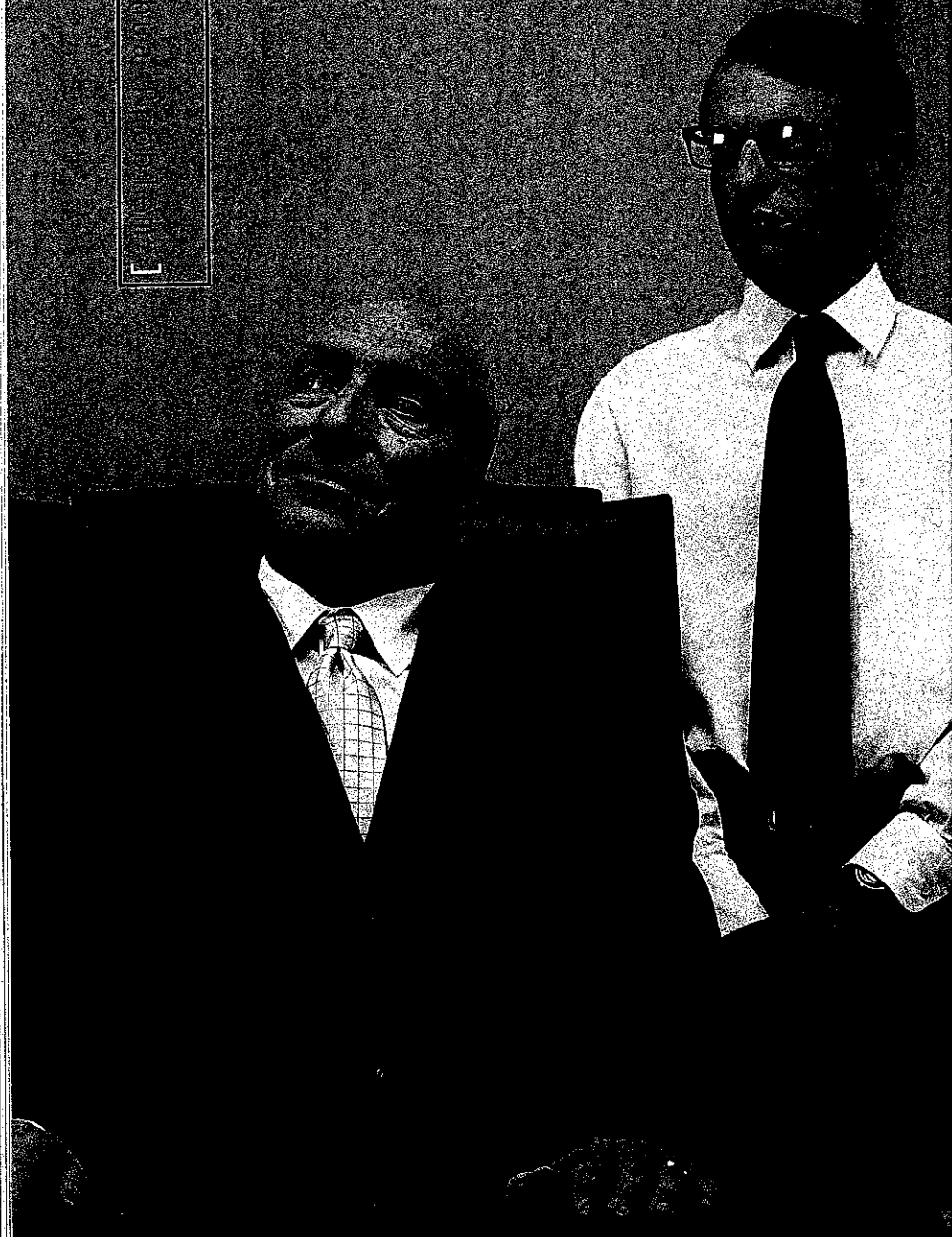




The Joshua Problem

MOSES TRAINED JOSHUA AS AN APPRENTICE. SADLY, JOSHUA NEVER TRAINED A JOSHUA. LEADERS MUST SEE THAT A CENTRAL PART OF THEIR JOB IS TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION TO LEAD BEHIND THEM. LEADERS MULTIPLY.

