

# **THERE'S A REASON FOR THAT**

UNDERSTAND WHY PEOPLE DON'T GET YOU,  
AND YOU DON'T GET THEM, AND HOW TO FIND  
CALM WHEN THE SHIFT HITS THE FAN,  
STARTING TODAY

**NOLAN COLLINS**

## **THERE'S A REASON FOR THAT**

**First Edition 2022**

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*This Is dedicated to my  
incredible children, Dane And Nia, for pushing me beyond  
my comfort levels, loving me when you didn't understand  
me, and turning out to be the most amazing, compassionate  
and loving people I know.*

*Thank you for making being a dad my best adventure yet.*



## 2022 FIRST VERSION NOTE

This book is being written as the world is still experiencing a pandemic and hopefully coming back to a level of normality. The ideas and concepts in this book were discovered before the world knew about Covid 19. They will be helpful and valid both during unexpected and stressful times and what we consider “normal” or even the “new normal”, whatever that means to you, long after this pandemic has run its course.

*This book is both a lens to see others more clearly, and a mirror to look back at ourselves. Only the lens is hard to turn and focus, more like a kaleidoscope, ever-changing in the hope of finding that one view we like every time. The mirror is one of those bent arcade mirrors that shows you as being distorted and imperfect, the way we see ourselves. Yet, you're ok to look at those imperfections knowing that others rarely get to see everything going on behind the scenes.*

With recent events on a global scale faring better at dividing people instead of uniting them, now is the time for more compassion and understanding of other people's differences. It's the time to look “in” at what we can do to make our immediate environment better for ourselves and the people we interact with. By looking at ourselves, we understand what we're doing and why, which leads to understanding that all the people we meet are going through the same things, only most are not looking in and being as self-aware

as you are or will be. They are mostly looking out at the world around them and hoping something out there will change, including you, to make their life easier. This is where “being the change” can help both you and indirectly help others, making life just a little easier for all of you.

This book is about how to be more aware of and respond to the people we meet and know, or think we know, including ourselves, and life as it happens, and is a precursor/companion to the book “RAMP-IT!”.

**It starts with you.** This book will help you find calm, clarity, and compassion when the world seems to be turning on itself.

By being more aware of your own thoughts and actions as you respond to the people and situations you find yourself dealing with, even the difficult ones, the world will not feel, or be, as bad as it often seems.

# INTRODUCTION

There were days I looked at people and thought, “Why? Just why did you do or say that? You need to leave the gene pool!”

Admit it. You’ve probably had that thought at least once today! And then, hopefully, tried catching yourself to not judge someone for the way they are!

Thankfully, it doesn’t happen that much anymore. Usually, I just look at people and think, “There MUST be a reason why you’re behaving that way, said what you said, or acted that way.”

And I must believe there is a reason. After all, we all do things from time to time that make others look at us like *we* should be the ones being thrown out of the gene pool! We are, after all, only human! Thankfully I’ve had time to redeem myself!

For example, in one environment about five years ago, I was a complete ass.

I'd started a new job as a digital marketing trainer with the UK's largest apprenticeship provider and came in with high expectations of the calibre of people I'd be working with.

My narrative was firmly set in my head, and by Grapthar's Hammer, this company and its people had better live up to it, especially after what I just went through at the last place!

In my first week, I sat in on a training session and was so appalled by the lack of what I deemed quality training, the frustration of the students, and the trainer's default mode to talk about himself, I wrote a stinging email to my new manager about how disappointed I was.

I probably came across as a bit of an ass, the new guy telling them how things should be done! My ego was fuelled by students telling me my 15-minute off the cuff presentation was the best thing they'd heard all week!

The worst part was that after I sent the email, I asked myself who the heck I thought I was to be so mean! I knew immediately that this was *not* me, and there must be a reason why this situation was happening and why I was reacting this way. I just didn't know what it was or how to find it...yet.

After I got to know another co-worker a few months later, who had at first given me the cold shoulder and told me point blank she'd heard I was a bit of an ass, I woke up to the question "why".

Why did I behave like that?

Why did that trainer talk about himself?

Why was I so upset?

Why didn't I do something different?

Why wasn't the trainer more skilled for that training?

Why did people judge me who hadn't met me?

Why did I judge others without really knowing them?

What were the reasons for this?

I walked into that job with a narrative and set of expectations that weren't met immediately, and I behaved poorly.

It made me think about all the reasons I, Nolan, the guy who was a clinical massage therapist and kinesiologist and trainer for years, a nice guy who was always ready to help others, had, in this situation and environment, turned into this ugly character, prepared to berate someone I didn't think was up to par. I thought I was better than him. I was wrong. Really wrong.

It turns out that role wasn't the best for that trainer at that time, and he went on to take multiple leadership courses and become one of the most qualified trainers in the company. I respect him for that.

*His frustration in the role, my frustration with the situation at the time, and my annoyance at how I behaved when I knew better are all things we deal with. Sometimes daily. It also bothered me that someone I barely knew thought I was that bad. Had I really been conscious of and applied the contents of this book back then, not only would I not have been as frustrated or had the ego, but the situation could also have been addressed and resolved faster and more amicably for everyone.*

Over the next couple of years, I developed a new framework to look at and understand almost any situation's success level to make it flow better, the RAMP-IT model. At the same time, I became aware of many reasons we get upset with ourselves and others when things aren't going our way and how to be both aware of them in the moment and find resolve faster, even if it means a solution isn't found immediately!

These situations were at work, at home, at the grocery store, with friends, strangers, youth groups, teachers, at sports

training, and more. We all interact with people in different settings and take on different roles in these wildly varying situations.

Those insights are in this book. Well, the top 20! And a couple of bonuses!

My initial audience for this book and the Considerations was companies and teams. After presenting less than half of what is in here many times and hearing how attendees saw how they could apply it at home, with family members and children, in organisations *and* at work, I realised there was a much larger scope of use. The narrative and this book are still geared towards a work environment; however, I want you also to consider applying what you learn here outside the workplace.

Writing this book, and you finding it, has happened at a good time. Many new perspectives, ideologies and breakthroughs in self-awareness and self-development have been recently published. I've included many of these perspectives, ideologies, references, and summaries in this book.

As we forge our way through 2022, looking forward to a year full of hopes and dreams to be fulfilled that maybe weren't last year, we find ourselves forced to spend time again with people we haven't seen in person for months. For some, we will still have to gauge what's going on with someone else when the only interaction is through a computer screen. This is when we get to see the best or worst of ourselves and the people we *thought* we knew.

So, what *can* you do in these new and high-stress situations? You can't expect to change everyone else or expect them to have changed since the last encounter just because you want them to. It would be nice, but let's be honest, it probably hasn't worked so far, so what to do, especially when what you know, or think you do, isn't enough?

**You change the way you think about what you think you know.**

Or at least the way you look at and understand yourself *and* what's happening around you. And you shift to a new way of thinking and acting when dealing with people in these situations, even the ones you think will never change.

To get you started, I want you to consider these 4 questions as you go through the book.

**1: There's a reason for that**, which is coming up as Consideration 1.

**2: How can I take in what's happening.** These are helpful or unhelpful thoughts.

**3: What can I do in this situation right now to help it.** It's being able to say to yourself, "I have a choice and control in how I respond", otherwise known as helpful or unhelpful actions.

**4: What can I take from this experience to help me anticipate how to handle events in the future?** These become helpful or unhelpful beliefs and habits.

Funnily enough, when you understand yourself better and are more aware of what you do instinctively or reflexively, you start understanding other people better. And then the situations we find ourselves in seem to get just a little easier to deal with each time.

If you're new to me and my work, my goal is to help more people like you and me find a sense of inner calm, clarity, and confidence so we can manage everyday activities with less stress. Activities like spending time with family, workplace events, co-workers collaborations and hanging out with our kids. It's also managing the many new situations we find ourselves in, sometimes with no notice or experience when

the shift is about to hit the fan. Yes, shiFt, as in things changing in our lives like new relationships, promotions at work, new jobs, meeting the in-laws, getting pregnant, kids going to school or getting their first motorbike, things that give us a chance to level up or fall apart.

*I am on a mission to help people get along with each other.*

## **INCLUDING THEMSELVES!**

*We put in the effort with people we know, yet don't as much with people we don't. Strangely enough, when you put in the effort with strangers, including people you've known for years, you'll find you'll make friends, get more of what you want, create more win-win scenarios and have a lot less stress.*

This isn't woo-woo stuff or having to meditate naked around an old oak tree. I'm not saying you aren't allowed to do that if it helps! This is getting to the end of the day and thinking, "That was a great day", and being able to enjoy your evening with your partner, kids, friends or even yourself.

It's knowing you were aware enough not to mistreat others or beat yourself up when you weren't at your best.

It's realising we are all constantly learning and at different stages of learning and being ok with that for ourselves and others.

I help people discover the perspectives that uncover actionable insights that lead to transformation. In short, I'm a solutions-minded mentor for improving behavioural thinking.

I'm also just a regular guy. I take my daughter to football and other activities; I cry at sad movies and don't mind admitting it. I tear up when I look at my kids and realise how amazing they are, even when we don't see eye to eye. Especially when we don't see eye to eye and realise I need to learn something

from them. I go to the supermarket and do the shopping, do the dishes and the laundry, you know, the usual stuff. When living as a single dad to two active teenagers, as I've been doing since early 2020, you find yourself having to do it all, and I'm not above doing any of it.

I don't have some unique gene or superpower that allowed me to find inner calm. Ten years ago, I was homeless with two small children and a wife after spectacularly losing a business because I didn't know what I know now. I was unprepared for that level of failure, and it almost cost me much more than my home.

