing."
~ Abraham Lincoln*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

"Our reputations do not come from how we talk about ourselves. Our reputations come from how others talk about us." ~ Simon Sinek

16

CHARACTER TRUMPS COMPETENCY

WHO YOU ARE MATTERS MORE THAN WHAT YOU KNOW

*"You can't climb to the top of the mountain
with base camp character." ~ Mack Story*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"A sign of wisdom and maturity is when you come to terms
with the realization that your decisions cause your rewards
and consequences. You are responsible for your life, and
your ultimate success depends on the choices you make."
~ Denis Waitley*

17

LEADERS HAVE FOLLOWERS

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEADER AND A BOSS IS WHAT THEY VALUE

"A leader is someone who has followers. If there are no followers, there is no leader. A person may have subordinates, workers, admirers, associates, co-workers, friends, and people who report to him or her, a person may have authority over other people, a person may hold an elective office, and a person may influence a large number of people, but that does not make that person a leader if there are no followers." ~ Jimmy Collins

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

"A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent." ~ Douglas MacArthur

18

POSITIONS ARE OVERRATED

*IF YOU CAN'T LEAD
WITHOUT A POSITION,
YOU WON'T LEAD WITH A POSITION*

*"The cost of leadership is self-interest."
~ USMC Lt. General George Flynn*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

"The only influence that truly has any meaningful value is based on moral authority, not formal authority. Position or title isn't important or required. Fear and intimidation doesn't exist. Others choose to follow you because of who you are and how you make them feel." ~ Mack Story

19

FOLLOWERS CHOOSE LEADERS

ALL GREAT LEADERS WERE FIRST GREAT FOLLOWERS

*"To excel in leadership, you must first master
followership." ~ S. Truett Cathy*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"Other people and things can stop you temporarily. YOU
are the only one who can do it permanently." ~ Zig Ziglar*

20

SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND

YOU WILL ALWAYS LEARN MORE FROM LISTENING THAN SPEAKING

"Principles are not invented by us or by society; they are the laws of the universe that pertain to human relationships and human organizations. They are part of the human condition, consciousness, and conscience. To the degree people recognize and live in harmony with such basic principles as fairness, equity, justice, integrity, honesty, and trust, they move toward either survival and stability on the one hand or disintegration and destruction on the other."

~ Dr. Stephen R. Covey

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

"Listening requires giving up our favorite human pastime— involvement in ourselves and our own self-interest. It's our primary, entirely human focus. And it's where our motivation to do anything comes from. With this as a base, can you see what a problem is created when we're asked to listen to someone else?" ~ Sonya Hamlin

21

THINK OF YOURSELF LESS

***THERE'S A FINE LINE BETWEEN
ARROGANCE AND CONFIDENCE;
IT'S CALLED HUMILITY***

*"People with humility don't think less of themselves.
They just think about themselves less." ~ Ken Blanchard*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"We all know that perfection is a mask. So, we don't trust
the people behind know-it-all masks. They're not being
honest with us. The people with whom we have deepest
connection are those who acknowledge their weaknesses."
~ Parker Palmer*

22

ASK FOR MORE RESPONSIBILITY

*WHEN YOU ACCEPT MORE
RESPONSIBILITY, YOU WILL
GAIN MORE INFLUENCE*

*"If we embrace the chance of living life to the fullest, then
we must be willing to accept responsibility for doing it."*

~ Ria Story

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

Are you living your life by default or by design?

23

THERE IS ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE

HELPING OTHERS SUCCEED ENSURES YOU WILL SUCCEED

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." ~ Henry Ford

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

"Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goals; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude." ~ Thomas Jefferson

24

BE THE FIRST TO HELP

***EVERYONE REMEMBERS THE FIRST TO
HELP; FEW REMEMBER THE SECOND***

*"Leaders are not always the first to see the need for change,
but they are the first to act. And once they move away
from the pack, they are positioned to lead."*

~ Andy Stanley

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"By accident of fortune one may be a leader for a time, but
by helping others succeed one will be a leader forever."*

~ Chinese Proverb

25

DO MORE THAN EXPECTED

*DOING MORE INCREASES YOUR
INFLUENCE; DOING LESS
DECREASES YOUR INFLUENCE*

*"Never mistake effort and intentions for results."
~ Dick Vermeil*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"Start doing what is necessary; then, do what is possible;
and suddenly you are doing the impossible. "
~ St. Francis of Assisi*

26

DO IT SOONER THAN EXPECTED

*DOING IT SOONER INCREASES YOUR
INFLUENCE; DOING IT LATER
DECREASES YOUR INFLUENCE*

*"The wise does at once what the fool does at last."
~ Jewish Proverb*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"The successful person has the habit of doing the things
failures don't like to do." ~ E.M. Gray*

27

DO IT BETTER THAN EXPECTED

*DOING IT BETTER INCREASES YOUR
INFLUENCE; DOING IT WORSE
DECREASES YOUR INFLUENCE*

*"When you do the common things in life in an uncommon
way, you will command the attention of the world."
~ George Washington Carver*

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"Don't measure yourself by what you have accomplished,
but rather by what you should have accomplished
with your ability." ~ John Wooden*

28

STRETCH YOURSELF INTENTIONALLY

ALL OF YOUR GROWTH HAPPENS OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

*"If you work hard on your job you can make a living, but if
you work hard on yourself you can make a fortune."*

~ Jim Rohn

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"When we are faced with change, we either step forward
into growth or we step backward into safety."*

~ Abraham Maslow

29

DEVELOP YOURSELF INTENTIONALLY

***IF YOU WON'T INVEST IN YOURSELF,
WHY SHOULD ANYONE ELSE?***

"Accidental growth vs. intentional growth is about as effective as accidental exercise compared to intentional exercise....not even close. And the results....not even close."
~ Mack Story

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*"Today I will do what others won't, so tomorrow
I can do what others can't." ~ Jerry Rice*

30

YOU MUST BET ON YOURSELF

IF YOU WON'T BET ON YOURSELF, WHY SHOULD ANYONE ELSE?

"Living intentionally leads to amazing results. Living accidentally leads to depressing disappointments. A better tomorrow won't just happen. You must be intentional and make it happen." ~ Mack Story

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

"To grow, you must be willing to let your present and future be totally unlike your past. Your history is not your destiny." ~ Alan Cohen

Want to order a copy for you and/or your entire team?

[Click here](#) to order *Blue-Collar Leadership®* now.

Mack has also written [*Blue-Collar Leadership® & Culture: The 5 Component for Building High Performance Teams*](#), [*Blue-Collar Leadership® & Supervision: Unleash Your Team's Potential*](#), [*Blue-Collar Leadership® & Teamwork: 30 Traits of High Impact Players*](#), and [*Blue-Collar Kaizen: Leading Lean and Lean Teams*](#). As of 2025, Mack and his wife, [Ria](#), have published [35 books on leadership development and personal growth](#).

[Watch an interview](#) with a frontline, blue-collar guy that has been using our books to facilitate high impact books studies with his team for years.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mack's story is an amazing journey of personal and professional growth. He married Ria in 2001. He has one son, Eric, born in 1991.

After graduating high school in 1987, Mack joined the United States Marine Corps Reserve as an 0311 infantryman. Soon after, he began his 20 plus year manufacturing career. Graduating with highest honors, he earned an Executive Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Faulkner University.

Mack began his career in manufacturing in 1988 on the front lines of a large production machine shop. He eventually grew himself into upper management and found his niche in lean manufacturing and along with it, developed his passion for leadership. In 2008, he launched his own Lean Manufacturing and Leadership Development firm.

From 2005-2012, Mack led leaders and their cross-functional teams through more than 11,000 hours of process improvement, organizational change, and cultural transformation. Ria joined Mack full-time in late 2013.

