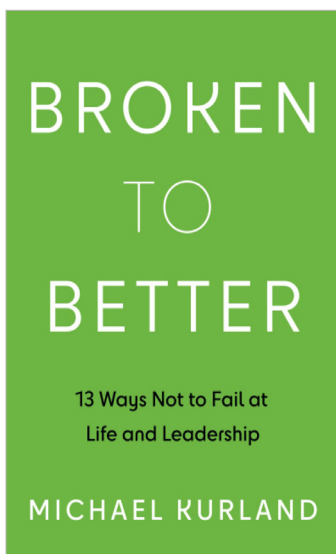


# EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## Broken to Better

### THE SUMMARY

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#### INTRODUCTION

I'm confident that, like me, you're looking for something better for yourself and your business. Being a business owner is not for the faint of heart. At a minimum, it takes a person with a firm resolve, the ability to persevere and pivot during challenging times, the humility to admit mistakes, and empathy for the people around them. Self-reflection should come long before setting pen to paper for a business plan. Understanding who you are is critical to being a leader who seeks to align purpose with profit.

Putting time and effort into your company's culture is an investment that will reap rewards for years. Creating a work environment that is welcoming, nurturing, and empowering will keep your team engaged and ready to service your clients with excellence.

This book consists of 13 principles that will inform and inspire you to Be Better in all aspects of your life—to be a better CEO, manager, employee, friend, coworker, or whatever shoes you fill. Some of the tips and best practices may seem like common sense. You may be tempted to gloss over them, but I recommend that you take it all in, as there's always something new to learn.

If you walk away from reading this book with only one lesson, it is to lead with emotional intelligence. Making money is a good thing, and I hope you will see how my team and I have been able to create and sustain a profitable company.

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However, I believe our success was achieved because of our Be Better commitment and our company culture.

If each of us committed to the Be Better mantra and approached each day with gratitude, imagine the world we'd be able to create for future generations! I challenge you to figure out your own way to Be Better so that your imprint on this planet will endure.

I don't know what challenges, personal or professional, will be in front of you as you read this book. But if, as CEOs and business leaders, we continue to be humble, to lead with integrity, and to Be Better, there's nothing we can't accomplish.

## **1. BE CONNECTED: Starting with Who You Know**

To launch and grow a business, you're going to need help—*a lot* of help. If you think you can do it on your own, you will quickly learn that is a recipe for feeling frustrated and overwhelmed. You will burn out and the motivation to strike out on your own will disappear faster than your bank account balance. Let's face it: we don't know everything and relying on experts from time to time may prevent a lot of sleepless nights.

The following are some practical tips on how to Be Connected and expand your network.

**SHOW UP WELL.** Despite what you may have heard, first impressions are lasting. People rarely forget them. Don't be afraid to "peacock it."

**TALK TO EVERYONE.** Networking is a two-way street. It's about establishing relationships and staying connected to the people you meet. Be authentic.

**BE READY TO LISTEN.** It's important to be able to discern when you should talk and when you should listen. Acts of kindness will go a long way.

**FOLLOW UP.** Following up is the primary reason why business deals fall through. Overdelivering on what you promise is always better.

**TREAT PEOPLE WELL.** Never burn bridges and treat everyone with kindness, respect, and generosity. Treat everyone with the utmost respect.

**KNOW WHAT YOU WANT.** Identify what you want from the connections you make, so the people you reach out to will know how to help you.

**EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS.** Along with industry trade shows or conferences, add smaller events, groups, and connections in your city to your list.

**DIVE INTO DIGITAL CONNECTIONS.** Utilizing social media platforms and virtual connections are vital to establishing and expanding your network.

**SPEAK UP.** Once your profile is finalized and ready for prime time, make your voice known by posting meaningful content. Posting regularly is win-win.

**BECOME A THOUGHT LEADER.** Post regular updates and periodically author articles on LinkedIn. Establish a viable network offline and digitally.

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**BE GRATEFUL.** One of the most important traits of any purpose-driven leader is gratitude toward everyone, including your network contacts.