My transformation to almost always having a sense of inner calm, clarity and confidence came with insight, awareness, training, and practice. Knowing what's in this book and the RAMP-IT model, I now find calm almost instantaneously, even in challenging situations.

Does it mean I'm calm all the time? Or don't overreact with my kids sometimes? No, I do. I'm human! However, I recognise it faster now and know when I'm reacting due to being in a new situation, and I know when I've been an ass, and it's time to apologise. As you'll discover in this book, I also know which of the many Considerations have contributed to my actions, reactions, and outcomes. So do my kids! They also have this annoying habit of reminding me of the Considerations from time to time!

I am a lifelong trainer, massage therapist, Specialised Kinesiology Practitioner and now a Certified Transformational Coach, Life Coach, CBT Coach, Emotional Intelligence Coach and RAMP-IT Coach, among others. Yes, RAMP-IT coach is something I made up to teach the framework I created. It's called innovation, my friend!

Through introspection, training, and observation, I've experienced a rapid shift in how I look at and respond to the world

around me, like Po in Kung Fu Panda, who finds inner peace quickly to the dismay of Master Shifu! I did mention I have teenagers, didn't I? And I did this while working a full-time job with two teenagers who were, and sometimes still are, very stubborn!

I also like getting to the point. I may not always succeed, but I try!

I realised over the years three essential truths:

- The world does not stop. There is no pause button.
- The world will not change for you.
- When you change, the world changes too.

My goal with this book is to show you how, by looking at yourself first, and the situations you find yourself in just a little differently and using what you learn, you'll be able to get calmer faster and stay calm longer. Even when confined to a small space with those strangers you call co-workers or family! You'll also return to calm faster for those times you "re-act" (acting again out of habit or uncertainty) first. You'll feel like you have more control over your emotions, thoughts, life, and how other people's actions affect you and be confident you can handle more situations with clarity and confidence.

**Here's the catch.** You can't just read this and expect everything to change. Let it sink in, and see yourself using these tips in different situations. It's ok if they don't come to you at first when you really need it if you remember to stop, think, and respond afterwards. It takes application and practice for insights to happen, and insight is necessary for fundamental transformation.

**Insight is when you take the time to reflect on something new and realise that adopting this new behaviour or thought will benefit you and then commit to *doing* it.**

Just knowing what you didn't know, or looking at it in a new way, will keep your brain busy for a while. Even if you don't get to use it immediately, it's now in your head, waiting for the right time to show up as instinct, gut feeling or intuition!

You can also print the cheat sheets mentioned in the book, and when you find yourself seething or ready to throw your laptop out the window, look at the cheat sheets and remember, There's a reason for that!

Thank you for being here and wanting to make your work, relationships, family, or life better, whatever time of year you're using this, even if it's just for your sanity right now. If you like what's in here, please let your co-workers and other family members know about it. This book makes for a great team or family present!

Also, if you've overheard any co-workers or friends, or people complaining about co-workers or family, I'm sure they'd appreciate this too.

Know that I am with you in thought and heart, wishing you the best time with the people you care about the most and care about you, even if they sometimes have a funny way of showing it.

By the way. Don't forget this book is a pre-cursor and companion to the upcoming books "RAMP-IT" and "RAMP your FLOWS", both of which will be available on Amazon soon!

There are bonuses and extra Considerations you can access via links in the book or by signing up to get all of these via email at [theresareasonforthat.com/bookbuyer](https://theresareasonforthat.com/bookbuyer)

You are never too old or young to consider these perspectives and Considerations. Regardless of where you're from, your sex or gender identity, what your religion or spiritual awareness is, what colour your skin is, and it doesn't matter what happened yesterday, last week or last year. I try not to have or show bias. We are all human, and we **all** deserve to be happy.

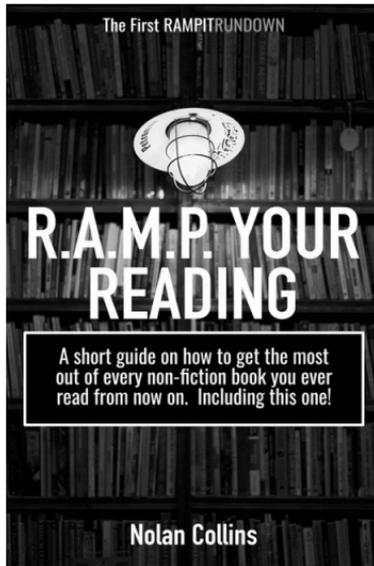
All that matters is that you want to be a little happier, less stressed, calmer, more confident, in control, courageous, and do it consistently. You are ready to take in new ideas like you're working with a clean slate, prepared to *act on them*, and be the person *today* your future self can look back at and say, "Oh yeah, you've been awesome for a long time now!".

If that's you, you're in the right place.

### **Something to think about...**

I don't include a lot of academic research or lots of random quotes because these are my insights and interpretations of what I've experienced and learned and applied over almost 30 + years of learning from multiple sources, many of which I've forgotten the origins or seen in numerous places.

I speak from the heart. What I include here is not new. It *may be* a new way of looking at things you already know and some things you may not know *yet*. The ideas and concepts here have been around for many, many years.



My goal is always to make things simpler, so it makes more sense, so you can get the results you are looking for faster, and they last longer. My purpose is to do some of that for you here and bring you closer to understanding yourself and the people around you.

**Get the free eBook – RAMP your Reading.**

This is a quick read that will help you get the most out of this book and every other non-fiction book, course, or class you've experienced or will experience from now on.

Download it at <https://theresareasonforthat.com/bookbuyer>

**I also have one HUGE request:**

If you like the book, please can you do two things:

1) Please leave a review on Amazon or the site where you bought the book. This helps Amazon realise it is actually a good book and will help them share it with more people.

2) Please tell your friends, co-workers, and family about the book. It will help all of you get on better and help them get on with people you didn't know they were struggling with.

Thank you so much for your support.

Nolan

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

THIS BOOK IS PACKED with many ideas and insights that you may not have thought of or experienced yet. Many of which you may also have already experienced and been shown but haven't given much thought to for a while.

As with anything you want to get good at, it takes applying the skills in real life. Like the first few times you're learning to drive, you still need to practice to find that fluidity in everyday use once you know the basics. You'll still come across new situations or shifts that make you re-think what you think you know and find yourself going back to basics.

You will experience situations where you or someone else are not on the same page. You won't remember what's in here until after the situation the first few times. Don't despair. Take a few minutes after any incident, argument, conflict, or discussion, and think about how you might have recognised what was going on sooner.

Taking the time to reflect and "read/evaluate" a situation, the existing outcome and, by thinking about the Considerations in this book, you are already visualising an alternate response and new outcome for the next time. If you can, discuss your

thoughts with the other person! If they've also read the book, as I recommend with teams or companies, you'll get more out of the discussion.

The first time you read the Considerations, you'll have questions and how they fit into what you already know. That's good. It means you are expanding your skills and knowledge.

Once you start using what's in here, you'll realise you can stay calm, take a moment to reflect on the moment and find a way to push through with more clarity and confidence.

Remember, the best way to use what's in here is to stop anytime you physically feel yourself getting anxious and say to yourself, or out loud, "There's a reason for that", then pause. The pause allows you to stay calm and bring what's happening to the frontal cortex, the conscious-thought part of the brain, and respond.

It takes practice!

I've said this elsewhere in the book: The best way to learn is to teach.

Do the exercises at the end of each Consideration and, if you are reading this book with others at work, discuss a Consideration at a morning or team meeting and give examples of where you've experienced the situation, how you handled it, and what, if anything, you would change now. This is not about blame! It's about understanding each unique situation better and how to act or respond better the next time it happens.

It also helps to discuss the Considerations in a forward-thinking setting. For example, anticipating situations that could arise and discussing which Considerations could be applied and how you'd approach the problem if / when it does come up. This can be an excellent tool for HR profes-

sionals who see and hear about *every little thing* that happens in a workplace!

As you read this book, I also want you to ask yourself, “When have I done this, behaved like this, thought like this, acted like this?”

At the beginning of each Consideration, I’ve put a common exclamation we’ve probably all used. Try turning that phrase around and make it about you.

For example: in Consideration 1: There’s a reason for that, the exclamation is “What were they thinking?” now turn this around to say, “What was I thinking?”

I think you get the point.

As far as using the book, read it all. The next time you do something you know wasn’t typical, or someone does something that gives you pause, i.e., upsets you or pisses you off, or confuses you, just think, “There’s a reason for that”, and refer to your cheat sheet, or the book, or community if you’re in it if you feel you need to figure it out!

I hope this book helps you and the people you share it with become better communicators who can easily handle difficult situations and discover more about yourselves at the same time.

### **IT’S NOT ALL BAD!**

Another way to use this book is to recognise when and why things are going well!

We are what we focus on. It’s called cognitive bias. If we’re looking for the negative, we’ll find it. If you’re a manager/ leader/ partner, don’t always look for what is wrong. You’ll always find what you’re looking for! Instead, go a week and only look for the good, or examples of what people are doing right, doing well, and being helpful.

You could have a day at work where everything seems to flow. Take the time to analyse what happened, the conversations, and the outcomes.

Did your team have “instead of’s” ready to go when they were stuck in a negative loop? (Consideration 8)

Did your partner stop and focus on their Purpose in the moment? (Consideration Bonus 21)

Was someone who is not usually agreeable, open, and now agreeable (Consideration 5)

Was the team super focused on a project and knocked something out (Consideration 13)

Was someone who is usually “toxic” or controlling more relaxed and allowing autonomy? (Consideration 10)

Did you see two typically conflicted people stop and try to understand each other? (Consideration 19)

There is a reason things go well, too and taking the time to understand why situations, meetings, relationships, and events are going well will help you plan to include those factors the next time.