In 2013, they worked with John C. Maxwell as part of an international training event focused on the Cultural Transformation in Guatemala where over 20,000 leaders were trained. They also shared the stage with internationally recognized motivational speaker Les Brown in 2014.

Mack and Ria have published 30+ books on personal growth and leadership development. In 2018, they were invited to speak at Yale University's School of Management. They also had over 80,000 international followers at the end of 2019 on LinkedIn where they provide motivational, inspirational, and leadership content to people around the world.

Mack and Ria inspire people everywhere through their example of achievement, growth, and personal development.

Clients: ATD (Association for Talent Development), Auburn University, Chevron, Chick-fil-A, Kimberly Clark, Koch Industries, Southern Company, and the U.S. Military.

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Excerpt from

Defining Influence:
Increasing Your Influence Increases Your Options

In *Defining Influence*, I outline the foundational leadership principles and lessons we must learn in order to develop our character in a way that allows us to increase our influence with others. I also share many of my personal stories revealing how I got it wrong many times in the past and how I grew from front-line factory worker to become a Motivational Leadership Speaker.

INTRODUCTION

**When You Increase Your Influence,
You Increase Your Options.**

*“Leadership is influence. Nothing more. Nothing less.
Everything rises and falls on leadership.” ~ John C. Maxwell*

Everyone is born a leader. However, everyone is not born a high impact leader.

I haven't always believed everyone is a leader. You may or may not at this point. That's okay. There is a lot to learn about leadership.

At this very moment, you may already be thinking to yourself, *“I'm not a leader.”* My goal is to help you understand why everyone is a leader and to help you develop a deeper understanding of the principles of leadership and influence.

Developing a deep understanding of leadership has changed my life for the better. It has also changed the lives of my family members, friends, associates, and clients. My intention is to help you improve not only your

life, but also the lives of those around you.

Until I became a student of leadership in 2008 which eventually led me to become a John Maxwell Certified Leadership Coach, Trainer, and Speaker in 2012, I did not understand leadership or realize everyone can benefit from learning the related principles.

In the past, I thought leadership was a term associated with being the boss and having formal authority over others. Those people are definitely leaders. But, I had been missing something. All of the other seven billion people on the planet are leaders too.

I say everyone is born a leader because I agree with John Maxwell, *“Leadership is Influence. Nothing more. Nothing less.”* Everyone has influence. It’s a fact. Therefore, everyone is a leader.

No matter your age, gender, religion, race, nationality, location, or position, everyone has influence. Whether you want to be a leader or not, you are. After reading this book, I hope you do not question whether or not you are a leader. However, I do hope you question what type of leader you are and what you need to do to increase your influence.

Everyone does not have authority, but everyone does have influence. There are plenty of examples in the world of people without authority leading people through influence alone. Actually, every one of us is an example. We have already done it. We know it is true. This principle is self-evident which means it contains its own evidence and does not need to be demonstrated or explained; it is obvious to everyone: we all have influence with others.

As I mentioned, the question to ask yourself is not, *“Am I a leader?”* The question to ask yourself is, *“What type of leader am I?”* The answer: whatever kind you choose to

be. Choosing not to be a leader is not an option. As long as you live, you will have influence. You are a leader.

You started influencing your parents before you were actually born. You may have influence after your death. How? Thomas Edison still influences the world every time a light is turned on, you may do things in your life to influence others long after you're gone. Or, you may pass away with few people noticing. It depends on the choices you make.

Even when you're alone, you have influence.

The most important person you will ever influence is yourself. The degree to which you influence yourself determines the level of influence you ultimately have with others. Typically, when we are talking about leading ourselves, the word most commonly used to describe self-leadership is discipline which can be defined as giving yourself a command and following through with it. We must practice discipline daily to increase our influence with others.

"We must all suffer one of two things: the pain of discipline or the pain of regret or disappointment." ~ Jim Rohn

As I define leadership as influence, keep in mind the words leadership and influence can be interchanged anytime and anywhere. They are one and the same. Throughout this book, I'll help you remember by placing one of the words in parentheses next to the other occasionally as a reminder. They are synonyms. When you read one, think of the other.

Everything rises and falls on influence (leadership). When you share what you're learning, clearly define leadership as influence for others. They need to understand the context of what you are teaching and

understand they *are* leaders (people with influence) too. If you truly want to learn and apply leadership principles, you must start teaching this material to others within 24-48 hours of learning it yourself.

You will learn the foundational principles of leadership (influence) which will help you understand the importance of the following five questions. You will be able to take effective action by growing yourself and possibly others to a higher level of leadership (influence). Everything you ever achieve, internally and externally, will be a direct result of your influence.

1. **Why do we influence?** – Our character determines *why* we influence. Who we are on the inside is what matters. Do we manipulate or motivate? It's all about our intent.
2. **How do we influence?** – Our character, combined with our competency, determines *how* we influence. Who we are and what we know combine to create our unique style of influence which determines our methods of influence.
3. **Where do we influence?** – Our passion and purpose determine *where* we have the greatest influence. What motivates and inspires us gives us the energy and authenticity to motivate and inspire others.
4. **Who do we influence?** – We influence those *who* buy-in to us. Only those valuing and seeking what we value and seek will volunteer to follow us. They give us or deny us permission to influence them based on how well we have developed our character and competency.

5. **When do we influence?** – We influence others *when* they want our influence. We choose when others influence us. Everyone else has the same choice. They decide when to accept or reject our influence.

The first three questions are about the choices we make as we lead (influence) ourselves and others. The last two questions deal more with the choices others will make as they decide first, *if* they will follow us, and second, *when* they will follow us. They will base their choices on *who we are* and *what we know*.

Asking these questions is important. Knowing the answers is more important. But, taking action based on the answers is most important. Cumulatively, the answers to these questions determine our leadership style and our level of influence (leadership).

On a scale of 1-10, your influence can be very low level (1) to very high level (10). But make no mistake, you *are* a leader. You *are* always on the scale. There is a positive and negative scale too. The higher on the scale you are the more effective you are. You will be at different levels with different people at different times depending on many different variables.

Someone thinking they are not a leader or someone that doesn't want to be a leader is still a leader. They will simply remain a low impact leader with low level influence getting low level results. They will likely spend much time frustrated with many areas of their life. Although they could influence a change, they choose instead to be primarily influenced by others.

What separates high impact leaders from low impact leaders? There are many things, but two primary differences are:

- 1) High impact leaders accept more responsibility in all areas of their lives while low impact leaders tend to blame others and transfer responsibility more often.
- 2) High impact leaders have more positive influence while low impact leaders tend to have more negative influence.

My passion has led me to grow into my purpose which is to help others increase their influence personally and professionally while setting and reaching their goals. I am very passionate and have great conviction. I have realized many benefits by getting better results in all areas of my life. I have improved relationships with my family members, my friends, my associates, my peers, and my clients. I have witnessed people within these same groups embrace leadership principles and reap the same benefits.

The degree to which I *live* what I teach determines my effectiveness. My goal is to learn it, live it, and *then* teach it. I had major internal struggles as I grew my way to where I am. I'm a long way from perfect, so I seek daily improvement. Too often, I see people teaching leadership but not living what they're teaching. If I teach it, I live it.

My goal is to be a better leader tomorrow than I am today. I simply must get out of my own way and lead. I must lead me effectively before I can lead others effectively, not only with acquired knowledge, but also with experience from applying and living the principles.

I'll be transparent with personal stories to help you see how I have applied leadership principles by sharing: How I've struggled. How I've learned. How I've sacrificed. And, how I've succeeded.