I don't know if you've read much Hebrew history, but I bet you know the story of Moses and Joshua. Four thousand years ago, Moses was the greatest Patriarch of the Jewish people. If you've never read about him—my guess is you've seen the movie. Cecil B. DeMille directed the classic film decades ago called *The Ten Commandments*, in which Charlton Heston played the lead role of Moses, the leader and deliverer of Israel. It was unforgettable.

In the story, Moses leads the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, through the wilderness, right up to the banks of the Jordan River. At this point, he stops. He doesn't finish the job of taking the Hebrew population into the "Promised Land." He is old and gray and ready to die. Fortunately, for several years Moses had equipped an apprentice named Joshua. Once Moses passed away, Joshua took the reins of leadership and led the people across the river into the land "flowing with milk and honey." He was ready for the job, and consequently, the nation of Israel didn't have to slow down one step as they crossed the Jordan and claimed the land God had promised them. Although it took years, one by one, they entered the cities and began to settle. Thankfully Moses had a "Joshua" to finish the job he was unable to complete.

The problem was—Joshua didn't have a Joshua. As far as we can tell from the reading of the Pentateuch and other contemporary writings, Joshua never duplicated the gift Moses had given him. He never took a young leader under his wing and prepared him to lead. Sadly, when Joshua died, Israel entered the worst period of her history—the period of the Judges—where they experienced chaos. Twice we read these words:

"And there was no king in Israel in those days and everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Why is it we see this dilemma—this Joshua Problem—repeated thousands of times each year in organizations around the world? I'm not sure if leaders are just lazy, or ignorant or shortsighted, but many of them last one generation, then leave their teams in shambles, wishing their leader was still around. As we ponder changing the culture we live in, our first consideration must be the development of next-generation leaders. Leaders are carriers of the culture. I believe we must be biased toward leader development. Unless we are, we'll take the easy route and focus on our tasks at hand. The "urgent" will replace the "ultimate." Dwight Moody once said, "It's better to train a hundred men than to do the work of a hundred men. But it is harder."

LEADERSHIP CULT OR CULTURE?

In our turbulent world today, organizations tend to focus on finding and hiring one great leader to take them to the next level. Everyone seems to be looking for a "Moses" to lead them to their Promised Land. Far too often, if they find that special leader, he or she becomes irreplaceable. Unfortunately, when a leader is hired from the outside rather than being developed from within the company, the organization inevitably will face another talent crisis when the leader departs. "Twenty years ago," says Jeff Sonnenfeld, associate dean at Yale School of Organization and Management, "only 7 percent of U.S. firms hired CEOs from the outside. Now it's 50 percent." We tend to just plug holes rather than meet the real need of building leaders. It's time we get out of crisis management and prevent this problem. We must build a fence at the top of the cliff rather than a hospital at the bottom.

When key leaders fail to develop other leaders, and instead maintain control themselves—the organization tends to look more like a *leadership cult* than a *leadership culture*. Everyone looks to the leader for answers: for vision, for encouragement, and for resources. It's all about the leader. They become a "Moses" for the team. What folks fail to realize is that Moses' greatest achievement might have been the years he invested mentoring young Joshua. Somehow he knew what Dr. Carl Henry has summarized so well: "Success without a successor is a failure."

A LEADERSHIP CULTURE:

At "Growing Leaders" we define a leadership culture as an environment of shared values, behaviors and language that contagiously affects team members to think and act like authentic leaders.

A study by Stanford researchers Jim Collins and Jerry Porras found that organizations that maintained stellar performance and endured through the 20th century had one essential ingredient: a culture of succession management. In short, they developed a leadership culture rather than a personal cult of one leader.

Collins and Porras went on to write their best-selling book, *Built To Last*, reporting that visionary companies like Procter and Gamble, General Electric, Wal-Mart, 3M, and Sony preserve their culture by developing, promoting, and carefully selecting home-grown talent. The organization is a training ground for leaders, not just a retailer that sells merchandise. They don't just do programs or distribute products—they develop people.¹

Tesco, one of the world's most admired grocery store chains, achieved leadership in the U.K. market under CEO Ian McLaurin. When he retired, some predicted that Tesco would go into decline. Instead, under the leadership of Terry Leahy, it has gone from strong to stronger. They are now successful in Eastern Europe and Asia.² Why? Terry and others like him had been groomed at Tesco, so they would be ready at any moment to lead. Leaders are at every level.²