Take a few minutes at the end of the day to reflect on what went well or who did something well, and acknowledge them, either in person, with a sticky note, or in an email. And read Consideration 19!

By the time you finish this book, I would love for you to feel confident that you can approach any situation with the clarity of thought and self-awareness not to react. And to realise there is a reason for what is happening, helpful or not, you now have a way to discover what it is.

I would love for you to feel more positive and understand the people you live and work with. If nothing else, I’d like you to

realise that you can live with more calm, clarity, and confidence when things are not going to plan, no matter what you've experienced, learned or believed up to now.

### **APPLYING THE ConsiderationS IN A WORK OR TEAM SETTING**

I'm going to bring this to the forefront even though I've mentioned it in context elsewhere in the book: If you want to benefit the most from this, you can't be the only one who knows it!

If you are a business owner, manager, leader, supervisor, trainer, HR person or mentor, I strongly suggest giving a copy of this book to every person in the company. And I mean everyone. That way, no one can say, "I didn't know how to behave better or stop before re-acting".

Note: Everyone includes the owner, CEO, Director, CFO, receptionist, part-time workers, and cleaners (if they work for you). Just as you would expect everyone to know and live by the company philosophy, so should they all know how to treat each other better!

It's time to get into the book now. Enjoy and let me know what you think. If you can think of other Considerations I'm missing here or in the online bonuses, they might get into There's A Reason For That Volume 2!

# THE CONSIDERATIONS

THINK BACK to when you first learned to drive.

You had to learn the foundations first. How to steer. How to use the gas pedal and the gears and use them together. How to start from a stop, then stop, or how to navigate roundabouts - it's an English thing, and I apologise, as we British do, for this contribution to the world!. These were the foundations. I don't cover the foundations of dealing with life situations here; that's what RAMP-IT is about.

What I'm covering here is what comes next.

Once you've learned the basics, you must then go to the main roads and mingle with other cars. I'm familiar with this as I'm teaching both of my children how to drive now. Surprisingly neither one of us has lost the plot, and it's all somewhat civilised so far.

So now you're out on the roads and dealing with forces out of your control. Other drivers, traffic lights, weather, potholes, construction, kids running in the road, animals, train crossings. *These* are the things you *consider* and can affect whether you get to your destination in one piece, calmly and in

control. They force you to adapt *your* foundational skills to handle or overcome them.

*Considerations are not conversation enders. They are conversation starters. They are not reasons or excuses. They just "are" and are a stepping stone to breaking through, asking more questions and finding new answers.*

If I turn a corner on a wet road and see a massive puddle in my lane, I don't look at the puddle and stop or get angry at the puddle for being there. I consider how it will affect what I'm doing and think, "What must *I* do so the outcome isn't detrimental to my journey and achieve my goal?"

The first time I hit the puddle, I may be going too fast and hydroplane a bit. The second puddle may be deeper than I thought, and the car suddenly slows down and pulls to one side. The more puddles I hit, the more ways I have to assess the situation as I approach it and make subtle adjustments to get through it safer.

Eventually, I get to the point it comes naturally. I look in the rear-view mirror, apply the brake, shift down a gear, and take the corner slower. *My* foundational skills, *in* my control, i.e. driving the car, changed to suit the environment, and I adapted to what was *out* of my control, the environment.

Other people are out of your control. (Read Consideration 10 if you think otherwise!)

This goes for your family and the people you deal with daily too.

Considerations help you understand why something *could* affect your forward movement, happiness, or flow. Considerations give you a tentative reason someone is behaving the way they are, or why *you* are not achieving your goals or behaving a certain way.

By acknowledging something is going on, and you can adjust *your thoughts and actions* to handle it, you are also setting yourself up to deal with this situation better the next time. It's like driving the same road with a pothole halfway down. You may hit it the first time, and maybe even the second, but then you learn to anticipate it, slow down, go around it, or over it slower, and now know what to look for on other roads and know how to deal with something similar when it comes out of nowhere.

**Remember**, as a tentative reason, it is a conversation starter, not an ender. Always be ready to ask a question when one of the Considerations comes to mind. Usually, "What can I do next?". Assume the person you're dealing with, like a pothole, will not move initially. When you learn to deal with it better, not only is it like improving your own suspension, but sometimes you may find the pothole has been fixed the next time you come around!!

Reflecting on the Considerations gives you a moment to pause and choose how to respond, just like driving in the rain. Sometimes things come at you quickly, like a cyclist suddenly veering in front of your car or a family member throwing out an insult or dragging up your less than stellar teenage years in front of the new guests. (Ah, Amsterdam *was* fun! Thanks, sis!) For even a split second, stopping to think gives you time to take a breath (stomach-focused, not the upper chest, of course!) and be more conscious of your response.

As with knowing what to do if a cyclist swerves in front of you, and doing what it takes to avoid the impact, so too can you mentally train yourself to handle sudden familial obstacles and have the confidence to steer around them and go on your way, unaffected other than a momentary rise in pulse. And the realisation that you have, indeed, "got" this.

Remember, Considerations are a starting point. Any time something unexpected happens, think of the 4 points I mentioned earlier:

1: Say to yourself: "There's a reason for that" – (keep reading, I will explain this more.)

2: Consider the other Considerations and think, "How can I take in what's happening and be aware of *my own* thoughts and how I am acting or re-acting."

3: Then decide: "What can I do in this situation to help it." And make a choice to remain in control.

4: Take a moment to reflect on how *you* handled the situation, what was good, or not, and how you can store the experience to help you in the future, without emotions! I didn't say this would be easy!!

I think you're ready to get started. Consideration 1 coming up! Don't forget to read the bonus ones and a few more online! They're reeeaaaally good!

# CONSIDERATION 1: THERE'S A REASON FOR THAT.

*AKA – What were they thinking?*

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*“Here’s all you have to know about men and women: women are crazy, men are stupid. And the main reason women are crazy is that men are stupid.”*

GEORGE CARLIN – COMEDIAN.

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IF IT WERE ONLY that simple!

Through all my RAMP-IT classes and training sessions and all the people I’ve taught, this Consideration stood out for most people based on feedback and surveys.

It encompasses all possible reasons and other Considerations and seems to calm people down faster than anything else!

Why?

*Because just saying it gives your brain a tentative explanation, appeasing it for a few seconds, and gives you time to decide whether that reason is essential to know or not.*

It's a reminder that we don't always know what is going on with someone else, or even ourselves at times and our reactions to situations are based, like Consideration 11, on the basis that we don't have all the information.

The most challenging idea to accept is that we may never know what is going on, AND we may not need to know what is going on. It's ok. Just breathe. I'll say that again. We don't always need to understand why someone did something and may never know! This can be hard to accept, especially when your body is starting to tighten, and emotions and stories make their way into your conscious thoughts.

The trick is to catch yourself as you become aware of those physical feelings and thoughts and just remind yourself, "I'm sure there's a reason for that".

For example, if someone cuts you off in traffic, the reason could be:

- Despite being a usually great driver, they are late and feel they need to take a risk right now.
- They are on the way to an emergency.
- They were thinking about something that happened to them and not focusing on the road.
- They are a selfish driver.
- They are moving to avoid an obstacle you can't or didn't see.
- They are a new driver and made an unintentional error in judgement.
- They accidentally misjudged your speed and moved over too soon.

- They were trying to move over quickly because a car behind them that you didn't see was on their bumper, making them feel uncomfortable.

None of these reasons has *you* in *their* mind! They are not doing it *to* you. They are just doing it. Whatever reason, right or wrong, legal or not, there is typically no malicious intent when something happens. And I'm not talking about road rage. Even then, the aggressor is not doing it to *you*. They are being aggressive to a driver they don't know. And it is *their* problem. The best thing to do is not "teach them a lesson"; it's to stay out of their way, so you don't make them worse, and they go on to hurt you or someone else.

At Kings Cross Station in London, I recently had an opportunity to help someone with this thought. I was walking through the station about to go home, and I saw a lady being nasty, rude, and offensive to a young lady handing out water bottles. She was unable to get a word in to explain, contrary to her ranting that they were polluting the ocean, that these were recycled and biodegradable bottles. When the irate lady finally left, this poor lady looked close to tears.

I took a bottle from her and said, "She's not upset at *you*. She doesn't know you." Within seconds her face changed, and she went back to smiling and handing out water.

Whether you've been the irate customer or on the receiving end, remember there is a reason for what is happening, and getting upset rarely, if ever, solves the problem.

With family, someone could be telling you not to follow your dreams or thinks you're making a wrong decision. Instinctively you tighten up, ready for a mental or physical fight. This is where you remind yourself: There's a reason for that. There is a reason they're saying what they're saying.

- It could be that they have experienced failure in the past.
- It could be they don't know how much you've done to achieve what you have
- It could be they are old and bitter and don't want others to succeed because they haven't
- It could be they don't understand you at all
- It could be that they don't understand what you're trying to achieve or how what you're doing is part of the small steps to a bigger purpose.
- It could be they do have experience and haven't heard what they think they need to hear to believe you're making the best decisions and just want to help, but they suck at articulating it!

This is where I'm guessing you're thinking, "So what do I do in that situation?". Don't worry. I'm coming to that in Consideration 6: Instead of.

### **Things don't happen *to* you...**

I heard in an audiobook recently and saw it in about 100 memes this week, "things don't happen *to* you; they happen *for* you." That sounds good, but they don't happen for you either.

*They just happen.*

How we perceive and interpret the situation determines whether we think we can learn something from the situation.

No matter how severe things are, and I know this may be difficult to accept, when we think things happen *to* us or because of a human-influenced external event, it's often because of what has been going on in someone else's world. Either that or we have a victim mentality. I'll get into that a bit more later.