Go beyond highlighting or underlining key points. Take the time to write down your thoughts related to the

principle. Write down what you want to change. Write down how you can apply the principle in your life. You may want to consider getting a journal to fully capture your thoughts as you progress through the chapters. What you are thinking as you read is often much more important than what you're reading.

Most importantly, do not focus your thoughts on others. Yes, they need it too. We all need it. I need it. You need it. However, if you focus outside of yourself, you are missing the very point. Your influence comes from within. Your influence rises and falls based on your choices. You have untapped and unlimited potential waiting to be released. Only you can release it.

You, like everyone else, were born a leader. Now, let's take a leadership journey together.

(If you enjoyed this Introduction to *Defining Influence*, it is available in paperback, audio, and as an eBook on Amazon.com)

Excerpt from

10 Values of High Impact Leaders

Our values are the foundation upon which we build our character. I'll be sharing 10 values high impact leaders work to master because they know these values will have a tremendous impact on their ability to lead others well. You may be thinking, *"Aren't there more than 10 leadership values?"* Absolutely! They seem to be endless. And, they are all important. These are simply 10 key values which I have chosen to highlight.

Since leadership is very dynamic and complex, the more values you have been able to internalize and utilize synergistically together, the more effective you will be. The more influence you will have.

"High performing organizations that continuously invest in leadership development are now defining new 21st century leadership models to deal with today's gaps in their leadership pipelines and the new global business environment. These people-focused organizations have generated nearly 60% improved business growth, reported a 66% improvement in bench strength, and showed a 62% improvement in employee retention. And, our research shows that it is not enough to just spend money on leadership training, but rather to follow specific practices that drive accelerated business results." ~ Josh Bersin

Do you want to become a high impact leader?

I believe everyone is a leader, but they are leading at different levels.

I believe everyone can and should lead from *where they are*.

I believe everyone can and should make a high impact.

I believe growth doesn't just happen; we must make it happen.

I believe before you will invest in yourself you must first believe in yourself.

I believe leaders must believe in their team before they will invest in their team.

I truly believe *everything rises and falls on influence*.

There is a story of a tourist who paused for a rest in a small town in the mountains. He went over to an old man sitting on a bench in front of the only store in town and inquired, "*Friend, can you tell me something this town is noted for?*"

"Well," replied the old man, "*I don't rightly know except it's the starting point to the world. You can start here and go anywhere you want.*"¹

That's a great little story. We are all at "*the starting point*" to the world, and we "*can start here and go anywhere we want.*" We can expand our influence 360° in all directions by starting in the center with ourselves.

Consider the following illustration. Imagine you are standing in the center. You can make a high impact. However, it will not happen by accident. You must become intentional. You must live with purpose while focusing on your performance as you develop your potential.

Note: Illustration and 10 Values are listed on the following pages.



Why we do what we do is about our *purpose*.

How we do what we do is about our *performance*.

What we do will determine our *potential*.

Where these three components overlap, you will achieve a
HIGH IMPACT.

10 Values of High Impact Leaders

1

THE VALUE OF VISION

Vision is the foundation of hope.

“When there’s hope in the future, there’s power in the present.” ~ Les Brown

2

THE VALUE OF MODELING

Someone is always watching you.

“Who we are on the inside is what people see on the outside.” ~ Mack Story

3

THE VALUE OF RESPONSIBILITY

***When we take responsibility,
we take control.***

“What is common sense is not always common practice.” ~ Stephen R. Covey

4

THE VALUE OF TIMING

It matters when you do what you do.

“It’s about doing the right thing for the right reason at the right time.” ~ Mack Story

5

THE VALUE OF RESPECT

To be respected, we must be respectful.

“Go See, ask why, and show respect”

~ Jim Womack

6

THE VALUE OF EMPOWERMENT

***Leaders gain influence by
giving it to others.***

“Leadership is not reserved for leaders.”

~ Marcus Buckingham

7

THE VALUE OF DELEGATION

***We should lead with questions
instead of directions.***

***“Delegation 101: Delegating ‘what to do,’ makes
you responsible. Delegating ‘what to accomplish,’
allows others to become responsible.”***

~ Mack Story

8

THE VALUE OF MULTIPLICATION

None of us is as influential as all of us.

***“To add growth, lead followers. To
multiply, lead leaders.” ~ John C. Maxwell***

9

THE VALUE OF RESULTS

***Leaders like to make things happen.
“Most people fail in the getting started.”
~ Maureen Falcone***

10

THE VALUE OF SIGNIFICANCE

***Are you going to settle for success?
“Significance is a choice that only
successful people can make.”
~ Mack Story***

Excerpt (Chapter 3 of 30) from
Blue-Collar Leadership® & Culture:
The 5 Components for Building High Performance Teams

THE IMPACT OF CULTURE

THOSE WHO WORK THERE WILL DETERMINE
WHO WANTS TO WORK THERE

“I think the most important and difficult thing is to create a culture in the organization where leadership is really important. It’s important for people in the company to realize that this is a growth-oriented company, and the biggest thing we have to grow here is you, because it’s you who will make this company better by your own growth. ~ Jim Blanchard

Listen to the voices of leaders who are losing the labor war:

- “We just can’t find any good people.”
As if...there aren’t any good or great people.
- “Due to the low unemployment rate, there just aren’t any good people left.”
As if...the only people who can be offered a job are those without a job.
- “In today’s labor market, those who want to work are already working.”
As if...those who are working at one place can’t decide to work at a different place.
- “When we do get good people, they won’t stay.”
As if...the problem is always with the people and never with their leaders.

One thing I know about leaders who make these and similar comments is this: Their culture is a competitive disadvantage. Someone else has the advantage and is winning the battle for the good and great people. The good and great people certainly aren't out of work wishing they had a job. They're working someplace else.

Until a leader is aware of the problem, they can't address the problem. In case it's not obvious, the problem is their culture. The leader owns this problem whether they want to or not. Every time I hear these comments, and I hear them a lot, I know I'm talking to a leader who doesn't know what they don't know.

Ria and I hear leaders across varying blue-collar and white-collar industries repeatedly making these comments as we travel across the USA speaking on leadership development. These voices seem to be getting louder and louder. In fact, these voices are an inspiration for this book.

There are many leaders in blue-collar industries needing help. I want to help them stop searching for good people and start attracting great people. The transformation won't happen overnight. However, until it starts happening, it's not going to happen. My intention is to use this book to raise awareness while providing a transformational road map for those leaders who want to make their culture their greatest competitive advantage.

We were speaking in Louisville, KY recently to owners of blue-collar organizations. Afterward, one approached and said, "There isn't a magic pill is there? I think we all hoped there was." I replied, "No sir. There isn't a magic pill or an easy button. This is how you build a high performance team and an exceptional culture that will attract, retain, and support them. There is no other way."

Your culture is always attracting certain types of people and repelling others. Who we are is who we attract. This principle applies to individuals as well as organizations. The culture within your organization is negatively or positively impacting those within the organization, and some who are outside the organization.

The key point is to understand the people inside your organization are constantly providing the most influential type of advertising about your organization and the leaders within it. It's called word of mouth advertising. How your team is feeling inside the organization will determine what they're saying outside the organization.

If what they're saying about their leaders and the organization to others is good, it'll be easier to find good people. If what they're saying is great, it'll be easier to attract great people. But, if what they're saying is bad, finding good people will be hard, if not impossible.

Remember the voices at the start of this chapter? Those leaders had team members who were sharing bad word of mouth advertising about the organization. Unless those leaders choose to change, nothing will change.

Common sense reveals it's easier to win the labor war while attracting great people instead of searching for good people. However, what's common sense isn't always common practice. Often, it takes uncommon sense to act on things that are commonly understood. Creating an organizational culture that will attract and retain great people requires leaders with uncommon sense.