In 2005, the Disney Empire said goodbye to Michael Eisner. Many thought Disney would have to look outside for a new leader who could handle such an amazing company. Despite great candidates like Meg Whitman from eBay, Terry Semel from Yahoo, and Paul Pressler from The Gap, Disney's board realized they had great leaders right under their nose. Disney concluded that leaders and organizations (just like all species) reproduce after their own kind. So, they hired Disney veteran Robert Iger. He breathed the culture at Disney, after being groomed for nine years.³ It worked like a farm club for Major League baseball players. Each management experience was designed to prepare team members for the next level—from Single A, to Double A, to Triple A, to the Majors. Bob Iger was ready. He was simply a "Joshua" ready to take the lead at Disney.

BUILDING THE FARM CLUB

So what does a "Moses" do to prepare a "Joshua?" This entire *Habitudes* book is about changing a culture, and to do that, you'll have to multiply leaders who will be the carriers of the culture. However, for now I want to focus on some practical "gifts" a leader can give to a potential leader in the organization. In addition to forming work teams, try meeting in groups of four to ten people for leadership mentoring. In these clusters, give away these gifts:

1. ACCOUNTABILITY – Gain permission to talk about their growth and help them stay committed.
2. ASSESSMENT – Evaluate their present state, providing perspective on strengths and weaknesses.
3. ACCEPTANCE – Empower them to be themselves and not try to imitate the strengths of others.
4. ADVICE – Furnish words of direction, wise counsel and options as they make decisions.

5. **AFFIRMATION** – Offer encouragement and support for them as they stretch in new areas.
6. **ADMONISHMENT** – Lend words of caution, warning them about pitfalls and correcting mistakes.
7. **ASSETS** – Provide tangible resources you have such as books, CDs, articles, personal contacts.
8. **APPLICATION** – Give them first-hand experiences and opportunities to apply what they learn.

Years ago, the late Dr. Nathaniel Bowditch became a ship captain by the age of twenty. That's quite a feat in itself. Fortunately, Nathaniel didn't consider this his crowning achievement. He was determined to fill the oceans with competent sailors. At twenty-one years old, he sailed on an East Indian voyage. It was on that trip he took the pains to instruct every crew member on board in the art of navigation; he mentored them in how to lead a ship. Afterward, every sailor on that voyage became a captain of his own ship. What's more, many of those captains went on to train others.⁴ There was no "Joshua Problem" here. Nathaniel built his career on this belief: "I start with the premise that the chief goal of the leader is not to build followers, but to build more leaders."

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. Why do you believe so many organizations simply look outside for new leadership when a current leader resigns? Why do they fail to develop new leaders from within?

2. When current leaders develop a new set of potential leaders, they prepare them this way:
 - a. Endorsement and authority
(The current leader lends the new leader their influence)
 - b. Experience and opportunities
(The current leader exposes them to real challenges)
 - c. Equipping and instruction
(The current leader mentors them on solving problems)

How do you think this preparation helps the new "Joshua" get over his/her anxiety?

Where have you seen current leaders prepare new leaders?

Why does mentoring leaders become difficult after two generations?

SELF ASSESSMENT

Think of the last potential leader you mentored. Evaluate how you did with these four practices:

CONVERSE

Did you discuss any principles you wanted them to learn?

< NEVER 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 OFTEN >

SHADOW

Did you allow them to follow you around and watch you practice leadership?

< NEVER 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 OFTEN >

APPRENTICE

Did you allow them to take on responsibilities as an apprentice under your care?

< NEVER 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 OFTEN >

DEBRIEF

Did you take time to follow up and evaluate their progress?

< NEVER 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 OFTEN >

EXERCISE

Reflect this week, and choose one potential "Joshua" that you could invest in. Invite them to meet with you on a regular basis and experience the four practices above. Talk about how well you do these four practices. Discover what other "gifts" they need in order to become a confident leader.

IMAGE TWO



IMAGE TWO
[Critical Mass]



IMAGE TWO
[Critical Mass]



Critical Mass

INSIDE THE ATOMIC BOMB YOU WILL FIND U_{235} AND UNSTABLE TNT. WHEN IGNITED, IT IMPLODES BEFORE IT EXPLODES. BEFORE A GROUP EXPLODES, A LEADER MUST IMplode INTERNALLY WITH A FEW IN THE GROUP. START SMALL. FOCUS ON KEY PEOPLE.

