

# REINVENTING GREATNESS

Leading Yourself & Others  
Through Change with  
Confidence & Trust

*\*NEW*  
*Special Section*

**How to Get Into the  
High-Impact Zone!**



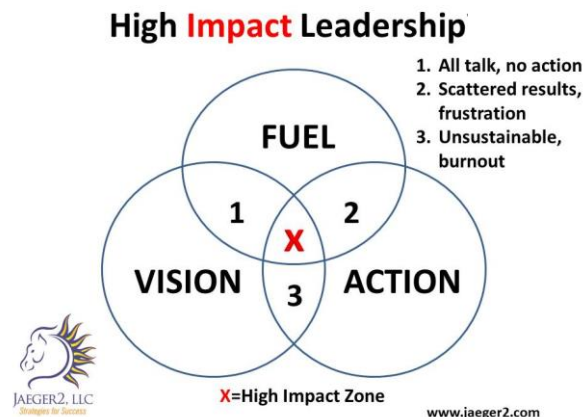
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## How to Get Into the HIGH IMPACT ZONE!

Adapted from: *Reinventing Greatness: Leading Yourself & Others Through Change with Confidence & Trust*

Leading through a reinvention or other change requires thought and care. It can be stressful and timelines may be tight. Overwhelm and chaos may run you down. Efficiency is key. After working with hundreds of entrepreneurs and executives, I've observed certain patterns of success. I've also noticed this same pattern while working with horses: the best leaders achieve great results while expending the least amount of energy. I call this the **high-impact zone**. But how do you find the high-impact zone? To better understand what was going on, I created a simple model.

I found that three primary components drive success: a clear vision, positive fuel source, and appropriate action. Vision is your level of clarity on what you'd like to see happen. Fuel is the energy and mindset you bring to the effort. And of course, appropriate action is required to advance and achieve your goal. Vision, fuel, and action are in constant flux during periods of change and require intentional management. High-impact leadership is leadership that balances all three to operate in the **high-impact zone**. If one area is missing or deficient, results will be compromised. The following diagram illustrates the high-impact leadership approach. The numbers 1, 2, and 3 indicate what can happen if an area is missing or deficient. Ideally, we want to be working in the middle at X. Where do you see yourself?



Most leaders are strong in two of the three areas, as noted below.

1—Vision and Fuel: You may be a brilliant visionary able to strategize and build a plan. I've attended many brainstorming, visioning, and strategic planning meetings that left me excited about the future. These meetings can be energizing and serve to unite a team around a common vision. However, the action component is sometimes weak or missing. Creating a vision and strategy without an implementation plan and accountabilities gets you nowhere. You end up in the "all talk, no action" mode. The plan ends up on a shelf or stored in your data files. You get blocked from taking action due to fear, lack of information, lack of prioritization or accountability, or the goal is just too big. Analysis paralysis may set in, and you defer action until a later date. But the later date never comes.

2—Fuel and Action: You may be positive, focused on tasks, and a great action-taker. You get a lot done, and your team loves you. However, you may be so busy tending to daily tasks and crises that the vision or bigger picture of where you're going may be blurry, missing, or not top of mind. Your results are scattered—sometimes successful, sometimes not. This causes frustration.

3—Vision and Action: You may have a strong and clear vision of where you're headed and be taking a lot of action to meet it. However, your fuel source is weak or negative. Leaders begin to burn out from the unyielding pace of the work and constant demands. Staff may leave. Fast-growing organizations and high-pressure environments are especially susceptible to burnout and retention issues. Clear boundaries, delegation, and recharge opportunities must be created for long-term sustainability.

Once you understand where you are, you can make adjustments to get to X. Getting to the high-impact zone is a leadership dance around vision, fuel, and action. Sometimes only a few tweaks are required, other times a full overhaul is necessary. With intention, anyone can reach X.

Using the high-impact leadership approach, several clients achieved top profits, one reorganized a struggling department into an award-winning performer, others gained new market share, another started a new business that was immediately profitable, many secured new senior leadership positions, and two sold their firms. All claimed that they felt more calm and happy than they had in years. Using this approach, I created a thriving business that I love, built the equestrian facility of my dreams (even after the bank rejected part of our construction loan midway through the build), and Lemon Squeezy strolled over a long crinkly tarp like he was walking in his field. The approach works for all goals, personal and professional.