The best led companies aren't impacted by labor shortages because they're consistently attracting the best and the brightest people to their organizations.

"If we lose sight of people, we lose sight of the very purpose of leadership." ~ Tony Dungy

Excerpt (Trait 4 of 30) from
Blue-Collar Leadership® & Teamwork:
30 Traits of High Impact Players

BE RESPONSIBLE

MAKING THIS CHOICE GIVES YOU A VOICE

“Total responsibility for failure is a difficult thing to accept, and taking ownership when things go wrong requires extraordinary humility and courage.”

~ Jocko Willink

The higher we climb up the organizational chart or the higher we climb up the pay scale, the harder it is for many of us to remain humble. However, as high impact team players, it's our responsibility to choose to be humble regardless of our status or income. And if necessary, it's also our responsibility to learn what it truly means to be humble.

Humility is a choice that high impact players will make.

If you haven't accomplished much or done much, it's a little easier to remain humble. I believe as a whole the blue-collar workforce is naturally more humble simply because of who we are and where we come from. However, I also believe some who climb their way up from the entry-level positions let it go to their heads.

I want to remain a humble high impact player. That's on me. Not letting my success go to my head is my responsibility. I've also gone a step farther and made helping others do the same my responsibility. High impact team players always do more than is required.

Each of us is responsible for choosing our values and

those values will determine our circumstances and the impact we have, especially when it comes to teamwork.

Just as humility is sometimes a hard choice for those with a high position or status, taking responsibility is often a hard choice for those in a low position or status. But as I've learned over the years, taking responsibility seems to be a hard choice for many regardless of their title, position, rank, status, or income.

When it comes to teamwork, low impact players dodge responsibility like it's a deadly disease. They may disappear when the task is being addressed or begin to make excuses as to why they can't help and shouldn't be asked to help. That creates distrust.

High impact players know a secret: When low impact players are whining, it's easy to start shining. They also know how to shine. It's actually pretty simple. They just listen for whining, and then step up and say, "I'll do it."

At that moment, the high impact player builds trust by simply taking the responsibility. The next responsibility of the high impact player is to follow through and get results. If they don't, they will create distrust with the team and the leaders. If they do, they will build additional trust with the team and the leaders.

Leaders are ultimately responsible for making things happen. If they don't make things happen, it won't be long before they are replaced by someone else who will be given the same mission. High impact players know the quickest way to build trust with a leader is to help them get results, so that's what they focus on doing.

As they develop a reputation for helping the leaders get results, their influence increases with those leaders. Because of their choice (taking responsibility and following through), they earn a voice. As time passes, the high impact players are asked their opinions much more

often than the low impact players.

As a result, the high impact players begin to influence the leader's choices and the team's direction. They're still on the team, but they're playing at much higher level. Those who are willing to make things happen are also given more chances to make things happen.

High impact players are never just along for the ride. They want to drive. They see the big picture. They don't shy away from responsibility. They wake up everyday looking for an opportunity to shine.

Imagine a team full of low impact players where everyone is dodging responsibility on every front. The leader will be frustrated, and the team will be frustrated. And little, if anything, will get accomplished. Unfortunately, these types of teams are common. Depending on your circumstances, it may be too easy to imagine this team. If so, don't miss what's right in front of you: endless opportunities to shine.

Now imagine a very different team, one filled with high impact players. They could be given the exact same mission as the frustrated low impact team. However, no one would be frustrated. The mission would be accomplished. Instead of being focused on finding excuses, the entire team would be focused on finding a way to make it happen. In that case, everyone shines.

What's the major difference between the two teams above? Attitude. Low impact players tend to have a negative attitude. High impact players always have a positive attitude. Attitude is a choice. If we can choose to be positive or negative, why not choose to be positive.

“Responsibility includes two important ideas – choosing right over wrong and accepting ownership for one's conduct and obligations.” ~ Charles G. Koch

Excerpt (Ch. 4 of 30) from
Blue-Collar Leadership® & Supervision:
Unleash Your Team's Potential

UNDERSTANDING ARTIFICIAL INFLUENCE

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
SOMEONE RESPECTING YOUR POSITION
AND SOMEONE RESPECTING YOU

“Into the hands of every individual is given a marvelous power for good or evil - the silent, unconscious, unseen influence of his life. This is simply the constant radiation of what man really is, not what he pretends to be.”

~ William George Jordan

If you want to begin to lead beyond your position, you must be respected by those you want to influence. No one gives you respect. You can demand respect all day long, but it's a waste of time. I always laugh (on the inside) when I hear someone demand respect. You will never be respected because you demand to be respected, at work or at home. It's simply not going to happen.

Think about it from your own point of view. If there's a boss or manager you don't like because of who they are as a person, can they demand respect from you and get it? Absolutely not. You may respect their position. But, you will never respect them simply because they demand it. You *must* respect their position to *keep* your job. But, you don't have to respect *them* to keep your job.

A position will give you authority but not influence. Influence must be earned by first earning respect. The more you are respected the more influence you will gain. Everything I'm sharing in this book, *if applied*, will help you earn respect and increase your influence with others.

Having a position or title such as Mom, Dad, Coach, Boss, Supervisor, Manager, VP, President, CEO, Owner, etc. gives you authority and control over other people. I call this *artificial influence*. Artificial influence creates the *illusion* that you have *real* influence. However, if you choose to influence people using only artificial influence, you are not leading. You are simply managing. Sure you may accomplish a lot, but what are you leaving on the table?

You can easily validate the principle of artificial influence by considering those bosses you've had, or now have, that you would never follow if they didn't control your pay, your time off, your promotions, etc. If you only follow a boss because you *have to*, their influence is *not* real. It's artificial. And unfortunately for the company, most likely, you will only do what you have to do.

The title of boss is one that is simply given, often by another manager with artificial influence. However, when it comes to real influence, managers are not in the same league as leaders. If you develop real influence based on character-based principles that you have internalized, then you will *earn* the right to lead. When you do, those reporting to you will do much *more than they have to* simply because they *respect* you.

A high impact leader operates from a position of real influence, not artificial influence or authority.

Listen to the voices of those with *artificial* influence:

- How am I supposed to make something happen when those people don't report to me?
- I can't make them do anything. They don't report to me and won't do anything I tell them to do.
- I can't get anything done in that department. They report to someone else, not me. It's useless to try.
- How can I be responsible for their results when they don't report to me?
- If you want me to make it happen, you've got to give me authority over those people.
- My hands are tied. They don't report to me.

Phrases like those are always spoken by a manager, never

by a leader. I've heard them spoken many times in my career by managers who don't have a clue about leadership. The only influence they have at work is directly tied to the authority, *artificial influence*, which is associated with the position they hold. Without it, they wouldn't accomplish much of anything.

I remember being in a facility as a consultant once. I needed some help from a few team members in a different department, so I asked the manager I was working with if it would be okay if I went over and asked them for some help. He said, "*You'll have to wait. I'll have to get an interpreter because none of them speak English.*" I said, "*Okay, I'll go wait over there.*" I thought it was interesting. When I got there, they all spoke English to me. Leadership is influence.

Managers make things happen with people who *have to* help them. Leaders make things happen with people who *want to* help them.

Most managers have never read a leadership book and can't understand a leader doesn't need authority to make something happen. Leaders only need *influence* to make something happen. Leadership is *not* about who *has* to help you. Leadership is about who *wants* to help you.

Research studies have repeatedly shown a 40% productivity increase when comparing people who *want to* follow a leader with those who *have to* follow a manager.

A manager thrives on artificial influence and is not interested in developing himself or others in order to capture this massive loss of productivity. That's what leaders do, not managers.

How do you influence? What is your style? Are you a director or a connector? Do you tell or sell? What would change if you had more real influence in every situation?