Critical mass is a term people use quite often in the corporate world today. What most individuals don't realize is that it didn't start as a business term at all. It is a term that emerged with the atomic age. When the first nuclear bomb was constructed and tested, an interesting fact came to light. The team of nuclear physicists began explaining to the public how the bomb worked. They reported that Uranium 235 was inside the shell. When mixed with TNT, it became unstable and imploded within the shell before it exploded outside the shell in that huge mushroom cloud we've all seen in photos. It's quite impressive.

What the nuclear physicists didn't recognize was that they were providing a vivid analogy for how ideas catch on among groups of people. When a leader wants to transform a large organization—they often make the mistake of thinking they can stand up in front the entire bunch of them, announce the change, and hope that everyone will buy in...just because they declared it. Hmmm. It's been my experience that lasting change usually doesn't work this way. It's rare for leaders to broadcast changes and get buy-in instantly. Instead, smart leaders use the idea of "critical mass." They realize it will take time to make lasting changes, so they select a small group of key, influential people, and over several weeks or months, they interact with the group about the new idea. They allow those influential people to weigh in on the idea and take ownership of it. Those leaders understand that people support what they help create.

Finally, those key influential people go out and either systematically or randomly create a buzz. They talk about it in their spheres of influence, with their own teams. Perhaps, they begin their own small groups to allow their people to weigh in and interact. Over time, the idea is caught. But it didn't happen overnight. It was due to the wise use of critical mass. Implosion before explosion.

Think about movements in history. In most cases, the idea of critical mass was implemented. John Wesley revolutionized England in the 1700s by using critical mass. He rode his horse around Great Britain preaching to the masses about spiritual transformation. Some of the people began responding to his message. He wisely placed them in small groups called "class meetings." They met on a regular basis, discussing the ideas and truths that Wesley had proclaimed to them. They held each other accountable to practice them. Over time, England was changed. In fact, one history book reported that Wesley almost single-handedly saved England from a bloody revolution (the kind that France and America endured during that same period) through his work. He changed the way people lived; how they worked; how they felt about slavery; and how they voted. In some cities, four out of five pubs closed down after he preached there.

Now here's the surprising part about the transformation: Historians tell us that only 1½ to 2 percent of the British population was even on board with Wesley's "Methodist" movement. Do you realize how encouraging this statistic is? One man instigated big change through a small group of people who wholeheartedly bought into an idea.

During the 1800s, the abolitionist movement in America began with a relatively small group of people. Keep in mind, slavery was commonly practiced among developed nations. It was normal for English, French and Americans—even "good" Americans—to own slaves. But a handful of people began to rethink the ideas of American freedom. They had heard about William Wilberforce in England, who had stirred up the abolition movement in the U.K. They decided they would meet as a group and debate the issue. Eventually, they got other groups to meet. Finally, it became a movement that culminated in the Civil War—and the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

During the 1900s, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spearheaded the Civil Rights movement. During a ten-year period between 1955 and 1965, African Americans, Hispanics and Whites marched and demonstrated peacefully in the U.S. Most of it happened in the Southeast. In 1963, Dr. King made a speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial; it was the most famous speech of that century: "I Have a Dream." It was televised nationwide. Many citizens really understood what those folks were about for the first time. Within one year, new Civil Rights legislation was passed in America. Once again, the astounding truth about this movement is—only 1 percent of the U.S. population was actually on board with the movement. But that's all it took. A small group can make a big difference if that group is fully committed. This is the paradox of an epidemic: In order to create one contagious movement, you often have to create many small movements first. Implosion before explosion.

WHO DO YOU LOOK FOR?

The logical question at this point is: who are the key people you must enlist in order to make the implosion become an explosion? Critical mass represents a percentage of the whole, and it should include key people of influence. But is there something more? In his fascinating book *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell thinks so. He suggests three types of people to implode with that will generate an explosion:

MAVENS

Mavens are data banks. They are people who know a bit about everything. Others seek them out because they store so much information inside of them. They provide the message.

CONNECTORS

Connectors are social glue. They spread the message because they keep such a large network of relationships. They are connected to all kinds of people, who each have their own circles.