In my sessions with horses, high-impact leadership results in everyone being “in step.” The humans' and horse's steps synchronize. This happens automatically as everyone “steps” into a shared vision with trusting energy and walks forward together. The synchronized footfall represents the team's alignment and emerges organically. I only noticed this when observing photos following our sessions. It's pretty remarkable.

Let's take a closer look at the components of the model and discuss how to get to **X, the high-impact zone**. Then Lemon Squeezy will show us what it takes to lead through change.

### **Vision**

One of the top keys to success is the ability to see your goal achieved. What's your goal? What do you want? Can you envision it?

During a reinvention, there are many moving parts. It's important to hold both a long-term vision of your goal and a near-term vision for what you want to achieve each day. On some days, you may need to laser in on each moment to stay on track. Focus requires discipline to avoid unnecessary distractions. As I've learned from working with horses, clarity is key. If you're not clear on what you want, you will not get it.

For example, one day I was in a retail shop and the owner and I started chatting. She expressed her struggles with her business and began to share her challenges. I asked her, “What do you want?” She looked stunned. “In what sense?” she asked. I rephrased my question, “How would it look if everything was going well?” I asked for details. She paused and said, “More customers, but I guess I don’t know specifically. I hadn’t thought about that.” I found out that she had been a competitive horse rider years ago. I asked her what would happen if she wasn’t clear with a horse on what she wanted. She began to smile. I wished her well and left with my merchandise.

If you can see it, you can make it happen. If you’re not clear about what you want, you may get tossed to the ground or swirl around in a sea of confusion. I’ve been tossed to the ground, and it hurts. Here are three ways to develop a vision.

1.     **Be intentional.** One of the best ways to gain clarity and “see” your goal is to practice setting an intention. High-impact leadership requires you to initiate and lead. It is a proactive process. Many of us work in a reactive mode. It can be easier to respond than initiate.

To be more proactive, ask yourself, What is my intention? Consider this question throughout the day and notice what happens. Then expand it out in time: What is my intention for the year? What is my intention for the next three years? Pondering these questions will prompt your brain to search for possibilities. As possibilities arise, consider the ones you’re attracted to. Then ask yourself, “What could that look like?”

2.     **Use visualization.** Create a vision board or imagine what you desire. Look at it every day. Viewing a vision board or holding an image in your mind triggers your brain’s reticular activating system (RAS). The RAS helps filter and prioritize sensory information and focus on what you want. You’ll begin to see opportunities and pursue relationships in alignment with your goals. Animals use the RAS to search out and capture prey. Humans can use the RAS to help “capture” a goal.

Brainstorm with yourself, your leadership team, and/or others you trust. Explore different visions, experiment and discover. Make the brainstorming session light and fun. You don’t have to figure it out all at once. Allow a vision to emerge and evolve. Consider the following questions:

- a)     What’s my best work so far?
- b)     What do I want to continue?
- c)     What would add more value?
- d)     What else would my clients love?
- e)     What could it look like?
- f)     What would it feel like?
- g)     What would my clients say once we achieve it?
- h)     How would it affect my life?

I first used the power of visualization when I was ten years old. I wanted a new bike. My small banana-seat two-wheeler wasn’t cutting it anymore, and I knew exactly what I wanted—a shiny blue five-speed

with black-and-white trim. It was sitting in the window of my favorite shop, but my family couldn't afford it. That summer, my parents shipped my sister and me off to our grandparents in New York, a fair distance away from the bike. But I was determined to get that bike. I drew a picture of it and hung it over my bed at my grandparents' house. I looked at it constantly and dreamed of speeding down hills with my dog Maggie and my best friend. I didn't know how I'd get that bike, but I knew it was mine. Then my grandfather offered me a job at his drugstore helping to stock shelves and price products. I stocked shelves with glee and carefully penned prices on everything from sunscreen to beach balls. At the end of the summer, I almost had enough money to buy that bike. My parents graciously donated the difference, and I sprinted to the store.

Little did I know then that I would use this same process (with a few more tactical details) throughout my life.

**3. Imagine your best-case scenario.** What if you achieved your perfect life? A perfect blend of work and play. Can you consider that possibility? Many cannot. Consider these questions to help open your imagination, tap into your creativity, and see possibilities. Remember, you are only doing this in your mind; there is no risk!