"When we look at people who disobey their leaders, the first question we ought to ask is not, 'What's wrong with those people?' but rather, 'What's wrong with their leader?'

It says that responsibility begins at the top."

~ Malcolm Gladwell

Excerpt (Ch. 26 of 30) from
Blue-Collar Kaizen:
Leading Lean & Lean Teams

LEVERAGE THE TEAM

FOCUS ON STRENGTHS; DEVELOP WEAKNESSES

“Instead of focusing on weaknesses, give your attention to people’s strengths. Focus on sharpening skills that already exist. Compliment positive qualities. Bring out the gifts inherent in them. Weaknesses can wait unless they are character flaws. Only after you have developed a strong rapport with the person and they have begun to grow and gain confidence should you address areas of weakness...and then those should be handled gently and one at a time.”
~ John C. Maxwell

High impact Lean leaders have a gift for turning a group of people into a team in a short period of time.

At the start of a kaizen event, calling the group of people a team is a poor use of the word team. They are simply a group of people assembled in a room about to be given a task to accomplish together. Most often, some want to be there, and some don’t want to be there. Odds are, this specific group of people has never worked together on a project before.

Knowing about continuous improvement is a must if you’re going to lead a kaizen event. However, knowing about continuous improvement (your competency) will not be the key to turning a group of people into a team of people. Turning a group of people into a team of people

is about having respect for the people. Your ability to quickly build a strong, functional team will be determined primarily by your character and secondarily by your competency. Your character is key in this area.

I've seen some very talented Lean leaders and others who have an extensive in-depth knowledge of Lean attempt to lead kaizen events. Most often, they struggle from the moment the event kicks off until the end. They know a lot about Lean but very little about leading people effectively. Why? Because their focus has been on learning Lean, not on learning leadership.

When it comes to growing, developing, and creating a new team, high impact Lean leaders know to focus on the team member's strengths in their area of competency and to develop their weaknesses in the area of character.

Each team member's competency strengths (what they know and can do), if leveraged, will launch the team forward. Each team member's character weaknesses (who they are) will hold the team back. This includes you.

High impact Lean leaders know there are always character issues. We all have them. A few of us are constantly working to improving ourselves, but many of us aren't. Focusing on character weaknesses is why high impact Lean leaders blend leadership development and personal growth components into all of their continuous improvement initiatives.

This is why I utilize the 20/80 rule I taught you in chapter 19. I didn't start using it by accident. I started using it by design. Until then, I only focused on leveraging the team's strengths. But, I hadn't been focused on developing their weaknesses. I'm sure you already know the root cause of most major problems that arise during kaizen events, whether with team members or people not on the team, is rooted in character issues.

The majority of Lean leaders focus only on the continuous improvement (competency) component of Lean. As a result, they provide no leadership in the area that will hold them and the team back the most, character development.

The reason Lean leaders do not address character development during kaizen events is because many of them are not addressing it in their own lives. In other words, because they are not leading themselves well, they cannot lead others well. Character development is always the missing link personally and professionally.

In the area of competency, ask questions and generate discussions to find out what people like or don't like to do. Don't assume they like to do what they are paid to do. I always have everyone introduce and speak about themselves before I talk about anything. I ask what their job is, how long they have been with the organization, what their previous job was, what their hobbies are, what they do for fun, how much Lean and event experience they have, and I ask them to tell me about their family.

The answers to these questions and the associated discussions allow me to connect and learn about their strengths. Then, I'm positioned to leverage the team.

“Humility means knowing and using your strength for the benefit of others, on behalf of a higher purpose. The humble leader is not weak, but strong...is not pre-occupied with self, but with how best to use his or her strengths for the good of others. A humble leader does not think less of himself, but chooses to consider the needs of others in fulfilling a worthy cause. We love to be in the presence of a humble leader because they bring out the very best in us. Their focus is on our purpose, our contribution, and our ability to accomplish all we set out to accomplish.” ~ Alan Ross

Excerpt (Toolbox Tip #15) from
Blue-Collar Leadership® Toolbox Tips:
60 Micro-Lessons to Maximize Your INFLUENCE



Toolbox Tip #15

Character counts. Who we are on the inside determines what others see, feel, and experience on the outside.

Why It Matters: When it comes to character, it's not about what we know. It's about who we are. People are most often hired for what they know, but they are most often fired for who they are. Our character will either launch us or limit us. Character is personal, but it's not private.

What We Do: We intentionally make choices that reveal a high degree of character. We make and keep commitments. We do what we said we would do, when we said we would do it, how we said we would do it, because we said we would do it. We ensure our motive, agenda, and behavior are aligned with positive, character-based principles. We say and do things that build trust.

What We Don't Do: We don't lie. We don't make and break commitments. We don't talk about others behind their backs. We don't fail to stand for what's right. We don't hang around negative people. We

don't do or say things that create distrust.

Bad Example(s): Blaming others for our behavior when things don't go our way. Speaking to others in anger. Pretending to know when we don't know.

Think About This

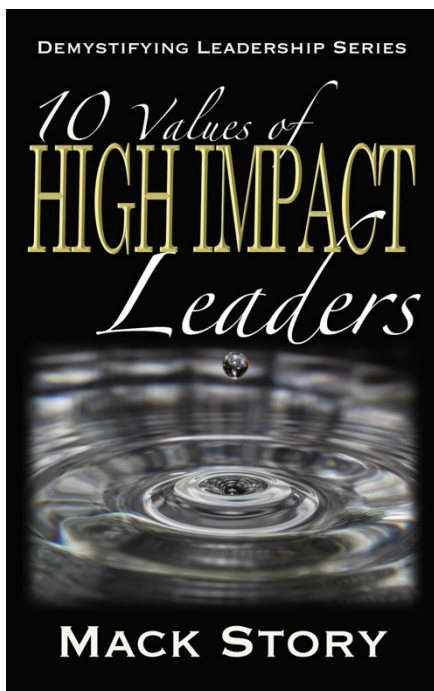
“Our reputations do not come from how we talk about ourselves. Our reputations come from how others talk about us.” ~ Simon Sinek

Allowing our pride and ego to prevent us from doing the right thing.

Ask Yourself: Do I ever blame others for my behavior? Do others control me, or do I control me? Who is responsible for my behavior? What does my behavior communicate to others?

What Do You Think?

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High impact leaders align their habits with key values in order to maximize their influence. High impact leaders intentionally grow and develop themselves in an effort to more effectively grow and develop others.

These *10 Values* are commonly understood. However, they are not always commonly practiced. These *10 Values* will help you build trust and accelerate relationship building. Those mastering these *10 Values* will be able to lead with speed as they develop 360° of influence from wherever they are.

**Order books online at Amazon or
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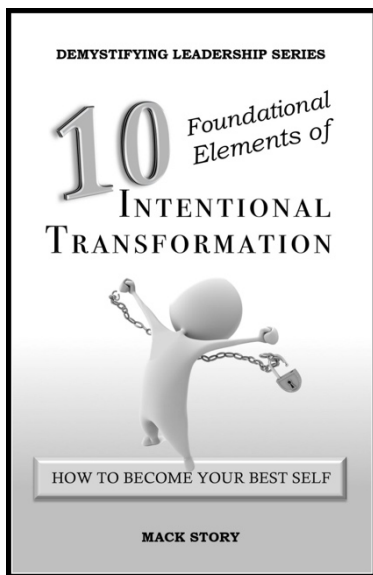


Are you looking for transformation in your life? Do you want better results? Do you want stronger relationships?

In *Defining Influence*, Mack breaks down many of the principles that will allow anyone at any level to methodically and intentionally increase their positive influence.

Mack blends his personal growth journey with lessons on the principles he learned along the way. He's not telling you what he learned after years of research, but rather what he learned from years of application and transformation. Everything rises and falls on influence.