SALESPeOPLE

Salespeople are persuaders. They don't know as much information as mavens, but what they do know, they sell well. They're convincing and move others to a decision.¹

When selecting your influential people, it is optimal to include some from each of these types. Obviously, some ideas, trends or movements can happen unintentionally. But they almost always have these same types of influential people. For example, Hush Puppy shoes have been around for decades. They were a dying brand of suede shoes by the 1980s. In fact, Owen Baxter and Geoffrey Lewis had decided to phase out the antiquated shoe due to lack of sales. But in 1994, Baxter and Lewis ran into a stylist from New York who told them the classic shoe had suddenly become hip in the clubs and bars of downtown Manhattan. It made no sense to anyone. By the fall of 1995, designers and key retailers were asking to feature the shoe in their spring collection. Sales went from 30,000 pairs of shoes a year to 430,000 pairs—all within 26 months.

So how did it happen? It was estimated that the original group of people who started the fad was somewhere between 10 and 25 people. But they were the right people—fashion influencers in N.Y. They caused a \$30 pair of shoes to go from a handful of Manhattan hipsters and designers to every mall in America within two years.² That's an amazing jump. Hmm. What might happen if we could corral this idea and become deliberate about it, like John Wesley or Martin Luther King Jr.? The keys are simple: Start small. Select people. Stay focused. Be patient. Remain committed. Anthropologist Margaret Mead once wrote: "Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. When a leader wants to impact an entire population, he or she tends to want to do it quickly and on a large scale. Where do we get this predisposition?

2. Why is it difficult to practice this *Habitude*, Critical Mass?

3. Where have you seen a leader or organization practice it well?

4. Why does Critical Mass tend to work when "Get Big Quick" methods tend to fail?

SELF ASSESSMENT

Evaluate yourself. When you want a big change to take place among a large group of people, are you prone to try to change them all at once, or work within a small group of key people? Assess yourself on the scale below:

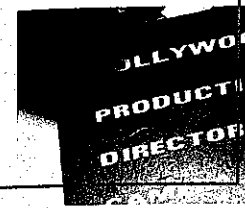
I WANT IT NOW						I AM WILLING TO BE PATIENT					
<	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>
I WORK WITH THE ENTIRE GROUP						I WORK WITH A SMALL GROUP					
<	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>
I PLAN A BIG EVENT						I FOCUS ON THE PROCESS					
<	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>

EXERCISE

Imagine you're in charge of leading a major change in your organization. Take a pad of paper and list the key mavens, connectors and salespeople you'd want to be part of your critical mass. Then, with your pad of paper, plan the "process" you would experience with this small team of people in order to implode before you explode on the entire organization. What steps would you take? How much time would you invest? How would you utilize the small core to impact the entire group?

IMAGE THREE

IMAGE THREE [The Hollywood Effect]



The Hollywood Effect

WHEN LEADING CHANGE, IT TAKES YEARS TO TRANSFORM AN ORGANIZATION BY SIMPLY CHANGING THE VALUES. IT TAKES A FRACTION OF THAT TIME BY MOBILIZING THE LEADERS TO ACT OUT THE VALUES UNTIL THEY BECOME REALITY.

In 2006, the movie *Miami Vice* was released around the world. It's the story of two rugged cops who use unconventional methods to get their job done. The movie was actually a re-make of a 1980s television show, which starred Don Johnson as Sonny Crockett. Don Johnson was "the man" back in his day. He was cool. He was tough. He shot straight, which may explain his behavior one day off camera. Don Johnson had just returned to his hotel after shopping a bit. He was enjoying some downtime away from his hard work as an actor. As he entered the room, he saw a thief rifling through his fiancée's purse. The man had just robbed the place and was determined to get away with his loot. Sadly for him, he had no clue whose room he was in. When Don Johnson saw the thief, he didn't have to think twice. His well-rehearsed Sonny Crockett role clicked right in. He took off after the crook, wrestled him to the ground and held the thief until police came to arrest him. One bystander commented, "It was an amazing situation, just like the show!"¹

You can only imagine what the thief felt when he looked up at his captor—only to see the face of Mr. Miami Vice himself. When newspapers reported the story the next day, one consistent question surfaced over and over: "Does life imitate TV, or does TV imitate life?" The fact is, both are true. Don Johnson had so embraced the character he played over and over, it was intuitive for him to pursue the criminal that day. It was second nature. He probably did it without thinking. He had "acted" his way into a character, full-time.