That car accident didn't happen for you. It happened because someone wasn't paying enough attention.

That job you lost didn't happen for you. It happened. It could have been because of you or a virus sweeping the globe. It could have been because your manager didn't like you. But that is also *their* issue. This may seem callous, but you will get over it, you will get another job, and you will, hopefully, learn from it.

That person or family member giving you a hard time didn't happen for you. It likely happened because they lack self-awareness, charisma (knowing how to interact with others in a positive, helpful, and encouraging way) and compassion.

This is where you take the context of what they are saying, rather than the tone, and determine if you can use what they said, ask them questions, or just nod and know you're ok and will be alright with what you're doing in life when they leave!

You do not have to find meaning in everything or every time something challenges you. Sometimes it just "is".

This brings me back to what this book is about: Handling difficult situations. When people lash out or say mean things, there are several possible reasons, and it is more to do with them, their own experiences, their interpretation of anything you may have done, and their thoughts.

You may not know what they've been through since you last saw them or only know what they wanted to tell you or the snippets of what you were told by someone they spoke to. And they don't know the whole story of what's going on with you.

If *you* are self-aware, there is an opportunity to learn something from every situation. The question is, will you? This is the "for you" part. There could be a lesson *for* you to learn, or

just circumstances to consider or brush off like a leaf that falls on your hand, not giving it a second thought. Sometimes things happen, and there is nothing for you to change or learn from it because you are *already* doing the right thing.

It's not all doom and gloom either. Sometimes good things happen, and we don't stop to take it all in. A family member could give you a piece of information that leads to a new insight for you, and it warrants stopping and thinking about what you can take from it. Remember, if you approach all situations with a clean slate mentality and be ready to receive, assess and act on what you hear as if you've never heard it before, you'll be more open to receiving the helpful advice too and making those transformative changes to get closer to your priority goals.

Don't tell yourself a story that "All men are bad" because one person was rude.

Or "All bosses are mean" because you had one mean boss.

Or "All foreigners or people who follow a certain religion or lifestyle are bad."

Or that "All members of one side of the family are difficult when one member is an ass because they had too much to drink one time."

These are just thoughts and stories you're telling yourself. They are not reasons to hold onto.

A scene from the movie "Paul" just popped into my head. Simon Pegg says - "You're an alien!" Paul, the alien, responds, "To you I am!". It's all about perspective!

Yes, this is how my brain works! Fun isn't it!

You may never know why someone cut you off or got angry at you for no apparent reason, so remind yourself, "there is a

reason for that”, and assume it’s a good one. It could, of course, be that they are a jerk in that short moment in time. That happens too. Assume the best of people, especially when you don’t know.

This goes for family too, even those who rub you the wrong way. Often, the situation they’re in with the family can bring out the worst in them. It is all situational, but again, *that* is another Consideration.

Even the jerk isn’t a jerk all the time. They may only be that way when you notice them, or they are around a specific person at a family gathering or in a meeting with a particular person present. I’ll deal with this more in Consideration 5: “*You*” is fluid.

Remember, you can only change yourself.

Oh, and in case you’re thinking about the lousy driver, “But if they deliberately cut me off and flip me off, well, now I know they are a jerk.” No, you don’t. You don’t know what triggered them at that moment, why that seemed to be the best reaction in their mind or how self-aware they are. The best thing to do is not let it affect YOU! It takes practice. I caught myself getting frustrated with a driver who cut in front of me, almost hit a cyclist then slammed on his brakes in front of me.

I had to remind myself there was a reason he behaved that way, and while I could have assumed any of 100 different reasons, the reality is... *I did not know*. So *instead of* reacting, I took a deep breath, slowed down to create more space between us, and went back to enjoying my drive. And don’t tell me, “Well, I *have* to do something when someone does something like that”, or “I can’t help myself” when you re-act to a situation. It’s a choice. If you can choose to drive at the speed limit and not go through the car in front of you, you can choose how to act. Always. It just takes practice.

Someone not pulling their weight at work could be any of the Considerations or because they are not clear on one or more of the RAMP-IT attributes. Unfortunately, none of us are mind readers, so asking a question could be the first step.

A manager I worked with told me she would remind herself of “there’s a reason for that!” whenever she got an email with a question the person “should” know the answer to. And then she would reply.

I probably did that to her a couple of times without realising it. However, her emails were always polite and professional, assuming there was a reason for my not knowing or remembering.

In work or personal relationships, it doesn’t help to say, “You should know that.” I know I’ve done it to my kids and had to catch myself. In those situations, I stop, ask them what they do know and fill in the gaps. Arrghh! Consideration 11 - Realise there is something missing!

I’m going to come back to the current Consideration at the end of the book and reflect on how the “reason for that” could be one of the other Considerations.

If you’ve read this far and realised you’ll need to learn how to talk to people more effectively, please read “Captive” by Vanessa Van Edwards.

**There is a reason for that.** Say it a few times. Seriously. Imagine I’m doing it with you.

There is a reason for that.

I’m sure there is a reason for that.

There is a reason for that.

I wonder what the reason for that is.

There is a reason for that.

When you're about to get upset, frustrated, angry or complain, say these phrases to yourself. Then ask yourself what *you* can do to diffuse, deal with, or help the situation.

### **A teaser for RAMP-IT.**

It's hard to keep this out when I know it can also help.

As I've mentioned earlier, RAMP-IT is the foundational framework that's inherent in any situation for it to succeed, fail, or thrive at a higher level. These ARE reasons why things cannot go as expected. Here are four sentences that you can take a second to think of when it comes to why someone is not doing something or doing something that is not helpful.

- They don't know their "why". The reason they are doing something is not clear, leading to being unfocused or unmotivated. This is about purpose in the moment, rather than being about "life purpose."
- They have unclear thoughts, negative or unhelpful thoughts because of past experiences. They may also experience discomfort around certain people, leading them to pull away, reinforcing unhelpful emotions and thoughts.
- They don't know what steps to take, and someone assumed they should. They may struggle with accountability or creative accountability, the ability to figure things out without a frame of reference or prior experience.
- They do not have the skills or aptitude to do what needs to be done. Essentially, they are the wrong person for the job. My ex-wife hated boiling water and burnt a hole in the pot once! We realised she was not the person to help in the kitchen! I'm sure she has learned a lot since then, it was over 25 years ago!

These foundations of knowing why you or someone else is doing something, being aware of your thoughts and physical feelings, understanding the process and steps to accomplish it and having the right tools and skills to do it are the foundation for most things. If you want to know more about this, please look out for my other book, "RAMP-IT." You can also read the bonus chapter at the back of this book.

I include this next thought here to finish this section. This will come in handy if you're in a situation where someone follows a process that you know or feel could be improved and want to interject.

I heard or read it recently, and my brain didn't store where I saw it! I have added a couple of sentences in there too. If you recognise it, please let me know so I can give due credit.

Don't knock the systems in place right now, even if they are broken! The systems you have in place are there *because they were better than what was there before to deal with the situation as it was*. Acknowledge this, give credit to the people who developed it if they are still present, and try to understand why the current solution was the best solution at the time. Then figure out how today's situation calls for new perspectives, resources, and processes.

There is a reason things are the way they are now. It doesn't mean they have to stay that way.

## **REFLECTION AND ACTION for THERES A REASON FOR THAT.**

To implement the Consideration "There's a reason for that", remember to stop when you don't like or understand a situation and remember the world around you is happening on its own terms, and you're not included in every choice and deci-

sion! Accepting what you don't know and deciding *if* you *need* to know vs *want* to know is the first step to keeping yourself growing forward.

Take a minute to think about a situation from the past when you have re-acted, only to find out additional information that settled the situation or changed the way you reacted. This could be a bad situation, where you felt someone wasn't living up to your expectations, or a good situation, where everything went well, even though there may have been differences between you and others. There was a reason. You just didn't have it upfront.

**How to recognise when this Consideration could be a factor:**

Any time you get upset, frustrated, angry, impatient, annoyed, and even happy, joyful, excited, and jubilant about someone else or yourself.

Sometimes just stop and think, what *was* the reason for that going the way it did? Remember, you can consider this when things are going well too!

**What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

Take a minute to see yourself experiencing a situation from the past where you've been frustrated.

Imagine at the exact moment you were about to get upset, that moment when you:

- feel your breath shortening
- your body tightening
- your throat muscles constricting as you're about to scream or yell

- and that vein on your forehead starting to throb

you say to yourself, "There's a reason for that".

And take a deep breath.

Now you're ready to explore the Considerations.

# CONSIDERATION 2: IT'S ALL SITUATIONAL

AKA: *Why did they act like that here?*

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*"...the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself."*

LEON MEGGINSON - PARAPHRASED  
FROM CHARLES DARWIN.

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I READ a book recently that told me to go to my friends and family and ask them to pick the top five values they believed I had. The most common one is who I am.

Umm... no.

All that will show me is the values or traits these people noticed based on their expectations and the situation they know me in. I'll let that sink in for a second.

In plain English: We behave differently with everyone we meet, based on the situation and history (think his-story – or hers!) related to that person.

For example, some people could be withdrawn from work for many reasons. It could be they are new, an introvert, lack confidence, are being abused at home, have anxiety at work, or are just sick. Being in an office environment where others are more extroverted and have more familiarity, this person may appear cold or disengaged and possibly lacking compassion.

This same person may be a musician who gets a crowd going at a gig, throwing themselves into the crowd and writing lyrics that show compassion beyond measure. Someone meeting them there may perceive them as egotistical, loud, or “a typical musician!”

Same person, different values, traits, and personality in different situations.

Have you ever been around someone you are drawn to? Do you behave the same way when you're with a person you don't feel comfortable around? Have you felt this difference at the same event or party?