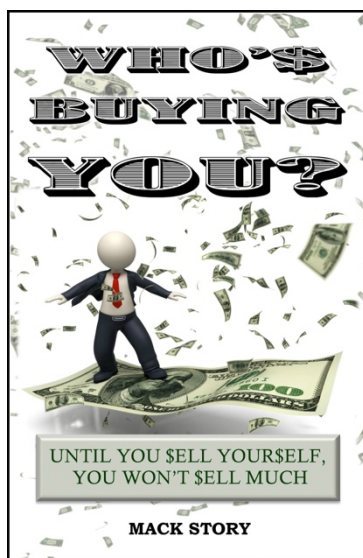
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10 Foundational Elements of Intentional Transformation serves as a source of motivation and inspiration to help you climb your way to the next level and beyond as you learn to intentionally create a better future for yourself. The pages will ENCOURAGE, ENGAGE, and EMPOWER you as you become more focused and intentional about moving from where you are to where you want to be.

All of us are somewhere, but most of us want to be somewhere else. However, we don't always know how to get there. You will learn how to intentionally move forward as you learn to navigate the 10 foundational layers of transformation.

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“Sales persuasion and influence, moving others, has changed more in the last 10 years than it has in the last 100 years. It has transitioned from buyer beware to seller beware” ~ Daniel Pink

So, it's no longer “*Buyer beware!*” It's “*Seller beware!*” Why? Today, the buyer has the advantage over the seller. Most often, they are holding it in their hand. It's a smart phone. They can learn everything about your product before they meet you. They can compare features and prices instantly. The major advantage you do still have is: YOU! IF they like you. IF they trust you. IF they feel you want to help them.

This book is filled with 30 short chapters providing unique insights that will give you the advantage, not over the buyer, but over your competition: those who are selling what you're selling. It will help you sell yourself.

**Order books online at Amazon or
BlueCollarLeadership.com**



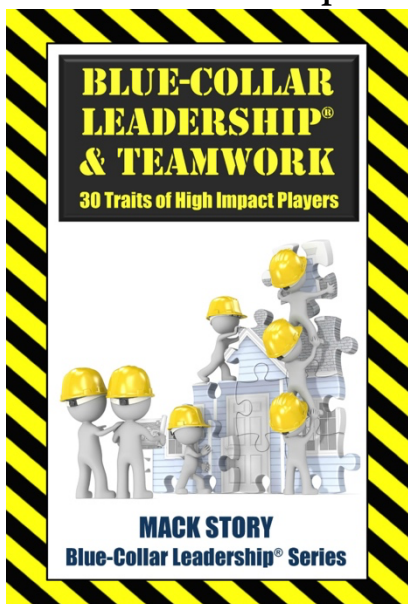
It's easier to compete when you're attracting great people instead of searching for good people.

Blue-Collar Leadership® & Culture will help you understand why culture is the key to becoming a sought after employer of choice within your industry and in your area of operation.

You'll also discover how to leverage the components of The Transformation Equation to create a culture that will support, attract, and retain high performance team members.

Blue-Collar Leadership® & Culture is intended to serve as a tool, a guide, and a transformational road map for leaders who want to create a high impact culture that will become their greatest competitive advantage.

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(Also available in Spanish)

Are you ready to play at the next level and beyond?

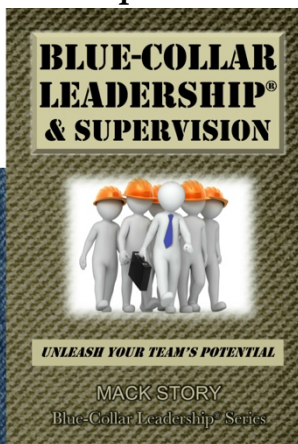
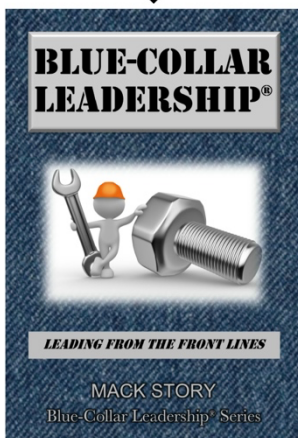
In today's high stakes game of business, the players on the team are the competitive advantage for any organization. But, only if they are on the field instead of on the bench.

The competitive advantage for every individual is developing 360° of influence regardless of position, title, or rank.

Blue-Collar Leadership® & Teamwork provides a simple, yet powerful and unique, resource for individuals who want to increase their influence and make a high impact. It's also a resource and tool for leaders, teams, and organizations, who are ready to Engage the Front Line to Improve the Bottom Line.

Order books online at Amazon or
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**AVAILABLE
IN SPANISH**



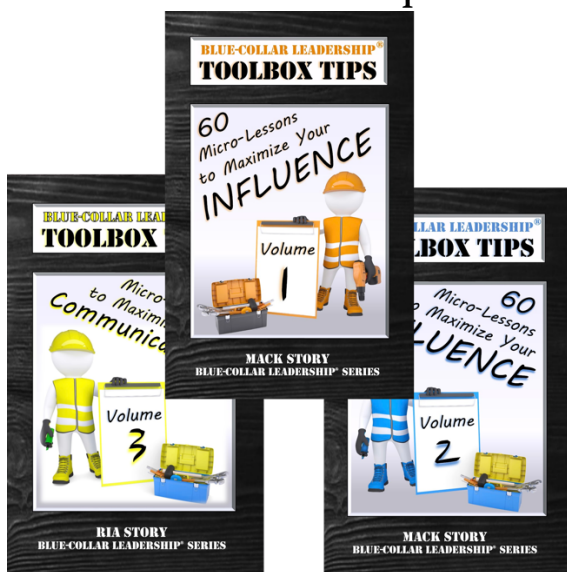
"I wish someone would have given me these books 30 years ago when I started my career on the front lines. They would have launched my career then. They can launch your career now." ~ Mack Story

Blue-Collar Leadership® and Blue-Collar Leadership® & Supervision were written specifically for those working on the front lines and those who are leading them. With 30 short, easy to read 3 page chapters, these books contain powerful, yet simple to understand leadership principles and lessons.

Note: *These two Blue-Collar Leadership® books are the blue-collar version of the MAXIMIZE books and contain nearly identical content.*

Download the first 5 chapters of these books FREE at:
BlueCollarLeadership.com/download

Order books online at Amazon or
BlueCollarLeadership.com



QUICKLY DEVELOP LEADERS AT EVERY LEVEL

Leaders are BUSY. That's why Mack and Ria Story created *Toolbox Tips*, a collection of powerful leadership principles delivered in a short and easy to understand format for quick and consistent workforce development.

Kick-off weekly meetings by reviewing a *Toolbox Tip* on **responsibility**, start your team safety meetings with a *Toolbox Tip* on **trust**, or begin your management team meeting with a *Toolbox Tip* on **character**.

Leverage the power of micro-learning with powerful, common-sense leadership principles. Quickly and consistently review, discuss, and apply *Toolbox Tips* to create a leadership culture filled with high impact individuals, high impact team players, and high impact leaders worth following.