This little incident illustrates an important truth for us as leaders. It's the power of acting from the inside out. A Russian theater director named Konstantin Stanislavski captured the idea more than a hundred years ago. Konstantin came up with a system for training actors, which included two major ideas: "Active Memory" and "The Method of Physical Action."

The first theory helped actors to step into a character by utilizing their memories of similar past emotions. They were required to think of a moment in their own lives when they had felt a desired emotion and then replay that emotion in their role to achieve a more genuine performance. In other words, become the character from the inside out.

The second theory, called The Method of Physical Action (MPA), is simple to explain, but its implications are profound. It is based on the idea that our emotional life is a two-way street. The only thing an actor has complete control of is his body, nothing more. Therefore, an actor must use his body as the primary tool of creation. Acting on an emotion gives it life. Actors must figure out what an emotion would cause them to do if they experienced it—and do it. The action brings out the heart and soul of that emotion.² To put it in common language, you are more likely to act your way into a feeling than to feel your way into an action. There is power in raw action.

So, what's our point of application? When we set out to transform a culture, we must remember that all cultures act on values they embrace. Kenya and Uganda, for instance, are countries whose citizens act a certain way because they've been raised with certain cultural values from childhood. No mother in Kenya has to tell her children to "act like a Kenyan." Why? They are living in a Kenyan culture. They will pick it up by watching the actions of those around them. In the same way, all organizations act a certain way because certain values have been embraced over time, either by default or design. They can be healthy or unhealthy, based on the conduct of those who have influence. Soon, the actions permeate the entire staff.

RESEARCH SAYS...

Research done by Dean Meyer and Associates helps us understand this principle. Dean and his team discovered that when a company determines to change their culture, they often make a list of the new values, then verbally communicate them to their teams. This isn't bad, but their research shows that by approaching change this way, it will take between 10 and 15 years for the organization to actually embrace those values. However, if the top leaders create a set of new values, then attach actions to each of those values and incorporate them into the leadership behavior, it requires just three years to bring about a culture change. Once again, it's the power of action. I call it The Hollywood Effect. Although it feels like you're "pretending" in the beginning, action translates faster than great speeches. Action produces emotion. And emotions multiply. They change organizations from the inside out.

Psychologist George W. Crane became known for a case he handled with a female client. The woman came to see Dr. Crane and told him she hated her husband and wanted to divorce him. She told the psychologist how selfish her husband was and said she wanted to hurt him as badly as possible. "Well, in that case," replied Dr. Crane, "I'd advise you to start showering him with compliments. Make him his favorite meals and serve him in any way you can. Do all you can to communicate you love him, and when you've become indispensable to him, then present the divorce papers to him. This is the best way to hurt him deeply."

Dr. Crane sent her off and asked her to call in a few months to let him know when she was ready to begin the divorce proceedings. Interestingly, she never called. When Dr. Crane finally spoke to her and asked if she was ready for the divorce—she emphatically resisted. "Divorce him?" she responded. "I changed my mind. When I began acting like I loved him, I discovered I really did."

Aristotle wrote, "Men acquire a certain quality by constantly acting a certain way. You become just by performing just actions. You become temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions."

Surely there's a principle here for leaders who want to transform their organizational culture. We can't just talk about it, or hold conferences, or even post some new set of values on the wall. We must act the way we want our culture to be—even if it feels like we're pretending at first. We must become the change we desire. We can't afford to wait until we "feel" like it. Remember, we're more likely to act our way into a feeling than to feel our way into an action. Along the way, it'll become second nature, just like Don Johnson stopping a thief on the street. It's The Hollywood Effect.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

This kernel of truth usually rings true with every leader. However, most organizations, schools, teams and non-profits don't practice it.

1. Why do we usually try to change things by simply changing the values we have in print?

2. Why is acting out the values a difficult way to transform a culture?

3. Why is action so transformative? Why is acting on a belief so powerful?

4. Where have you seen this *Habitude* practiced in your past?

SELF ASSESSMENT

Take a moment and list your organization's top six values below:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

Now—honestly evaluate how well you model those values for your team. Do you act on them?