**GUARD YOUR REPUTATION.** If your goal is to be more than a revenue generator, you must do more than turn a profit. Character speaks loudly.

**BE PREPARED TO FAIL.** Life happens, and it happens to all of us. Admit when things don't turn out the way you'd like. Step out of your comfort zone.

## **2. BE TEACHABLE: Asking for Help**

There are so many tasks you have to do when you start a business, and most of the time, you don't know what you don't know. Being teachable will help you avoid many common mistakes made by new business owners.

I'd recommend having two to three mentors. More than that and you will be overwhelmed with all of the ideas and advice you'll receive. You know what happens when there are too many cooks in the kitchen.

Here are some practical tips on how to Be Teachable and find the best mentor.

**FIND YOUR PERFECT MATCH.** Who is your perfect match mentor? Most likely, it's someone you already know. They must have experience in doing what you want to do. Your mentor should be someone who is seasoned in the business you're seeking to launch or knowledgeable about the facet of your business that is not your strength.

**BE OPEN-MINDED.** Don't be afraid to have frank conversations with your mentor about the expectations of your relationship. This is time well spent and may prevent potential frustration and confusion about each other's roles. Remember, you're not seeking opinions. You're seeking solid direction. If you're constantly pushing back, you're wasting their time and you may annoy them to the point where they won't want to help you. Be teachable.

**GATHER AND PRIORITIZE YOUR QUESTIONS.** In today's evolving climate, it can be challenging for potential mentors to carve out time to coach and guide others. Having a business plan with clear goals will help keep your time together focused on the goals you want to achieve. It's fun to brainstorm new ideas for your business, however in the early days you need to be heads-down in the work that will get your business off and running. You will have many questions that will pop up every day, but not all of them will need an immediate answer.

**FIND MENTORS WITH COMPLEMENTARY SKILLS.** A good mentor is an expert in their particular skillset, but no one is knowledgeable in everything. Your mentor may connect you to additional experts when your business hits certain junctures or milestones. You can have more than one mentor, but be careful not to spread yourself too thin or your head will spin about which way to go.

**UNDERSTAND YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES.** In addition to respecting your mentor's time, there are other responsibilities: Be on time. Follow through. Prepare an agenda, set goals, and determine action items you want to discuss, develop thoughtful questions.

**EXPECT CHANGE.** How often should you meet with your mentor? Your time commitment will evolve over the course of your business. In the beginning, it may be weekly. The first couple of years it may be quarterly. Once the company is on a solid trajectory of growth, perhaps annually.

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It may be hard to believe, but there will come a time when you will be ready to mentor others. No successful entrepreneur succeeds alone.

### 3. BE FEARLESS: Launching Your Business with Boldness

Fear of failure can be a great motivator. When you decide to start a new business or expand an existing one, it can be scary—especially if you have never done it. You have to check your fear at the door; you have to be fearless. Being informed so you can make good decisions is just as important as not letting your fear get in the way.

Here are some practical tips on how to Be Fearless when launching your business.

**KNOW WHO YOU ARE.** Knowing who you are as an entrepreneur will help you navigate these scenarios. It's not enough to have a good idea. It's not enough to have the capital to start a business. You have to know what makes you tick. You have to do some self-reflection and know your strengths and weaknesses.

**DETERMINE YOUR "WHY".** You also have to understand why someone should buy from you. If you don't have an answer, it's time to go back to the drawing board because this lack of self-awareness and confidence may come back to haunt you. Without a firm sense of what you can offer, you won't be able to differentiate yourself from your competition.

**DEVELOP A BUSINESS PLAN.** Many entrepreneurs think they don't need a business plan. It's intimidating, so it's understandable why many new business owners want to avoid writing one. However, at some point you're going to have to put something on paper, even if it's scratching out a budget on a cocktail napkin (keep that napkin!). You must have a vision for your business. It doesn't have to be a vision of where you're going to be in 10 years, but you have to at least know where you want to be when you open your doors.