*How others perceive you is based on your physical and verbal cues while with them. And that is largely based on how YOU perceive THEM! It does not define you.*

When it comes to families, frequently the only time we see many of them is at family gatherings. Who we are, or how we behave, emote and act at those events, is who they think we are.

If there is a family member you have a great connection with, you may be more open and confident in those situations.

If there is a family member who is loud and overbearing or you've had bad experiences with, you may be withdrawn around them or avoid them.

Others may see this behaviour and simply associate that behaviour with you without knowing the underlying reasons for your behaviour. Oh, and you do this to the people you meet too. It's instinctive until you become more aware, which *you are* doing by reading this book and applying it!

The above situations can happen at work, especially when people from different locations don't see each other for weeks or months at a time.

As you go through the other Considerations, this is a key takeaway because I want you to think back to situations where you've behaved differently. Then think about how you felt in that situation. Were you comfortable? Skilled? Outgoing? Confident?

This messes most people up when they read books on manifestation or mindset. *It is not always mindset that is the problem.* It is not always fear. It is not always how much action you take. It all depends on the **situation** and circumstances, who you believe *you* are, and your belief in your own confidence in *that* situation.

Here's something else to think about; who you are talking to, in which room, at what time of day, and who else is in the room, along with your experiences, their experiences and any other factor creates unique situations. You can go from one room to the next and find your and other people's behaviour and actions change in an instant. What helps is just being aware of this and asking yourself why you may change. By the way, the answer is not because of the other person. It's because of how *you* have chosen to react to that person based on your *own* thoughts and feelings. *It is* all about you!

Situations change us.

As a dad, I frequently must be the one who upholds the rules. That can be tough for someone who was always good at breaking them, especially at school! The stories I could tell of climbing across the roof of the boarding house to go into town or walking miles to the all-girls private school! At other times I may question the rules, especially when it comes to school decisions and policy!

When I taught Digital Marketing to apprentices, I had to use the company systems and tools and do as I was asked without question. Yet when I got more comfortable, I questioned it, with a solution, of course, and challenged the status quo, always trying to improve the situation.

At times I may push back against something I disagree with, as we all do. We all experience multiple traits in different situations. In some situations, a lack of purpose will hold you back. In others, it could be a lack of a plan.

- I have been a great dad and sucked at a job.
- I have struggled with fitness in the past yet had no shortage of motivation for a hobby.
- I've closed a business because I lacked experience and a plan, yet I successfully managed teams and grew revenues in restaurants without blinking.
- I've been great as a dad when my kids were young yet struggled at times as they became teenagers.
- I've worked in different roles in the same company; one almost got me fired, and the other got me new opportunities.
- And my favourite: I taught and motivated teenagers at work, yet can't get my kids to clean their rooms!

I considered putting this next paragraph in later, however, I believe this is an excellent place to introduce the title of Dr Benjamin Hardy's book "Personality isn't Permanent."

You get to be, act and behave how you want to, and not be defined by your role, position, or feelings towards others.

The point here is that you get to choose your personality, emotions, tendencies, values, behaviours etc., *in this and every situation*.

What makes us good in one area over another? And why can't we replicate it everywhere else? We have not experienced both success and challenge in every situation we've ever encountered or are about to! To overcome this, continue learning, understanding and being aware of the other Considerations as a starting point, and remember that it's all situational.

Going back to the quote at the beginning helps to realise that change just means we are put in different situations, often several times a day. Learning to adapt and grow gives *you* the edge.

## **REFLECTION and ACTION for ITS ALL SITUATIONAL**

To implement the Consideration "It's all situational", realise that every encounter, even with the same people, on different days, at different times of day, in different places, with different purposes or intentions, means we are dealing with new factors...

Every.

Single.

Time.

Dwelling on or only pulling from the past limits our ability to get through *this* moment in time.

At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned that mindset is not always the problem and have not included it as a stand-alone Consideration in this book for a reason. Our mental attitude and thoughts are inherently open; otherwise, we wouldn't try new food, new clothes, meet new people or learn how to do new things at work.

Our thoughts on whether we can adapt or change are situational.

Take a minute to reflect on how you've behaved differently with different people in different situations. Do you treat strangers that are new clients or friends of friends differently than a stranger you meet at the cashout (tills) or on the street?

Keep this in mind the next time you're in a new situation and unsure how to respond.

**How to recognise when this Consideration could be a factor:**

When someone's behaviour or actions seem unusual, out of the ordinary, or something just feels off. This is the time to think about what usually happens and why it could be different this time.

**What was your insight from this Consideration? Who could you share it with?**

Think back to a time when you've behaved differently and know it's not how you normally behave. Think about why you behaved differently. You may want to return to this one once you've read the whole book, so you have more answers!

Now imagine you're in a situation where someone else is acting unusually. What could you say to yourself?

For example:

There's a reason for that.

It's all situational.

What can I do to help this situation?

# CONSIDERATION 3: EVERYTHING IS RELEVANT

*AKA: What have you done... to get you here?*

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*"Relevance is not something you can predict. It is something you discover after the fact."*

THOMAS SOWELL

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**EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER DONE HAS GOT you here. What you do next matters.**

As I'm writing this section, I happen to be sitting outside my dad's house in the south of France, where he has lived for the past roughly 45 years. I've come down here to see him for the first time in 3 years and get some time away from my everyday responsibilities to rewrite this book. He's lighting the grill for some fresh saucisse, a lovely herbed French sausage, and casually mentions we're in France thanks to my grandmother! He didn't even know I was writing this Consideration!

He was putting up shelves in my grandmother's house in the early '70s when a Frenchman visited. They got talking and two weeks later he was down here in the South of France looking for a place to live. The rest, as they say, is history.

Here's where it gets interesting. Because my father lives in France, I got to learn French. I studied French at a higher level at school. While working in a restaurant after finishing school, a Frenchman came in who didn't speak much English. I stepped in and was able to help. He was staying with some people I knew who lived in the same village so invited me over for a drink. While there, a visiting friend of his who worked for a cruise company gave me a business card. That led to me working on cruise ships and moving to America, where I met my wife, had my kids and got into coaching.

All these things happened because my dad put up shelves for my grandmother! I don't think she liked him either!

These things happened and created their path around life situations, divorces, marriages and moving to other countries. However, there are decisions I've made that have led to undesirable outcomes. There are things I didn't do because I felt it was too risky or not the right time. The point here is that everything I've ever done, the decisions I've made, the people I've met and chosen to hang out with, the work I've done, skills I've learned *or not*, have all brought me to this table in the South of France, writing these words.

And I'm ok with that. Are you?

I can't change what I didn't do. I can't change what I did. What I can do is think about where I want to be or who I want to be and decide what I need to do today, tomorrow and over the next few days, weeks, months and years to achieve it. That's part of the coaching process I do with my clients.

Who are you now? What got you here? Where do you want to be? What are you willing to do to get there? What are you willing to sacrifice? (no children or goats, please!)

What are you doing today that is helping you reach your goals? It matters. You'll realise in a few days, weeks or months when you either achieve your goals or don't. Whatever you did or didn't do in that timeframe got you to exactly the outcome you'll have.

In a work setting, I've often found people who don't like where they are believe it was all out of their control. It's as if they suddenly ended up sitting behind a computer, and nothing they did contributed to the situation.

I'll reiterate something I mentioned earlier: Where you are today is as much a factor of what you did NOT do as what you did.

- Not standing up for yourself.
- Not taking courses and learning new skills.
- Not speaking up.
- Not taking charge of your own life.
- Not walking away from a bad situation.
- Not choosing to be deliberate in your actions to help you achieve your purpose or desired future outcome.

I know the last one encompasses a couple of other Considerations; however, owning those decisions and helping the people you work with own theirs gives relevance to what you are doing today. When you do this, you are forging your own path to your destination, not blindly following a partially trodden path by someone else.

In a work environment, we can sometimes find ourselves assuming someone's elevated skill level based on our own

experiences, yet forget to realise they may not have had the same training or mentor.

In the introduction, I talked about starting a new job and holding another trainer to a higher standard. It turned out he had been thrown in at the deep end with a brand new curriculum and not the required training to match. No wonder he struggled.

In this context, the lack of adequate support, structure, and training from the company led to his inability to teach the material to the standards laid out.

The outcome was based on the foundation. A poor foundation leads to a poor result.

## **REFLECTION and ACTION for EVERYTHING IS RELEVANT**

What you do today affects tomorrow's outcomes. What you're doing is either helpful or unhelpful for you and the people you influence. Choose wisely. You can't tell the future any more than I can, so don't think you have to plan everything out. It's important to own your choices and be ready to change direction at a moment's notice!

Don't be afraid to go with the flow. Also, realise that if you want more significant or specific outcomes, you often have to direct the flow where you want it to go sooner, with more planning and focus.

When dealing with others, remember that they have not lived your life, so things you take for granted or expect others "should" know may not have happened yet for them. Take this as another opportunity to ask questions, e.g., what do you know about this, or what's your understanding of this, and be ready to fill in the gaps as needed, helpfully and posi-

tively of course. If this is their first time learning how to do something a new way, try to remember what it was like for you the first time you learned it and what caused you to have your insight moment.

What are you doing today that is helping you? Are you doing all you can, or are you spending just a little too much time preparing to prepare, checking email, flicking through social media, or sitting on the couch binge-watching instead of doing what you know could to help you achieve your goals and desires?

I'm not judging you. Only you know what you should or could be doing. If it's not what you are doing, do something about it!

**How to recognise when this Consideration could be a factor:**

Anxiety and depression are often expressed because of thoughts and emotions around not being where you think you should be, aka depression, or not knowing how to get to where you want to be, or what it will look like, aka anxiety.