EXERCISE

Choose one of the values in your list above that you feel you don't model well. Make it a project to begin acting on that value, to see how it affects the people around you. Try the following steps:

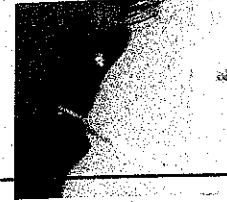
1. Identify a person who does model the value well and interview them. Learn from them.
2. Brainstorm specific ways you can practice the value at work, school or home.
3. Reflect on the best way you can "model" the value for each of your team members.
4. Read a book about that particular value.

After a week, evaluate whether anyone noticed a change in you. Did your actions positively affect anyone?

2
3
4
IMAGE FOUR
[Family Virus]



IMAGE FOUR
[Family Virus]



Family Virus

CULTURES WORK LIKE A VIRUS IN A FAMILY. VIRUSES ARE CONTAGIOUS BECAUSE FAMILY MEMBERS ARE SIMILAR AND LIVE CLOSE TOGETHER. LEADERS HIRE THE CULTURE THEY WANT AND FOSTER CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS AND TEAMWORK.

A horrifying news report was broadcast in May 2006. It all took place in Jakarta, Indonesia. The mother of a large family was unknowingly exposed to a bird flu virus as she sold vegetables at the market. The virus was carried by chickens in the station next to hers. When she returned home at the end of the day, the woman greeted each of her family members. Everything seemed quite normal. By the next morning, however, each of her family members began to suffer from symptoms of the bird flu. Within weeks, six of seven family members were dead.

Doctors and scientists who studied this bird flu epidemic noticed something quite intriguing. None of the other family members were exposed to the chickens in the marketplace, so experts concluded that the virus spread through this woman. Although the deaths in that family cluster were the largest ever reported, the outbreak could have been larger. Fortunately, the virus did not spread outside the family, even though the woman was in contact with other people. In other words, not everyone she touched caught the virus. So there had to be a factor other than just proximity that caused the deaths. Scientists soon concluded what that factor was. In all the family clusters that were infected, only direct blood relatives—not spouses—caught the bird flu. This means the virus was contagious for two major reasons: proximity and similar genetics.¹

This story can be told a hundred times over across the globe. Viruses are caught due to the same two reasons—people are *close* and they are *comparable*. Proximity and similarity. This illustrates another *Habitude* which teaches us how leaders spark movements and epidemics. I call it “family virus.” A culture is nurtured quickly when people work close to each other and when they share a common makeup. In fact, we can take it a step further. All cultures give birth to people already like the culture, and the people within a culture become more like each other by working together in teams. It is social integration.

A virus can be contagious and infectious, and it can actually cause an epidemic if placed within the right context. People of the same blood who live in proximity to one another are the most susceptible. Take the act of yawning, for example. Picture someone yawning as they sit among a group of people. Have you ever noticed that when one person yawns, it often prompts others nearby to begin yawning too? Yawning is a surprisingly powerful act. It is contagious. And it is especially contagious within people who share a similar makeup. It's a classic example of "family virus."

On a more tragic note, sociologist David Philips from UCSD has studied what he calls a "suicide virus." David has studied famous suicide stories reported on the front page of newspapers during a twenty-year stretch between the 1940s and the 1960s. Then, he matched them up with suicide statistics from the same period of time. He found that immediately after stories of suicides made the news, there was a jump in the number of suicides in those areas.² For some reason, suicides are infectious. And this kind of contagion isn't rational like a persuasive argument. It's the power of suggestion.

"When I'm waiting at a traffic light and the light is red, sometimes I wonder whether I should cross and jaywalk," Philips writes. "Then, somebody else does it and so I do it too. It's a kind of imitation. I'm getting permission to act from someone else who is engaging in a deviant act." Somehow we feel better when we're not acting alone. For some reason, we trust someone else's judgment more than our own, whether it is jaywalking or driving fast on the freeway. Behavior can be viral.

So, how can we put this *Habitude* to work as leaders? Let me suggest the following ideas: First, ideas, products, messages and behaviors spread like viruses through repeated exposure. Leaders can harness this by summarizing a contagious message and exposing their team to it repeatedly.