**Order books online at Amazon or
BlueCollarLeadership.com**

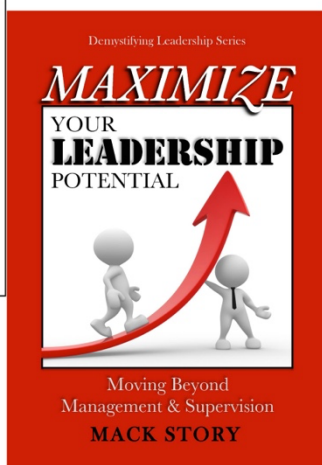
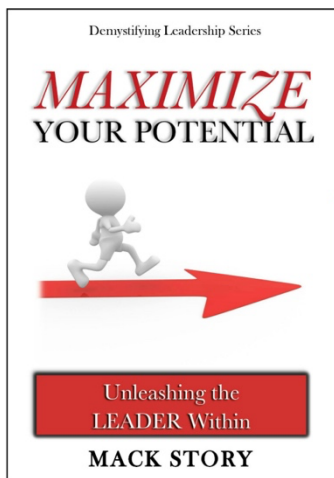


The biggest challenge in process improvement and cultural transformation isn't identifying the problems. It's execution: implementing and sustaining the solutions.

Blue-Collar Kaizen is a resource for anyone in any position who is, or will be, leading a team through process improvement and change. Learn to engage, empower, and encourage your team for long term buy-in and sustained gains.

Mack Story has over 11,000 hours experience leading hundreds of leaders and thousands of their cross-functional kaizen team members through process improvement, organizational change, and cultural transformation. He shares lessons learned from his experience and many years of studying, teaching, and applying leadership principles.

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"I wish someone had given me these books 30 years ago when I started my career. They would have changed my life then. They can change your life now." ~ Mack Story

MAXIMIZE Your Potential will help you learn to lead yourself well. *MAXIMIZE Your Leadership Potential* will help you learn to lead others well. With 30 short, easy to read 3 page chapters, these books contain simple and easy to understand, yet powerful leadership lessons.

Note: These two MAXIMIZE books are the white-collar, or non-specific, version of the Blue-Collar Leadership® books and contain nearly identical content.

ABOUT RIA STORY

Mack's wife, Ria, is also a motivational leadership speaker, author, and a world class coach who has a unique ability to help people develop and achieve their life and career goals and guide them in building the habits and discipline to achieve their personal view of greatness. Ria brings a wealth of personal experience in working with clients to achieve their personal goals and aspirations in a way few coaches can.

Like many, Ria has faced adversity in life. Raised on an isolated farm in Alabama, she suffered extreme sexual abuse by her father from age 12 to 19. Desperate to escape, she left home at 19 without a job, a car, or even a high school diploma. Ria learned to be resilient, and not just survive, but thrive. (Watch her 7 minute TEDx talk at RiaStory.com/TEDx) She worked her way through school, acquiring an MBA with a 4.0 GPA, and eventually resigned from her career in the corporate world to pursue a passion for helping others achieve success.

Ria's background includes more than 10 years in healthcare administration, including several years in management, and later, Director of Compliance and Regulatory Affairs for a large healthcare organization. Ria's responsibilities included oversight of thousands of organizational policies, organizational compliance with all State and Federal regulations, and responsibility for several million dollars in Medicare appeals.

Ria co-founded Top Story Leadership, which offers leadership speaking, training, coaching, and consulting.

Ria's Story From Ashes To Beauty by Ria Story

The unforgettable story and inspirational memoir of a young woman who was extremely sexually abused by her father from age 12 to 19 and then rejected by her mother. (*Watch 7 minutes of her story in her TEDx talk at RiaStory.com/TEDx*)

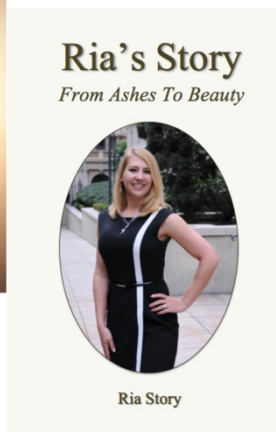
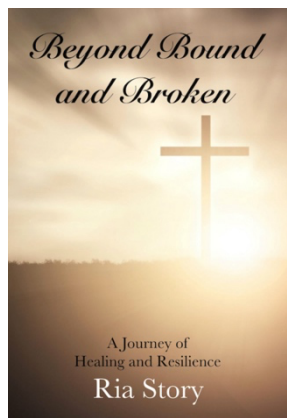
For the first time, Ria publicly reveals details of the extreme sexual abuse she endured growing up. 13 years after leaving home at 19, she decided to speak out about her story and encourage others to find hope and healing.

Determined to not only survive, but also thrive, Ria shares how she was able to overcome the odds and find hope and healing to Achieve Abundant Life. She shares the leadership principles she applied to find professional success, personal significance, and details how she was able to find the courage to share her story to give hope to others around the world.

Ria states, "It would be easier for me to let this story go untold forever and simply move on with life...One of the most difficult things I've ever done is write this book. Victims of sexual assault or abuse don't want to talk because they want to avoid the social stigma and the fear of not being believed or the possibility of being blamed for something that was not their fault. My hope and prayer is someone will benefit from learning how I was able to overcome such difficult circumstances. That brings purpose to the pain and reason enough to share what I would rather have left behind forever. Our scars make us stronger."

Available at Amazon.com in paperback, audio, and eBook. To learn more about Ria or to book her to speak at your event, please visit: RiaStory.com/TEDx

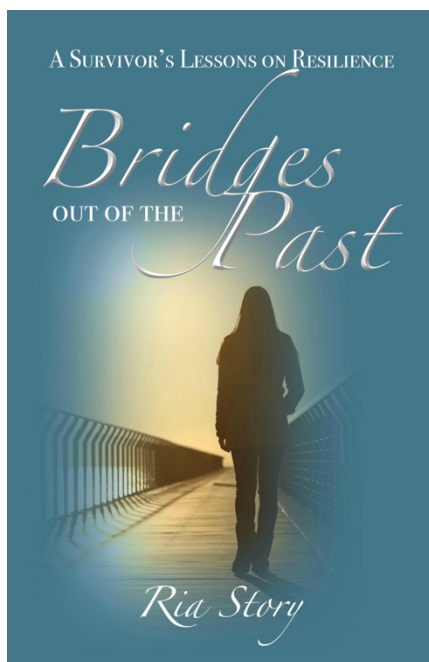
**Order books online at Amazon or
RiaStory.com**



In *Beyond Bound and Broken*, Ria shares how she overcame the shame, fear, and doubt she developed after enduring years of extreme sexual abuse by her father. Forced to play the role of a wife and even shared with other men due to her father's perversions, Ria left home at 19 without a job, a car, or even a high-school diploma. This book also contains lessons on resilience and overcoming adversity that you can apply to your own life.

In *Ria's Story From Ashes To Beauty*, Ria tells her personal story of growing up as a victim of extreme sexual abuse from age 12 – 19, leaving home to escape, and her decision to tell her story. She shares her heart in an attempt to help others overcome their own adversity.

**Order books online at Amazon or
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It's not what happens to you in life. It's who you become because of it. We all experience pain, grief, and loss in life. Resilience is the difference between *"I didn't die,"* and *"I learned to live again."* In this captivating book on resilience, Ria walks you through her own horrific story of more than seven years of sexual abuse by her father. She then shares how she learned not only to survive, but also to thrive in spite of her past. Learn how to overcome challenges, obstacles, and adversity in your own life by building a bridge out of the past and into the future.

(Watch 7 minutes of her story at RiaStory.com/TEDx)

**Order books online at Amazon or
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You have untapped potential to do, have, and be more in life. But, developing your potential and becoming the best version of yourself will require personal transformation. You will have to transform from who you are today into who you want to become tomorrow.