These are simple definitions and, in the workplace, when people get anxious or depressed, it is often due to not being fully aware of, or accepting of how they got to where they are, *which can lead* to not knowing how to deal with or being fearful of what comes next.

Taking some time to think about where you are, how you got here, and focus on the positives can help with depression by being aware of the relevance and worth of your strengths and actions. Knowing you *are* enough where you are right now, and there is a solution, even if you don't know it yet, can help with anxiety and helps define what is relevant in your next actions to get you where you want to go or be.

Again, this is a very simple solution, yet it works. I cover this in more depth in the RAMP-IT book.

**What was your “aha” insight from this Consideration?  
Write down one thing that stood out for you.**

Consider an event where you were anxious or overwhelmed. How did you get through it? What would you say to yourself now if it happened again? What could you say to someone else who is anxious?

For example:

There's a reason for this.

How did we get here?

What do you think could be the first step to moving forward?

Will that help you get things back under control?

How can I help?

# CONSIDERATION 4: EVERYTHING IS RELATIVE

AKA: *What are you willing to give?*

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*“A coil spring understands relative force more than anyone. It longs to be squeezed, and when released, unleashes its greatest force on the world. Yet if you fail to fully depress the coil, it will return just as half-hearted a response and say, ‘that’s what you asked for’ “*

I SAID THAT

---

I DEMONSTRATED this Consideration with some of my students and just missed one of their heads by inches! Imagine holding a rubber band stretched out between your thumb and finger. You have a tightly folded piece of paper in the shape of a V notched into the rubber band, and you pull it back an inch.

You let go, and the paper “bullet” has no momentum and falls to the floor: little effort, no momentum, limited results.

Now try it again.

This time notch the paper bullet and pull it all the way back until you feel the rubber band straining. Let go and it'll fly across the room at speed, hitting your target if your aim is good!

More effort = more momentum = better results.

This is a simple way of explaining that your effort into something often determines what you'll get out of it. If you read this book and apply the Considerations, you'll get the benefits. If you don't, you won't. Amazing concept, right!?

In the networking group BNI (Business Network International), Ivan Misner coined the term "Givers Gain". That just about sums it up too. What you put in, you get back.

In the workplace, this often shows itself as a lacklustre effort in employees, especially new ones. I saw this a lot working with the apprentices.

The employees who got more mentoring and more training progressed faster than those who didn't. I will talk about accountability later, however, I want to mention that if you are the one who wants to go, and feel you are not being mentored or trained enough at work, nothing is stopping you from finding your own mentor online or doing online training. Nothing except you and your own limiting beliefs or actions.

Are you working with someone who seems to have run out of steam or seems to be doing the bare minimum? How can you help them learn more, be more motivated, inspired, or purposeful? Do you know their goals? Can you help them achieve them, or know someone who can? The more help they get, the more they can do, which helps everyone!

**“Relative” also has another meaning.**

*“Isn’t it strange how a lamb can feel like a lion when comparing itself to a mouse, whereas a lion feels like a lamb when measuring itself against dragons?”— Richelle E. Goodrich, **Slaying Dragons: Quotes, Poetry, & a few Short Stories for Every Day of the Year.***

I haven’t seen any dragons or lions around me recently, but I have seen a few BMW drivers being unnecessarily aggressive on the road. That is until a Bentley pulls up next to them. They look a bit sheepish then!

Relative in this context refers to how we perceive things in *relation* to our own experiences or self-identity. One of the reasons I don’t go into detail about my past, the different types of abuse I dealt with as a child and moving into adulthood, is because to some people it’s not going to seem that bad. To others, they may wonder how I survived my teen years!

I happened to go to a boarding school from 15 -18 years old. This was nothing like Eton or a fancy school. It’s where the kids who didn’t fit in anywhere else were sent. At least that’s how it seemed to the inmates, I mean, students. Getting caned across my palms after getting caught smoking in town is something I’ll never forget! Of course, I also won’t forget how long it took to run between the girl’s and boy’s boarding houses! Co-ed boarding schools rock!

Ever heard one of these?:

- You’re lucky to have a job like this...
- You should be grateful for having...
- You’re fortunate to have me in your life.
- You don’t know poor. When I was a kid...

All of these are subjective based on your situation and circumstances and relative to your perception of what *could* be. Everything can change with only a tiny change in perspective, perception, action, or direction.

Here are a few more perspectives on how to look at what is relative.

- The minimum wage job you'd never take is an unemployed person's chance to have a feeling of self-worth.
- The small home you'd never take is a haven for someone who has lived in squalor.
- Your moderate health is a goal of someone who is severely ill
- Your weird friends are a welcome change to someone who goes home alone every night.

OK, back to the first meaning of Relative, you know, the one about how much effort you put in determines how much you get back.

I know it's fictional, but I love how in *Back To The Future*, Marty's life changes because of something his dad did in the past. One punch when George stands up for himself, believing that his purpose is strong enough to fight for, and he realises he has the strength within him to act, then acts. That one moment changed their lives. How's that for being relative? Significant action, even bigger rewards.

My story is mine. Yours is yours. What matters is that you start creating your new chapters today based on who you want to and can be, not who you were, what you did or don't have, or what happened.

Whether you put in the effort in the past or not, today is the day to start taking more significant actions, with purpose of course, so you can look forward to more substantial rewards.

If you expect me to dwell on the past, sorry, I don't. I'm over it. (You can feel this way after reading my first three books too!) We've all got history.

I understand you may have gone through things in the past, even if it was five minutes ago. I don't want to diminish its severity nor excuse others' treatment of you. You are here, now, and can make choices and act today. So, do it! Take action. Take significant actions with purpose, and you'll find you get big rewards. If you're stuck on where to start, my other book, RAMP-IT, will help.

Bring the stuff that made you stronger with you. Leave the rest behind. In my workshops, I've added an activity where you get to write out two piles of notes. One is your strengths; what you've overcome and been better for it. The other is the stuff that held you back. You put the good stuff in your workbook and take it home. The rest you leave behind.

I feel I need to make this clear here: All my work, coaching and books are focused on forward, positive, growth-focused action in alignment with the RAMP-IT attributes. When you adopt that perspective you realise there is nothing holding you back unless you allow it to.

Here's something else to think about: How you feel at the end of the day is relative to how aware you are of your own thoughts and actions *during* the day.

Don't feel the need to correct people or defend your choices if you are doing things for the betterment of your team or family. If you find yourself pushing someone else's buttons, be aware enough to stop.

If you're feeling down, acknowledge it, then ask yourself what you can do to get out of this funk. Then do it, one step at a time.

Remember, it's all relative. What you put out can also come back to you. Some call it karma, some call it kismet, fate, or providence. As Rachelle Weisz's character in *The Mummy* says to Benji, "People like you always get their comeuppance!"

Whether or not you believe in karma, my point behind all this is that if you put out negative energy, comments and actions, the chances are the people receiving them will reciprocate in kind.

Instead, encourage, support, and realise that you have a choice in how you act and what you say and how you take on emotions. Being aware leads to greater self-control. Self-control leads to greater calm. Greater calm leads to feeling good, even if others don't feel the same way. And that is ok.

## **REFLECTION and ACTION for EVERYTHING IS RELATIVE**

To implement the Consideration "It's All Relative", remember that what you put in is what you get out. This can be effort, intention, helpful or unhelpful thoughts, words, actions, and time. If you want to see big change in others, there must first be a big change in you.

Think about where you are today and if you've got what you want. Now think back to how much effort, time, learning and improvement you've put into that area of your life.

Could you do more?

The answer to that is, of course, always yes!

Do you know someone who needs more support, training, or guidance? Can you give it or point them in the right direction? Remember, you may not always be the resource they need. This doesn't mean there isn't a resource that is!

**How to recognise when this Consideration could be a factor:**

Overwhelm would be one of the first signs of this Consideration being a factor because it usually stems from a lack of training, organisational skills, time and effort management, or mentoring on how to be more efficient.

If the outcome of what's happening is a lack of efficient productivity, the solution is not to come down on the person. It's to find out what they need to be more efficient. And if you think you've done all you can, or rather, all you know, to help them, it could be time to find someone else or another resource to help.

Remember that just because something makes sense to you, it doesn't mean it will make sense to someone else the way you explain it!

**What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

When have you experienced overwhelm and then learnt something that helped you?

Think about meeting someone who is overwhelmed and asking them questions.

For example:

What do you feel you don't know?

What have you tried?

Imagine you got through this situation. What changed to help you? Who did you become or what skills did you learn, or what changed to make it happen?

How can I help?

# CONSIDERATION 5: “YOU” IS FLUID

*AKA: Who are you today?*

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*“There’s such a lot of different Annes in me. I sometimes think that is why I’m such a troublesome person. If I was just the one Anne it would be ever so much more comfortable, but then it wouldn’t be half so interesting.”*

*L.M. MONTGOMERY, ANNE OF GREEN  
GABLES*

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**Who you are today is not set in stone.**

I HAVE NEVER BEEN a huge fan of labels, personality tests, behaviour models or tendency tests because I realised quickly that I was not the same person, exhibiting the exact same personality traits, or behaviours, in every situation, or with the people I either met, worked with or was in a relationship with. Are you? Always?

Neither were the thousands of people I've met and worked with!

Shock and horror! Anyone reading this who does personality tests will consider this blasphemous! And yet most people feel the same way about these tests, usually only a few days after they've done it, and have already forgotten most of what they were told!

I could never remember what all the letters, colours and numbers meant for me, let alone be able to speed read someone else and respond in time to make an impact!

I will add here that I think there is a place for these tests, more so for understanding yourself, thinking about why you have those traits, and deciding if you want to keep them or learn to take on more helpful behaviours. I don't think they are a good way to label people for the long term.