Viruses grow exponentially, doubling over and over as they spread. Once something gets started, repetition can make it multiply until it gains momentum and becomes more attractive than it deserves to be. I'm sure you've heard of books or movies or trends that have become wildly popular, and you've thought to yourself: How could such a simple thing spread so fast? It's easy. Family virus. Leaders must consistently talk about the idea they want to spread and keep their people close together until it catches on. A contagious idea or vision has three requirements:

1. YOU MUST SEE IT CLEARLY
2. YOU MUST SHARE IT CREATIVELY
3. YOU MUST SAY IT CONSISTENTLY

Second, viruses expand among people who share the same values. So, leaders must hire the culture they want. New employees should match the desired culture and have chemistry with their team members. Chick-fil-A restaurants are a great example of these concepts.

Recently, I spoke with Tim Tassopoulos, an executive with Chick-fil-A in Atlanta. When I asked him how they've nurtured such a contagious leadership culture, he said simply, "At this point, we hire the culture." They not only groom leaders from within who've already caught the "virus," they only hire or promote people who incarnate the culture. They often invest several months in interviews before they hire a store operator. They treat the hiring process more like a "marriage" than a "date." Think about it: You might say yes quickly to someone who asks you out on a date, but you'd take a lot more time getting to know them if they proposed marriage! Consequently, their employee retention rate is over 93 percent. And the people who join the team already think and act like the "culture."

David Salyers, vice president of marketing at Chick-fil-A, once told me how he got the promotion to his position. Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-A, met with him in his office. Truett and the rest of the executive team affirmed David's potential to serve as vice president. Nevertheless, they added, there was just one change they required of him. David responded he was willing to do whatever was necessary for the promotion. He was shocked, however, at their request. They told him, "You're spending too much time at the office." He couldn't believe his ears, but he had heard them correctly. The executives felt David was spending too much time at the office and not modeling balance in his life. They reminded him how contagious leaders are and how they couldn't afford making him a leader if he passed on unhealthy work habits. Many of his staff had families, and the executives didn't want a leader who infected them with the idea that they should work late into the night. Wow. It isn't often you see a company that understands how infectious a culture can be and is willing to set standards to keep the environment healthy.

HOW DOES A VIRUS GET STARTED?

Once you understand that a "family virus" is a product of your environment and the people who pass it on, you can capitalize on your culture and make your ideas extremely infectious. To summarize, here are some action steps to take:

1. FORM TEAMS TO KEEP YOUR PEOPLE WORKING CLOSE TOGETHER.
2. INFECT THOSE TEAMS WITH THE BIG IDEAS YOU BELIEVE WILL SHAPE THE CULTURE.
3. DEVELOP AND PROMOTE PEOPLE WHO "CATCH" THE VIRUS AND ARE CONTAGIOUS WITH THE IDEAS.
4. RESOLVE TO ONLY HIRE PEOPLE WHO ALREADY INCARNATE THE CULTURE.
5. THE ESSENTIALS YOU WANT IN TEAM MEMBERS ARE: CHARACTER, COMPETENCE AND CHEMISTRY.

Do these things well, and who knows what might happen? You might even start an epidemic.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Let's talk about the power of "family virus."

1. Where have you seen this *Habitude* at work? Have you seen a team or organization become contagious with good attitudes or behaviors? How about bad ones?

2. Why do you think individuals who work close together in teams begin acting similarly?

3. How does this *Habitude* illustrate the power of one person? List ways one person can influence a team negatively or positively.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Are you on a team right now? Whether you're leading it or not, evaluate how contagious your environment is, based on the truths of "family virus."

1. DO WE SHARE SIMILAR VALUES AND DESIRES?

< NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES >

2. DO WE WORK CLOSE TOGETHER IN TEAMS?

< NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES >

3. DO WE EMBRACE AN INFECTIOUS IDEA AND TRY TO PASS IT ON?

< NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES >

4. DO WE ONLY ADD MEMBERS WHO INCARNATE THE CULTURE?

< NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES >

EXERCISE

Try this exercise: Step back and look at your team as a whole. If you're not on a team right now, imagine you're leading a team and can choose whomever you want to join that team. What's your objective? What values should be practiced? What kind of culture do you want on that team? Write these answers down. Now, consider the three ingredients of character, competence and chemistry. Who would you add to the team, and why? Discuss it with a community of friends.