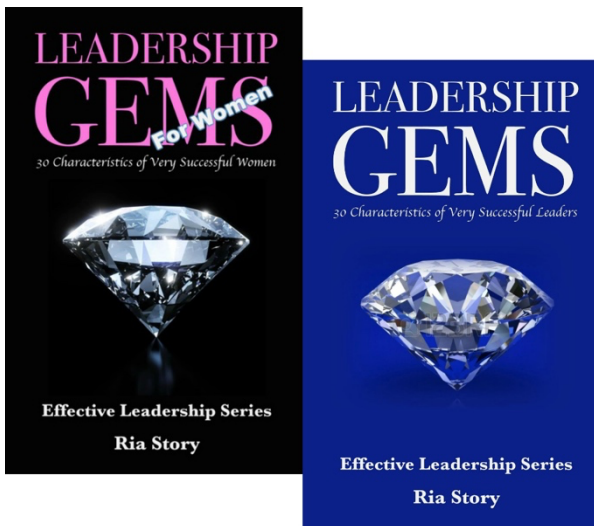
Gain unique insight in, *“Fearfully and Wonderfully Me: Become the Woman You are Destined to Be”* and the accompanying workbook to help you: believe in yourself and your potential; embrace your self-worth; overcome self-limiting beliefs; increase your influence personally & professionally; and achieve your goals & develop a mindset for success. These two resources will empower you to own your story, write a new chapter, and become the woman and leader you are destined to be.

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You have untapped potential waiting to be unlocked. To be successful requires us to have knowledge of the principles of success, awareness of how to utilize them, and discipline to intentionally apply them. There are no shortcuts to success, but we can travel much faster when we have an achievement model we can apply. This model will help you develop more influence personally and professionally, execute an action plan for personal success, and maximize your potential in life. Both women and men alike will find practical and relevant information to immediately apply to their situation and improve the outcome.

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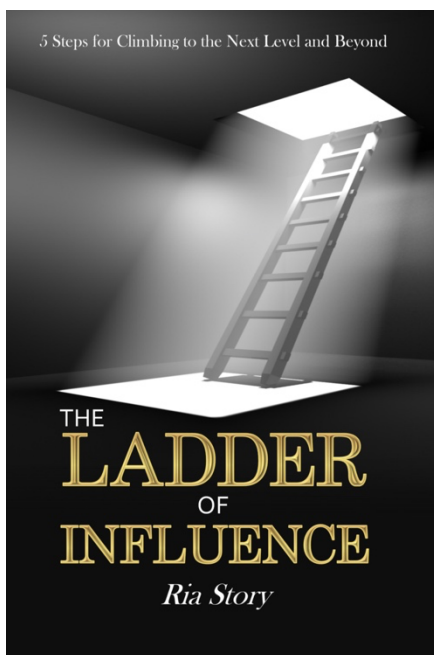


Note: Leadership Gems is the generic, non-gender specific, version of Leadership Gems for Women. The content is very similar.

Women are naturally high level leaders because they are relationship oriented. However, it's a “*man’s world*” out there and natural ability isn’t enough to help you be successful as a leader. You must be intentional.

Ria packed these books with 30 leadership gems which very successful people internalize and apply. Ria has combined her years of experience in leadership roles of different organizations along with years of studying, teaching, training, and speaking on leadership to give you these 30, short and simple, yet powerful and profound, lessons to help you become very successful, regardless of whether you are in a formal leadership position or not.

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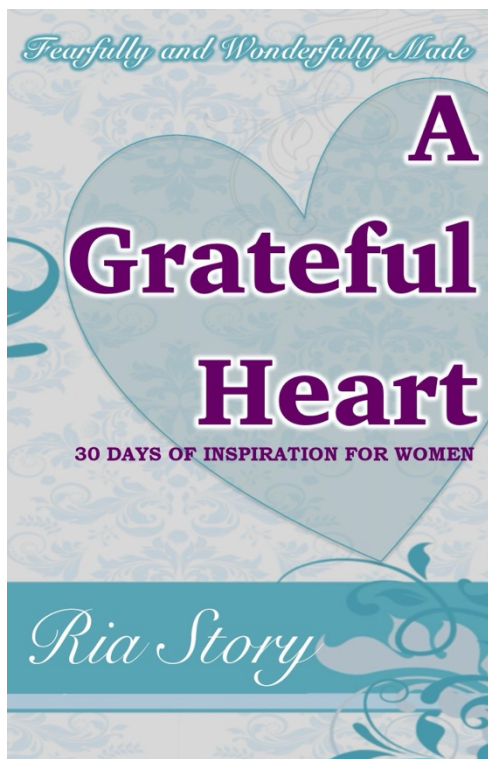


The Ladder of Influence® provides a powerful, yet simple, framework to help you realize the practical steps you can take to increase your influence with the people around you: family, friends, co-workers, your boss, etc.

We all have some influence, yet we all want more influence. Simple. But why, how, where, who, and when we influence others as well as how we in turn are influenced by others is incredibly complex because people are incredibly complex.

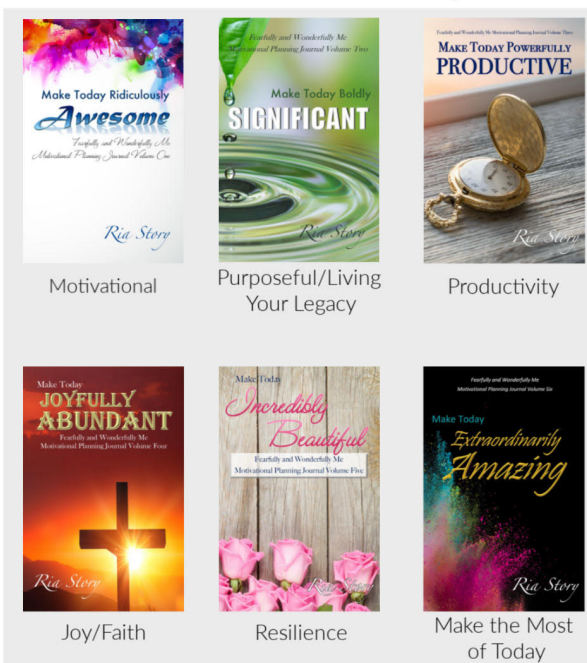
When we have more influence, we have more options, opportunities, and more choices. Life will always be better with more options, more opportunities, and more choices.

**Order books online at Amazon or
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Become inspired by this 30-day collection of daily devotions for women, where you will find practical advice on intentionally living with a grateful heart, inspirational quotes, short journaling opportunities, and scripture from God's Word on practicing gratitude.

Motivational Planning Journals
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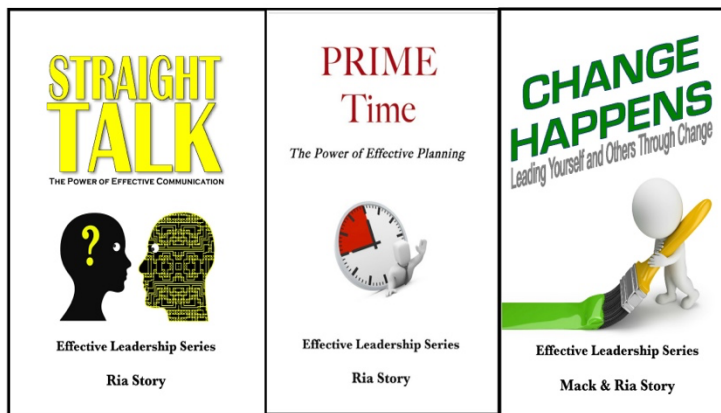


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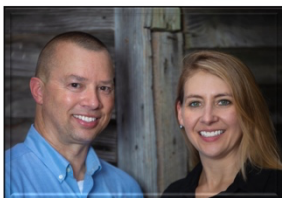
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Mack Story, founder of Blue-Collar Leadership®, logged 11,000+ hours leading cross-functional teams and has 30+ years of experience in the blue-collar manufacturing industry. He is a certified leadership speaker, trainer, and author of 14 leadership books, including 10 Values of High Impact Leaders and Defining Influence, as well as the Blue-Collar Leadership® Series books.

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