Think about your friends, family, and work colleagues for a moment. Write a list of the five people you spend most of your time with. Next to it, write a list of the people you rarely see. Do you behave, emote, or act **exactly** the same with each person? Do you find yourself adapting your personality to people based on the reward, aka passion, love, and encouragement, or rejection, aka cold shoulder, resistance or being discouraged, you get from them?

My parents divorced when I was under five years old, and my dad moved to the South of France. I only saw him once a year for a few weeks. When I was there, he worked a lot yet always found time for my sister, especially when the village fete was happening! He only hit me twice my whole life; once when I lied to him, the other when I was nasty to his partner. I think I was an early teenager at the time. I knew why I got the punishment, and other than those two moments, I was happy around my dad. He was easygoing and allowed me to be myself.

My mother was the opposite. Now don't read into this and think I'm maligning her. Without the way she acted and what she said and did, I would not be who I am.

My mother could unleash on me when she just *thought* I'd done something that didn't meet her expectations. I became guarded, defiant, and stood up to her, even if it meant being hit again. Again, remember this was over 30 years ago! Because of what's in this book and my other books and training, I can confidently say I don't allow what happened then to limit me today. See Consideration 20!

Those experiences gave me a perspective and understanding of mental, physical, and emotional discomfort that I otherwise wouldn't have. I can't go back and change the past and.... there was a reason for that.

In each family situation, I had to adjust my outward persona and behaviour. Time, and understanding of personal improvement, including RAMP-IT, evened me out. I learned to approach life without holding on to past baggage and blaming those events, people, and experiences for how I was behaving. *Your* situation could have been worse or not as bad. However, if you think about it, you probably also act differently with each person you know.

I believe we all like to think we behave the same with everyone, yet *we* notice each person's nuances and traits as being different to ours. We then fine-tune our personalities and actions to either get along with them when we like them or, when we don't or we feel threatened, become combative, defensive, or withdrawn. Sometimes it's because of one thing that was said or done in one isolated situation, yet we often hold onto that feeling and emotions around that person for years!

Most of the time, we adapt our personality and behaviour *because* of the history with the person or how we perceive *they*

feel about *us*! We then say we behave that way *because* of them, as if they are moving our arms and legs and mouth like a marionette puppet.

Sometimes, we behave a certain way towards people we don't know because of their looks, age, skin colour, the vibrant clothes they wear and our perception of how we think we should behave with them. My mother-in-law, years ago, made a negative comment to my ex-wife when she discovered my grandmother was Indian, from India! It was as if I had suddenly become someone else in that instant, all because of her preconceived ideas and judgment. Until then, she had treated me somewhat normally!

So why have I added this as its own Consideration? Because it is deeper than just being situational and needs its own section to highlight the importance of knowing that your personality is not fixed.

Remember, if you do not see eye to eye with someone, you can't control *their* perspective. You *can* change *your* tone, behaviour, and outward traits to help the situation. This does not mean giving in or being perceived as "weak" either. *It means you can adapt by being aware.*

*You can't expect a rock to move because it's in your way. Trying to reason with someone in the moment of disagreement is no different.*

It's easy to look back and see how we've changed over decades or during stages of life shifts. I'm not the same person I was as a teenager, in my twenties, thirties or forties. I'm not the same person I was before getting married the first time... or the second time! I'm not the same person I was before having kids, or after they became teenagers, started dating, or got their first motorbikes! I'm still struggling with being a dad to a teenage daughter who is self-confident, rides a motorbike, is dating, and getting ready to join the RAF. I

had to do some serious introspective thinking and mindfulness on this!

So, here's a question: Have you always been the same person you are today, with everyone you've met in every situation?

I'm guessing not.

Guess what, neither are the people we interact with every day!

In short, there could be a reason someone is being difficult with you and not others, or others and not you!

I certainly expect to be fluid and adaptable with my personality traits and behaviours in the years to come, and know that I'll continue to evolve. As will you.

I doubt you're the same person you were years ago. If you read personal development books or have taken a personality or behavioural test, I'm guessing your character, behaviours, actions, and thoughts are different to the person you were six months ago. Maybe you'll act and be different after reading this book or this chapter!

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**"Well, kind of a lot's happened since then!"**

NICOLAS CAGE IN "THE ROCK"

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Another important note here, and *this is important*, is that you're different today than you were with the people you haven't interacted with for a while. I've seen this at sales meetings, where someone who gloated and was "in your face" in the past, is now a leader and encouraging and supportive. Is it that *they* have changed, or we've changed enough to recognise the change? Or both?

*The people you know change, yet the last encounter we have with someone is often who we expect them to be the next time we see them.*

Read that again and take it in.

Not only do we often treat people assuming nothing much has changed since we last met them, but they are often doing the exact same thing to you!

Chances are, they are not the same person entirely.

*Are you holding people accountable for who they were or who they are now?*

Are you taking the time to find out who they are now? And even if they haven't changed much in the current situation, it doesn't mean they haven't changed at all. They may be reacting to who *they* think you *were* too! Think about *that* for a minute!

You may have argued with someone or commented based on your beliefs in that moment five minutes ago, yet reading a few pages in this book could change how you look at them, yourself, or the situation. If they come at you trying to rekindle the argument, you can say, like Nicolas Cage did, "Well, a lot's happened since then!"

Even children change from one day to the next, and as parents, without having this realisation that personality is fluid and situational, we hold our kids to their last mistake, achievement, or interest and often fixate on it. I know I've done it. My son will probably tell you I still do from time to time, and I have to catch myself or be called out on it and stop and think about it. It's ok, this all takes time!

If you have kids, and this sometimes goes for co-workers too, they'll be friends with someone one day and enemies the next. A week later, they're friends again. Their excuse often is "THEY changed!" Not "I changed!" Kids change their perceptions quickly and mature at different speeds. This affects how they see the people around them and whether they are still aligned with them or not.

The self-aware kids and adults tend to break away from people who have not reached or displayed the same level of maturity, and so they move on to find someone who is at their level to continue pushing themselves and growing.

Please note that this is only one of many reasons teenagers and adults break away from relationships, friendships, and jobs.

### **PERSONALITY: IT'S NOT AN EXCUSE!**

After talking to people who had taken personality, behavioural and tendency tests, other than the fact most had forgotten what it even meant and had no clue what it meant to their co-workers anymore, I found that they often used their new label as an excuse for who they were. They used it to define why they behaved the way they did and treated people the way they do. It was almost as if they thought they'd been aiming to become that label (red, blue, white, yellow, or ENTJ, Rebel, 7, etc.) and, feeling they now "fit" into this role, they should just keep on being *that* person.

Having this shiny new label justified who they had become. And now the label gave them permission to keep that personality trait, no matter how disruptive or harmful it is, and everyone else be damned! And then suddenly, that label started leaking into and taking over other situations and relationships that hadn't been there before.

“This is who I am!” is often a response when asked why they act that way. Sorry, but no. This is how you’re *acting*. Not who you *are*. Only 30-40% of who you become is genetic, depending on which study you look at. Even if it was 50%, you get to choose who you are and how you act for the other 50%.

I get it; most people want to identify with a role or persona so we can tell the world that’s who we are. That’s why all those quizzes on social media asking you for personal information to determine which Marvel, DC Comics, or cartoon character you identify with were so popular. I say “were” because they were banned by most of the social sites.

Interestingly, I’d written most of this chapter based on what I’ve read and experienced, and then out of the blue, Dr. Benjamin Hardy, one of Medium’s most prolific writers and a successful Organizational Psychologist, released his book “Personality Isn’t Permanent.” I highly recommend the book as it goes in-depth to what I firmly believe is true: Your personality is not permanent. It is fluid.

I like his book. A lot. I like it because it both validates my own thoughts and beliefs (don’t we all want that!?), and it is well thought out, questioning what we’ve come to accept and expect because so many people still teach that personalities, behaviours, and tendencies are wired into us at birth. Or, once developed through experience, are what we must live with. Forever!

They are not! Personalities are not permanent.

The world is also not flat. Fish have a three-month memory, not three seconds. Nerves can regrow, and the brain can form and reorganise synaptic connections itself - it’s called neuroplasticity. If any of those are new to you, you’re welcome!

There are companies and consultants who go into organisations and have people take personality and behaviour tests to better understand who they are. “You’re a Yellow” And now, suddenly, you are “the Yellow in the room”, and people look at you as if that defines you, justifies why you do what you do and excuses the “negative attributes” of that label.

While they are well-intentioned, and I know saying this will alienate all the people who live by these frameworks, I find they are detrimental to the work environment when the results are taken as a definitive end result or label to be identified with, no matter how much you tell attendees not to!!

People get their results and say, “well, I’m not like that all the time. And I see a little bit of me in all these types.” To which the instructor/personality test facilitator usually responds – “well, we all do, but you’re going to be more one than the others”, as if you are incapable of changing once you realise there’s a trait you want to change.

*Note: I was a little guilty of this the first few sessions I taught RAMP-IT and some of these Considerations and included a personality/behaviour quiz in my training. Despite reminding people that they are not the outcome, or label, indicated by the test and that it was just a guide for their current state or situation, people would still start calling themselves and others by the labels.*

Recognising you fit into *all* the categories at *different* times is a good sign of being self-aware and knowing you can change how you act and behave in different situations.

It reminds me of the Divergent films, where people are put in Factions. Then there are the Divergents, the people who can fit into any of the factions. They are self-aware and adaptable. Unfortunately, like in real life, while we strive for self-actualisation and the ability to be adaptable in different settings, it is often perceived as a threat or being a know-it-all when you achieve or exhibit being well-rounded! Go figure!

Dr Hardy's book also dispels the myth that *we* need to change to make others feel better about their "unchangeable" negative behaviour. Instead, understand that we are all different.