- a) What is your best-case scenario? Notice how easy or difficult it is to answer this question. Does your mind keep going back to "I'd like to, but..." or "Oh, but I could never do that"? Those are limiting beliefs, which we'll discuss in the fuel section. For now, remove the perceived limiting factor—money, time, age, whatever—from the picture. Allow yourself to dream without limitations and judgment.
- b) What if you said yes to the best-case scenario? Did your heart just skip a beat? Did you suddenly feel nervous? Check in with your heart and gut. Your body is giving you information. How does pondering this question feel? Does it excite you, terrify you, excite and terrify you? That's good. You are waking up to possibilities and considering them as real.
- c) What would need to shift if you said yes to the best-case scenario? Here's where your rational mind can jump back in. It can help you begin to outline a plan in your mind.
- d) What resources would you need to make the best-case scenario a reality? Yes, most everyone could use a bit more time and money, but here's where you begin drilling down to the details. Look around in your imagination. What specifically do you need—a new website, a new hire, a new building, a new job, subcontractor support, a dog walker, a housecleaner, a coach, investors?

After you've identified what you want, it's time to check your fuel.

## **Fuel**

Fuel is your energy from moment to moment. Your energy consists of your beliefs, thoughts, emotions, and experiences. It influences your perspective, how you feel, your decisions, your actions, and how others feel about you. Your energy is also affected by your physical health. Be sure to nourish yourself well to optimize your fuel.

Your energy is an invisible and silent superpower. It can work for you and against you. Whether you know it or not, you are constantly sharing it with the world. Others judge you by how they feel when they are around you. Think about some people you know. How do you feel in their presence? Do they make you feel happy, neutral, or a bit anxious? Our bodies pick up information when we're in the presence of another or a group. Good leaders pay attention to this energy and alter it to create productive environments.

There are two types of energy that drive behavior: fear and love. Fear includes anxiety and doubt. Love includes confidence and trust. Neutral energy is a form of love energy that I discussed a lot in *Take the Reins! 7 Secrets to Inspired Leadership*. In neutral energy, you are calm, present, and aware without judgment. You just be.

Fear can keep you safe and push you into action. It's a great short-term motivator. But chronic fear causes stress and reduces your quality of life. Too much fear can block you from achieving your goals and your ability to reach the high-impact zone. Fear may push away what you most desire. Love, confidence, and trust enhance your quality of life and help attract what you most desire.

Over time, chronic fear can drain you and leave you exhausted. Love recharges you. You can think of fear and love as debits and credits from your personal energy bank account. Fear withdraws energy from your account (-); love deposits energy in your account (+). For these reasons, I consider fear negative energy and love positive energy. You need to be sure you have enough positive energy to achieve your goals.

When you are aware of your energy, you can shift it to inspire different thoughts, behaviors, and results for yourself and your team. Once you begin to use your fuel source with intention, you can empower your life. You make better decisions, build deeper connections, take better action, and hone skills in observation, listening, and inquiry. Your life gains more meaning. Any superpower must be handled with great respect. Empower positive fuel and give yourself what you need to keep it flowing. Here's how.

### **How to Empower Positive Fuel**

Strengthen your positive fuel "muscle" as you would any muscle—practice and work it. You can do this without working up a sweat. My favorite activities for empowering positive fuel include a daily practice of gratitude, affirmations, and meditation. I also practice switching negative fear-based thoughts to more productive thoughts.

These activities direct your brain to focus on the positive. When your brain finds something good, it releases dopamine, oxytocin, or serotonin. Neuroscience calls these the "feel-good chemicals" since they help us to feel good. The better you feel, the more positive your fuel. Let's look at each activity.

**Gratitude.** Developing a daily gratitude practice is simple. Every night before you fall asleep (or in the morning), think about three things that you are grateful for from that day. This makes your brain search the events of the day for something good. Be sure to anchor your gratitude to specifics from that day. Avoid rote recitation. For example, "I am grateful to have met so many inspiring people at today's

event,” or, “I am so grateful to my knees for feeling strong on today’s run.” If you’re having a rough day, you may want to challenge yourself to find twenty or more things you are grateful for.

**Affirmations.** To create a powerful affirmation, think about a peak experience. A peak experience is a time when you felt fantastic. It can be work-related or non-work related, but it must be significant to you. For example, perhaps you gave a compelling speech, completed a marathon, traveled alone to another country, secured a fantastic new job, hiked a tall mountain, presented research to a board, or received an award. Think about who you were in that moment and create three affirmations based on that experience. Use present tense. For example, “I am strong. I am committed. I am a great communicator.” This is who you are at your best. Try out different statements, use other sentence structures, and feel which ones inspire you. Declare your affirmations each day in front of the mirror. This may sound silly, but it works. For example, one of my peak experiences was galloping cross country with my horse Dixie. She cleared every jump with ease. As we raced to the finish line, I beamed with pride. She had been a tough horse to train, and I fell off her many times. My affirmations from that experience are “I am trusted. I am free. I can fly.” These statements still feel true and bring me great joy.