**DO YOUR RESEARCH.** You can open your company wherever you want. However, I urge you to be smart about it. Do your research on business requirements such as state taxes or employment law.

**BE HAPPY.** Finally, consider where you want to be when you're *not* working. You're not going to be in the office 24/7, even though it might feel that way for the first couple of years. You will go home each night, and you will want to go to a place that makes you happy. "Be happy" is my response when I'm asked what the meaning of life is. Doing things you don't love when life is so short just doesn't make sense to me.

### 4. BE PEOPLE-CENTRIC: Fostering Inclusivity

At first, as a new entrepreneur, you will hire new people who will simply help you get the work done. However, eventually the primary tasks of each position will need to be identified so that you attract and retain the best talent. This might include thinking about what the job looks like on a daily basis. With this defined, you can start looking for those specific skills and desired character traits.

Here are some practical tips to Be Inclusive to build a diverse team.

**ANALYZE HOW YOU'RE SPENDING YOUR TIME.** Understanding which of your tasks need to be delegated is the initial step in figuring out who you should hire first. Is what you are doing the best use of your time?

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**IDENTIFY YOUR COMPANY'S GOALS.** Why does your organization exist? Why does it do what it does? How will you accomplish your "why"? What values will your organization adhere to in the face of adversity?

**DEFINE THE SKILLS NEEDED FOR YOUR BUSINESS.** The clearer you are on the skills needed for your business from the beginning, the more your team will thrive in their roles.

**ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.** Ask interviewees about their work style. Do they prefer to work independently or on a team? Ask applicants about their prior experience and the culture of their previous jobs.

**EVALUATE YOUR INTERVIEWING SKILLS.** There's an art and a science to interviewing. People have different interviewing styles, and it's important to adjust so that you can get a complete picture.

**REFINE THE ONBOARDING PROCESS.** Retention begins with a solid onboarding process that is continuously refined as your business grows and you better understand the needs of your employees, as well as the roles for which they were hired.

**INVEST IN YOUR EMPLOYEES.** The more you invest in your employees, the faster your company will grow. When they are equipped with the resources and tools to do their jobs, they'll become highly productive.

**KNOW WHEN AND HOW TO LET SOMEONE GO.** But what if, after all of your investment of time and energy, it's just not working out? If this is the case, it's time for some hard decisions to be made.

**TREAT YOUR EMPLOYEES WELL.** When you have a team that's functioning cohesively, it helps your bottom line and also strengthens your company culture. It's important to invest time into your hiring and training programs.

As your business grows, you will continually fine-tune your process, programs, and procedures. Your team is your key to success.

### **5. BE FUTURE-DRIVEN: Navigating Organizational Growth**

Your business needs to be future-focused, even before you have your entire team in place. There will come a time when your business grows enough that you will need to separate your employees into functional areas or teams. At first, it was all hands on deck. However, this is not sustainable as you continue to add clients and employees. Inefficiency will be the name of that game.

Here are some practical tips on how to Be Bigger while navigating organizational growth.

**HIRE THE EXPERTS.** As your business grows, a solid team will enable you to begin removing some of the hats you wore as CEO. But hiring the wrong people will end up costing you more. If you don't hire the best people, you'll have to hire someone to fix their mistakes.

**BE FAIR AND GENEROUS.** Your sales team is the bread and butter of your business. Without a healthy funnel of client prospects coming in, there's not much for the rest of your team to do. Building trust with your sales teams, being fair with commission payouts, and recognizing everyone for their part in the sales process creates a cohesive and unselfish team.

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**LOOK FOR SHARED VALUES.** We have spent much time and effort building an upbeat, positive culture, and we want our team to embrace and reflect that to our clients.

**LEARN FROM THE LITTLE MISTAKES.** In the beginning we made some mistakes, but that's to be expected for any new business owner. The key is to learn from these mistakes, create better processes, and get crystal clear on the type of employees you want to have working for and with you. We tried to keep our mistakes to a minimum. You can't make catastrophic mistakes—that's goal number one! Everything we did wrong, we learned from, and everything that we did right, we built upon.