**Meditation.** Meditation is a great way to clear your mind. Sit in silence for a few minutes each day. This gives your mind an opportunity to relax and reset. If you are new to meditation, start with short sessions up to five minutes. Don’t force anything and don’t judge yourself. As thoughts arise, notice the thought and allow it to pass. I like to sit outside near our wetland. Sometimes I don’t meditate; I just sit and observe nature.

Walking meditation is another way to clear your mind. Walk slowly, take deliberate steps, and notice your breathing. Allow your breaths to be long and slow.

I do a form of meditation when I first get on a horse. As we walk, I match my breathing to its footfall. I count the horse’s steps as I breathe in and out. Depending on the horse, this may be eight counts of in-breath and eight counts of out-breath. This clears my mind and helps us both relax and find a rhythm. Often the horse’s steps get longer and slower.

**Switch your thoughts.** The “Thinking Path” exercise is a process of inquiry to help you intentionally switch from one thought to another. This is very useful for shifting from a negative thought to something more positive. The exercise includes four questions (source: Alexander Caillet, “The Thinking Path,” 2004):

- 1) What am I thinking?
- 2) How does that make me feel?
- 3) How does it make me behave or what does it make me do?
- 4) What is the result of that behavior/action?

If the result of the thought does not feel empowering, ask yourself, “How else can I think about this?” Then go through the process again to find a different result. Do this a few times to find a thought that helps you to move forward.

Now it's time to take action!

## Action

To reach the high-impact zone, you must take the right kind of action. Not all action is equal. Many people waste time doing unnecessary tasks, like scrolling through endless emails, constantly checking social media, and attending unproductive meetings. Be aware when you gravitate toward these familiar actions. This is a sign that you might be avoiding the unfamiliar out of fear. It's easy to take action that gets you nowhere. Being "busy" is not necessarily productive.

But sometimes taking any action is better than doing nothing. It may not be high impact, but the action can give you confidence. You don't have to have your fuel all perfect to move forward. You may feel scared, but if you take action, you begin to feel better. That action helps your fuel to shift, and you begin to take better action. Your next action could be a high-impact action. Give yourself grace in this process and do the best you can.

Taking high-impact action requires intention, focus, listening, and clear boundaries. Here's how to do it.

## How to take high-impact action

**High-impact action** is action that achieves results with the least amount of effort. High-impact actions include activities based on three main areas: **Relationships**, sharing **Expertise**, and seeing/creating **Opportunities** (REO).

For example, one conversation with the right person at the right time can give you the opportunity of a lifetime. Relationships are key. Your top priorities for action must include creating and deepening relationships, understanding and anticipating needs, delivering top-quality service, and being a trusted resource. You must also showcase your skills/expertise on a regular basis so others can see and experience your talents and gifts. This is true whether you're a solopreneur or small-business owner, leading a corporate team, or reinventing. This doesn't mean becoming a big braggart, it's all about sharing your expertise from a place of service; a true desire to help others.

I see three main areas where many of us struggle:

1. Creating offerings before understanding what the target market really wants, needs, and is willing to pay for. We assume we know what they want. We spend time designing programs and offerings, creating beautiful websites and outreach materials, but we haven't talked with one person in our target market.
2. Getting so consumed supporting one client that we do not make time to pipeline new prospects. If that one client pulls out, we're left scrambling.
3. Responding to a prospect or client request (including a supervisor) before having a full conversation about needs. This can lead to a massive missed opportunity or much time wasted redoing work.



I have personal experience in all three of those areas. The school of hard knocks is expensive. But I've also learned a few things.

For example, years ago I received a call for potential leadership coaching. The prospect had received two quotes from other coaches and wanted a third bid. We talked in-depth, and after a few minutes, it became obvious that she was dealing with a complex issue that might require more than leadership coaching. I asked if she would be willing to meet in person. She said yes and mentioned that none of the other coaches had requested more detail or a meeting. I ended up supporting her and her organization for several years. She received the full support needed to move forward.

Here are a few guiding questions to help you focus your action. Check in with your vision first. Then go take action.

1. What are the three most important things that must be done today to advance the vision/goal?
2. Is this the best use of my time or could someone else do this faster/better?
3. What relationship(s) must be nurtured? (team member, strategic partner, vendor, client, prospect, board member, etc.) What new relationship could I cultivate?
4. What am I setting up for the future? (For example, speaking events, new programs/offerings, a plan to bid on a contract, stronger prospect pipeline.) What needs to be done to prepare?
5. Who needs to know about me/my work? Set up meetings with key players inside and outside of your firm to raise awareness. Share your expertise and build credibility by writing articles, blog posts, and giving talks.
6. What opportunities are emerging? What opportunities can I create?
7. What baby step can I take right now to advance the vision/goal? Completing baby steps builds confidence and momentum.
8. What energy drains must be eliminated? Energy drains are anything that drains your energy. This may include open decisions, outstanding invoices, underperforming programs or departments, overdue healthcare appointments, or anything that is waiting for a response from you. This can include ridding yourself of toxic people and your own negative thoughts.
9. Who else can help? No top performer works alone. Reach out to your team and find trusted experts to support your goal. If you work by yourself, join a mastermind, form referral partnerships, get a coach, hire experts, or invest in a program to help you move forward.

Note: Sometimes the best action is to take no action. Take a break. Rest is critical to advance. Refuel.

Now let's see what high-impact leadership looks like with Lemon Squeezy.

## High-Impact Leadership with Lemon Squeezy

In session two of Reinvention in the Round, we simulated a scenario in which Lemon Squeezy and I would review requirements for a \$10 million request for proposal (RFP). The goal was to decide if he would lead the proposal development. We called this the “tarp proposal,” which was represented by a 16-foot-long gray tarp. Lemon Squeezy was loose in the arena, now an imaginary conference room. To review the RFP requirements, I unrolled the tarp. The crinkly fabric’s loud sounds and shifting shape scared Lemon Squeezy. He took off cantering around the ring, his eyes wide, his veins bulging. He raced around for a few minutes. I continued to review the requirements myself. But by the end of session two, he and I stood shoulder to shoulder and stared down at the edge of the tarp. The audience and I agreed that this meant he would think about leading it.

The next month during session three of Reinvention in the Round, we simulated a meeting to follow up with Lemon Squeezy. I wanted to know if we were moving forward with him as the proposal lead. We entered the “conference room.” He was free to go wherever he chose. He walked by my side as we weaved in and out around two red exercise balls, blue barrels, and orange cones. It was as if we were brainstorming strategies. Then I walked to the corner and pulled out the tarp proposal. I dragged it behind me and he followed closely. As I unrolled the proposal, he stood quietly by my side. I walked down the middle of the long tarp and he followed with hesitation. His hooves smacked against the vinyl in rhythm with my feet. The audience was awestruck. We agreed that Lemon Squeezy was comfortable with the RFP requirements and had said yes to leading the proposal. A photo of session 3 is at the end of this section.

What changed from session two to session three? I did not train him on the tarp between sessions.

Here’s what happened: we were in the high-impact zone. We had a good blend of a clear vision, positive fuel, and appropriate action. By empowering Lemon Squeezy to decide for himself if he was comfortable with the RFP requirements, he did not feel pressured. He trusted me to trust him. I was clear on what would be expected—a walk across the tarp—but never once did I force him to do that. He did it on his own. Lemon Squeezy felt safe, explored options, took risks, and grew into this leadership role in a very short time. The photos from this session showed that our footfall was synchronized as we walked together over the tarp. It’s amazing what can happen in the **high-impact zone**.

### Summary tips to lead yourself and others through change:

1. Be clear on the destination, the vision of your goal achieved.
2. Check your fuel source, your energy. Are you leading from a place of confidence and trust or fear? Fear drives others away and incites stress and volatility. Calm confidence generates trust and openness. Shift your energy as needed.
3. Address uncertainties. Be honest with yourself and your team. Identify potential risks. Listen to their fears. Address your own fears. Take a step back if needed.
4. Clarify roles and responsibilities. During change, roles and responsibilities may shift. This may result in promotions, lateral moves, and natural attrition. Be clear on expectations and

new procedures. Not everyone will embrace change, and some may choose to leave the organization.

5. Communicate regularly and celebrate small wins. Stay close to your team and encourage them to do the same with their managers and staff. Share updates and timelines. This builds trust and engagement and assures the team that progress is underway.

**Lemon Squeezy's Epic Leap: Overcoming Fear to Lead the "Tarp Proposal"**  
Notice the Synchronized Steps