**BALANCE YOUR TEAM.** Even if you are a great relationship builder, it can be challenging to balance all of our team's different personalities and needs. Everyone has different professional goals: some want to move up the ladder while others are happy being individual contributors. You have to be able to understand your team's skills and talents so that they can seamlessly collaborate.

### **6. BE PURPOSEFUL: Creating Brand Champions**

In my company, we treat our employees well. I know what it feels like to not be valued, and I did not want my team to feel that way. I aim to create an atmosphere where people feel cared for and cared about. Of course, everyone is going to want to be paid well and get raises, but top talent is looking for more than money. You will be able to attract and retain people if you have a thriving company culture. The keys to engagement and retention are inclusion, appreciation, flexibility, and trust. We want to create brand champions, and that starts with being purposeful about the employee experience.

Here are some practical tips to Be Purposeful and create brand champions.

**DEFINE CORE VALUES.** I've seen many organizations that don't have an engaging company culture, and in most cases, it's because of the leader. They are the biggest problem. How can your employees rally around you as their leader if you're not being a good example of your core values? I believe the single most important thing you can do as a business owner and CEO is to define the core values of your company. These guideposts should reflect your team's feedback.

**MAKE CULTURE MORE THAN WORDS ON A WALL.** Your company culture has to be evident in all you do. Relying on an annual picnic or holiday party to get the message across is not going to cut it if you're looking to engage and retain a loyal workforce. But when you live and breathe your vision, your team will too. I'm not afraid to get my hands dirty, and my actions match my words.

**CREATE A POSITIVE CULTURE.** Over the years, many friendships have formed within our organization. Our team enjoys working together. They go above and beyond because they are engaged relationally with their colleagues. As you know, it costs more to win a new client than it does to retain an existing one. The same holds true for your employees. If you're investing in your existing team by providing job skills or leadership training, they're becoming rooted in your business.

**ASK WHAT YOU CAN CHANGE.** Another way to improve engagement levels and retention rates is to survey your employees. When you do this does not matter. Whether you ask 10 questions or 50 does not matter. There just needs to be a mechanism where people can actually share their thoughts with you.

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Good leaders rally people for a common cause. They will be your brand champions. They will be the ones to help make your entrepreneurial dream a reality. As leaders, we must do all we can to show our teams they are respected, cared for, and valued. Without them, your business will not be successful.

### **7. BE ENGAGING: Building a Culture with Longevity**

New habits start with a decision to make a change. Perseverance and commitment make habits stick. Bad habits arise when we lost that commitment or simply quit. There's really only one way to reverse the trend: make a decision to change and put a plan in place, being mindful of distractions or naysayers that try to derail your success.

While it is important to develop a healthy mindset for your personal wellness, it should translate into our business. Creating a culture of wellness in your business requires the same level of commitment. When you create a culture centered on a healthy mindset, the investment will pay off in the long run.

Here are some practical tips to Be Engaging in creating your company culture.

**CREATE A CULTURE OF EMPATHY.** Everyone struggles on some level, and the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes for just a moment changes your personal perspective and deepens your relationships. When employees feel valued and truly cared for, they will give you their best. However, if they are experiencing a lack of compassion or feel they are not appreciated, they will seek other opportunities.

**INVEST IN YOUR EMPLOYEES.** The "sunk costs" of both losing people and recruiting new hires is high. Think about how much it costs you to hire and train someone from day one to when they are fully independent. The onboarding process may take only a few months, but for employees to feel confident in their role, it can take up to a year. Your return on investment in them is based on the company culture you've invested in. If you've done it right, your company becomes a welcoming environment that your team wants to be a part of.

**MAKE YOUR VISION COME ALIVE.** From the first day, we had the simple goal to treat our employees, clients, and vendors better. We were determined to build a better workplace where everyone was valued. Honesty and integrity would drive our relationships. We would do what we said we would do, and we would keep our promises. We turned a profit our first year, but I wanted to do more. I wanted to leave a legacy.

**CULTIVATE YOUR CULTURE.** Employee surveys are an integral component in a strong culture. In everything we do, we want our team to know their voices are heard. Company culture is key to employee retention and engagement, and it can also impact client relationships. In some cases, it's actually helped us attract new clients. Cultures are built over time, and if they are cultivated properly, they can only get better.

### **8. BE PROFITABLE: Selling for Success**

If you think about it, you're selling something to someone every single day. You sell yourself at a job interview. You sell an idea to your boss. You sell a project to your team.

Likability, passion for your product or service, and relationships are key to selling successfully. Here are some tips on how to Be Profitable and sell for success.

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**KNOW YOUR CLIENTS.** My clients are not commodities or simply a means to my bottom line. They are people and the ability to connect with them on a human level is an important factor in being a successful sales person.

**BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU SELL.** Great salespeople believe in what they're selling. They have a deep conviction their product or service is best.

**OVERCOME YOUR FEAR OF REJECTION.** When a "thanks, but no thanks" response doesn't stop you from moving forward, you have all you need.

**HAVE MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS.** Meaningful conversations with your clients can turn your business in a brand-new direction—if you're open to it.

**BE SELECTIVE.** Beggars can't always be choosers. But if you're spending more time and resources on a client who is barely giving you any business or is actually costing you money, it may be time to cut the cord.

**SELL WITH INTEGRITY.** Always be authentic in all of your personal and professional dealings. Always.

**KEEP THE BIG PICTURE IN MIND.** You can teach anyone your processes and procedures, but if they aren't inherently motivated to sell, it's going to be a challenge. Know the value your products or services bring to your clients.

**BE FLEXIBLE.** Sometimes you might have to go against what's usually done or expected. Sell customers on the "why," not the "what."

**RESPECT PEOPLE.** I don't try to sell "things." I want you to buy my services because you like doing business with me and you trust me.

**STAY CONNECTED.** Using any and all means available to you so you can connect with your clients is the mark of a solid salesperson.

**KNOW WHO YOU ARE.** Knowing what your skills and talent are helps you know your best role to play within the sales process.

### **9. BE SERVICE-ORIENTED: Creating the Client Experience**

Ensuring that your customers or clients have a memorable, personalized, and enjoyable experience is an important differentiator, whether you are an e-commerce or traditional brick-and-mortar business.

Here are some practical tips on how to Be Service-Oriented and create a memorable client experience.

**TAKE CARE OF YOUR EMPLOYEES FIRST.** If we want our sales and customer service teams to treat our clients well, we must treat them well. Richard Branson: "Clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients."

**BUILD TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS:** The essence of great customer service is when customers trust you implicitly with their business. When asked why I think people choose us, I always have the same response: people do business with people they trust. It's simple. Our clients like us.

**IDENTIFY YOUR IDEAL CLIENT.** When you're just starting out, your entire focus is on getting new business. Your sales funnel has to be continually replenished. In the beginning, you may not be able to choose your clients, and sometimes,



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there may be one or two that are difficult. To be successful, we had to identify the best recipients for our services, and we had to deliver consistent, repeatable, and memorable experiences to them.

**IMPROVE YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE.** You can't fix what you don't measure. How do you know if you're delivering excellent service? Asking your clients what they like and don't like with a survey can help you to identify holes in your processes and ways you can improve.

**INTEGRATE OPERATIONAL PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGY.** Honesty is a key element of customer services. Ensuring that your operational processes are integrated must go hand in hand with honesty. Sales and customer service must be in lockstep so no one is overpromising and underdelivering. This builds trust with the client and also builds trust in your teams, which is important.

**PROBLEM-SOLVERS GET CALLED FIRST.** Great customer service is about solving someone else's problems, creating loyal customer relationships, and setting the foundation for repeat business. When you can do all three better than someone else, it will keep your sales funnel full and your company growing. Invest in your customer service, invest in your team, and invest in your processes and data analytics. This will pay off with a healthy bottom line and, more importantly, happy clients and employees.

### **10. BE EFFICIENT: Scaling for Sustainable Growth**

In order to scale for future growth, you need to be efficient. You need a comprehensive operations function that is continuously evaluated, so you are delivering top-notch service to your clients, as well as enabling your team to work seamlessly and avoid duplication of efforts.

Here are some practical tips on how you can Be Efficient and scale your business for future growth.

**START WITH WHAT YOU KNOW.** Instead of trying to learn everything, tap into the knowledge, tools, and processes you already know. Starting with where you are at and with what you know can save you time and money.

**BE DETAIL-ORIENTED.** When you launch a business, there are details you have to consider. If you're leaving a corporate job to become an entrepreneur, you can't take their sophisticated systems with you, nor is it likely you can purchase them on day one. It may be a bit rocky at first, and the learning curve may be steep.

**ESTABLISH PROCEDURES.** Scaling your business is a rinse-and-repeat process. But this continuous improvement can be fun if it's done when your hair is not on fire. Establishing procedures and setting up a structure for your company is much easier if it's done before you actually need them.

**NEVER LET 'EM SEE YOU SWEAT.** It is tempting to think that your operational processes and procedures have nothing to do with your company culture, but they do. Things like payroll running smoothly, computers working properly, and emails being delivered are all part of how your team functions. When you align your people and your purpose with profit, you create a solid company culture.

**DELEGATE AND LET IT GO.** Every small business owner needs to learn to let go and trust their team to do what they do best. This isn't limited to letting go of tasks—you'll also have to let go of your ego and the idea that no one else can do what you do.

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**NEVER BE SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO.** Just when you think a process is the best it can be, it's time to break it and build it up again. This is the only way to scale a business, because processes that worked for a company of 21 people won't work for 40 people or 100.

**ANALYZE YOUR TIME.** The faster someone finishes a job or a service call, the faster that person can move on to the next. Completed jobs are what we're selling, but I can't tell my team to work faster without giving them the tools to do so. Technology and process improvements enable us to make decisions faster. Teaching people how to strategize and manage their workflow inherently speeds up the work. You can have a great product, but if you can't get it out the door, you're out of business.

### **11. BE GENEROUS: Building a Social Impact Program**

Even though I was enjoying being able to turn a profit early on in my business, I didn't feel proud of just making money. I needed a higher purpose. I wanted to incorporate this mindset into my company's DNA. I wanted to be known for more than just fixing things. Being generous is about doing something to make someone's life better.

Here are some tips on how to Be Generous and build a social impact program with purpose.

**FIND OR CREATE GIVING OPPORTUNITIES.** In our organization, every client service call ties into our social impact program designed around giving back to our designated nonprofit partners. Our team members are proud knowing that we are involved in many giving opportunities. We are living our vision and making an impact in other people's lives.

**ESTABLISH A NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIP.** When we selected our nonprofit partners, we wanted to ensure they aligned with our core values. We also wanted to feel good about who we were helping. Anyone can write a check to their favorite charity, but I wanted my team to be able to physically do something as part of their volunteering.

**SHARE THE GIVING SPIRIT WITH YOUR CLIENTS.** Because our social impact program is tied to our business operations, our clients also get to participate in our initiatives. When we tell them that their 200 calls resulted in putting 200 meals on a table for a family or giving a little kid their first bedroom in their new home, I believe they are both proud and grateful to do business with us. When clients see our commitment to these causes, they want to work with us.

**PARTICIPATE CONSISTENTLY.** I encourage you to find a cause you're passionate about, where you can build a long-term relationship. Don't be discouraged if your first steps are small ones. If that first partner isn't right, it's okay to move on to another. Today, we are partnered with several organizations at different times of the year so there's something for everyone.

**BE OPEN TO RECOMMENDATIONS.** There may be efforts your team members are passionate about or deeply involved with that can add value to your program. It's important that you, as their CEO or as their manager, are open to their recommendations. It's my hope that every entrepreneur and business leader incorporates some type of giving back into their business strategy.

### **12. BE INSPIRING: Leading for the Future**

Everyone reacts to challenges differently. Some crumble, but for others, it's an invitation to dig in. If you're not continuously evolving as a leader, you become stagnant, and your team will be disengaged. Here again, as soon as you

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think you've perfected something, tear it up and start over again. Complacency with anything is never good. Strong leaders should always be pushing their teams to avoid complacency at all costs.

Being an inspiring leader starts with this willingness to change. Here are some practical tips to Be Inspiring by being a better leader.

**EXAMINE YOUR MOTIVATION.** It's always good to understand the motivation for anything you do so that you are doing it for the right reason. My capacity for empathy and compassion toward others has been expanded because of what we've gone through. Also, my commitment to my employees is stronger than ever. I am going to support my team, and I'm not going to let them down. I want to ensure they know how valuable they are to me and our company.

**BE TRANSPARENT.** Through the multiple employee engagement surveys we've conducted over the years, I've learned a great deal about the way my team views our culture, our programs and processes, and our leadership style. A good leader has to be open to receiving feedback—good and bad—and make the necessary corrections.

**BE RESILIENT.** Sometimes, we don't find out how strong we are until we are pushed. It's all a part of being in that mode of continuous improvement and being agile, which again, is a mindset all leaders need to have. Agility is a trait that leaders in the 21st century are going to have to strengthen. Adapting to the rapid pace of change—accepting advances in technology, having the ability to be nimble, to let go of the "We've always done it this way" mindset—will be necessary for any organization to thrive.

**CULTIVATE A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MINDSET.** Your team should always be focused on improving their skills, both personally and professionally. But if you spend your time micromanaging everyone, then you don't have a team; you have a group of underlings who are just doing what they are told.

**MAINTAIN YOUR REPUTATION.** It's important to roll up your sleeves and pitch in. More than likely, you know how to do most everyone's job because you did it yourself when you launched your company. Your team should see that leadership is willing to help out in a crunch. This builds trustworthiness and credibility with your employees. Once your credibility is gone, it's almost impossible to recover. Your reputation as a leader is to be guarded at all times.

### **13. BE BETTER: Starting Today**

In these pages, I've shared my personal journey. This is what's worked for me. Developing an award-winning culture is not easy. People think company culture is a walk in the park. It's not. If it's done wrong, it's even harder to correct. You have to weave culture into your road map from day one, because it's easier to get to where you want to be when you know what you want to achieve.

Remember, you're a CEO trying to build and grow a business. Your team depends on you to keep the business profitable. They didn't come to work to watch you become famous. They are working for you because they believe in your vision, and they want to experience their own personal professional success.

What you do impacts your team, your clients, and your reputation. The decisions you make are hinged on what you deem is important, the vision for your business, and the vision for yourself. For me, company culture and being an authentic, purpose-driven leader are key. That's my sweet spot, whether I'm making a sale or hosting my podcast.

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I've shared a lot of information about what it means to be a Be Better leader and how, because of this commitment, my business, my team, and even I have become successful. This is what has worked for me and my company. It may or may not work for yours. This is why I stress the importance of being authentic and being yourself. Don't be a copycat. You can't do exactly what someone else did and expect to get the same results. You're not that person. You can learn from them and cherry-pick the approaches or decisions that make sense for you and your business, but expecting the exact same results is unrealistic.

Be authentic. Be vulnerable. Be gentle when you're delivering hard messages. Be kind. Be willing to do the same jobs you're asking your team to do. Learn from your mistakes, and don't be afraid to make hard decisions.

In writing this book, I wanted to encourage, maybe even inspire, others who are thinking about starting their business to take a leap of faith. Know who you are as a person so this translates into the leadership of your company and ultimately, into a culture that attracts talent and clients.

Our Be Better culture has evolved as our company has evolved. This is how it should be for any organization. You must always strive to be a better version of yourself every day.

To be a better leader, you simply have to Be Better.

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