Be compassionate. If possible, find out why someone is negative, disruptive, or difficult, then help them see what is possible by modelling the positive behaviour. Oh, and do it without expecting they will have the instant insight you want them to have to "come around to your way of thinking". Let it sink in. I never said this would be easy!

When frustrated, we *react* based on what we know, not *act* on what we don't know yet. We get stuck in an identity loop, or pattern, usually because, according to Dr Hardy, one of the following four reasons:

- "They continue to be defined by past traumas that haven't been reframed
- They have an identity narrative based on the past, not the future
- Their subconscious keeps them consistent with their former self and emotions
- They have an environment supporting their current rather than future identity."

The point here is that our personality changes from person to person and situation to situation. It changes as we grow, learn new things, have new experiences, get older, change our beliefs, release limitations, and experience both traumatic and positive events.

As you go through this book, I'll remind you that you have a choice to either:

- Keep portraying all the personality traits and behaviours of the person (you today!) who got you this far,

- Or decide to define and take on the personality, habits and behaviours of the person who will get you where you want to go next, the future you, and live up to it. And know that it will change again as you grow and evolve!

Instead of personality “types”, in his “Personality Isn’t Permanent” book, Dr Hardy says: “*The most scientifically backed theory of personality breaks it up into what are called the “Big Five factors”, developed by Lewis Goldberg in the 1990s. It is often referred to as the OCEAN model.*”

This approach has been shown to be more effective and understandable to the masses than other profiling models such as DiSC, Enneagrams, and Myers Briggs (MBTI), and hopefully, you’ll see why I agree. Even if you make a living doing DiSC, MBTI or other personality tests!

Even Carl Jung had an opinion on this:

*“But everyone possesses both mechanisms, extraversion as well as introversion, and only the relative predominance of one or the other determines the type.” (Jung, C. G. Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 6: Psychological Types: 006 (p. 4).)*

This view can be applied to any of the OCEAN factors (see explanation below), in any situation! Yes, we may *lean* to one end of the spectrum for each attribute because of habits and learned behaviours. However, when you are more self-aware and realise who you want to be or how you want to behave, you can look at the factors in different situations more objectively and decide if it is helping you, the relationship, your objectives, the team, or not. And then adapt.

This is not a book about the OCEAN model, so I don’t want to get side-tracked. I’ve taken the factors and added a little context for whether you are showing high or low attributes of each factor. Don’t forget this is all situational too, so your

individual OCEAN attributes could vary widely between events, people, work, and social situations!

Introducing this to you is to give you a tool, or framework that makes sense and can be used in the moment, without needing to know colours, numbers, letters or putting others in a box or giving them a lifetime label!

I include this here because it's relevant to a lot of what's in this book. If you want to know how to get on better with others, it's important to be aware first of how *you* are acting in a situation. Then you can do a rapid read of the people around you, and you only have to know and understand these five factors to grasp where they are in relation to the situation and you.

Also, remember this is not about having to "give in to the other person"; it's about being aware and finding a helpful way forward that helps you all achieve your goal or purpose.

Following is a short-ish overview of the OCEAN factors. For a more detailed look with some pointers on how to understand where you are on a scale of 1-10 with each one, see the OCEAN Overview in Appendix 1.

### **1: *OPENNESS to new experiences***

How open we are to new ideas and learning. In other words, are we open to change, variety, and originality? How creative, curious, imaginative, vulnerable or daring are we?

### **2: *CONSCIENTIOUSNESS***

How organised, motivated and goal-directed you are – which is sometimes equated to your level of accountability, resource-

fulness, self-discipline, persistence, self-control, and connection to the purpose.

### 3: *EXTROVERSION*

How energised and connected you are around other people - Often equated to our views of self (worth, esteem etc.) and self confidence - being funny is a sign of self-confidence and extroversion, although I've met some extraordinarily funny introverts too!

I struggled with this concept for a long time because I'm outgoing and happy to stand on a stage and teach, yet I also like my personal space and tend to spend time alone when I'm thinking. To some, I may be called an introvert, while others may call me an extrovert. I could also be called an ambivert! Confused much? So was I. I started telling people I was an introvert just because I enjoy my alone time from time to time!

Yet, at the same time, I longed for a stage to share what I know because I know it helps! Maybe it's the Gemini in me!?! Or maybe, as mentioned in the Openness section, I've always had fun doing presentations and been supported, and prepared myself (usually) for a good presentation. I also don't let it get to me if something goes wrong.

Here's the reality: As much as I am not a Red, or ENTJ, or a 7, I am neither an extrovert nor an introvert, and *neither are you*. Sorry to all the businesses thriving on building up introverts. Keeping people in that fixed mindset of that label as if it's a negative label often only perpetuates the myth that they can't find a level of extroversion in more situations.

. . .

*We may show tendencies commonly associated with extroversion when we feel confident or comfortable and have the energy to expend associated with social confidence and comfort, despite it actually being draining. We may show tendencies commonly associated with introversion often when we are less confident or more comfortable away from a social environment or have less energy to give., even if we normally thrive on others' energy. Wanting to spend time alone to think and not be disturbed by people should not be labelled introverted.*

I've told people I like "me time", and they reply with "aww, you're an introvert, it's ok", like I'm a puppy needing my ears stroked.

I am confident that I work better when not disturbed, yet I'll also do it in a busy coffee shop! I also know people who show extroverted tendencies yet frequently need time to recharge or crash in a big way when their body tells them they need some downtime.

I have seen self-proclaimed introverts teach with incredible passion, mingle with the crowd, and get energy from their interactions, then sit in a corner office and work silently for days on end. I've seen introverts say things like, "I got up on stage and talked, but I'm an introvert." Instead, say this: "I got up on stage and talked, and I have introversion tendencies, and it's ok!"

It really is situational, so instead of calling yourself an introvert or extrovert, acknowledge when you have the tendencies of each in different situations, accept it, and change it *if you want to, and it will help you achieve your personal and/or team purpose*. More importantly, change it by putting yourself in new situations, in a supported environment, if it will help you achieve your own goals and become the person you've

decided you want to be.

And if you're typically extroverted, recognise when your body is screaming for some alone time!

If you're sitting there seething at my comments, I did say I would challenge your thinking. This is one of those times! You're welcome!

Those with HIGH Extroversion: Tend to be outgoing, the life of the party, easy to get along with and make new friends as they tend to be less inhibited.

#### **4: AGREEABLENESS**

How friendly and optimistic you are toward other people. More than Extroversion, which is more about your ability and tendency to interact and the associated energy, Agreeableness is more about the how of interaction. For example, you can be low on Extroversion yet high on Agreeableness. Of course, you can also be high on both!

Words like humble, patient, unselfish, polite, kind, trustworthy, sensitive, amiable, considerate and helpful are associated with being Agreeable.

#### **5: NEUROTICISM**

How well stress is handled and other negative emotions. In short, it's about Emotional Stability. Being able to manage stress and negativity better is an end benefit of understanding and applying what is in this book and the RAMP-IT book; understanding how to use RAMP to the main areas of your life with less worry and be less emotionally reactive in difficult and new situations.

I should mention that there is a difference between being neurotic, or having neuroses, and the personality trait “neuroticism”. Neurosis was a term coined in the 1700s to describe various mental conditions that at the time could not be linked or associated with physical ailments.

Today most professionals don’t use the term neuroses and instead diagnose specific conditions relating to depression or anxiety.

So keep in mind that Neuroticism in the context of personality traits is another way of saying Emotional Stability and the ability to handle stress.

Don’t forget to read Appendix 1 at the back of the book and get more detailed and actionable information about the OCEAN model.

When, not “if”, you master your emotional stability, you’ll be on the right track to achieve self-actualisation according to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

I don’t have enough space to make this a book about personality, so for more depth on this subject, please read this article on Positive Psychology: <https://theresareasonforthat.com/ocean> or read *Captivate* by Vanessa Van Edwards and *Personality Isn’t Permanent* by Dr Ben Hardy. You can find them on Amazon. Both are well worth the read or listen if you prefer audiobooks.

### **How to use the “You” is Fluid perspective**

1: Linking back to other Considerations, be aware that the people you know or think you know are still going to respond or react differently in different situations and with different people. If you realise someone is less Agreeable or

not being *Open* with a specific person, maybe pull them off to the side and start a discussion about something else. Use the question starter "What" instead of "Why" to be less aggressive/demanding. E.g., "What is holding you back" or "What doesn't feel right", instead of "Why aren't you going along with us" or "Why can't you see how this will help!"

2: When family start complaining about other members, do not join in, even if you agree! Show that you have grown and have a new perspective and offer your insights or excerpts from this book. If you have printed the handy dandy Considerations cheat sheet from the log-in area, you can show it to them and ask which one they think they can relate to in this situation. Don't make it about the person being complained about. Make it about the person complaining to help them get through the situation!

3: Anticipate others not getting your perspective, awareness, or insights. It's ok, it happens, be *Open* to this happening!

4: Be aware of how you act, respond, or react to people in different situations, especially when you don't "get" them or feel they don't "get" you. Try to catch yourself if you think you might say or do something snarky, snidey or unhelpful. Instead, ask yourself where you are coming from on the OCEAN factors, and think about where the other person may be coming from.

You can download a simple OCEAN chart in the online area to see where you are on the scale for each of these factors today. Maybe complete the form/worksheet based on your thoughts on personal growth or this book! Then do it again as a partner, a parent, a boss, a friend, or with multiple friends and see how it changes! Just being aware of this may make you think about how you interact with someone the next time you see them!

**CAUTION:** Please do not then *justify* your behaviour once you learn this. You behave the way you do because of what you have learned and acted on. This attribution of factors is an **end** result, not a cause! And they can change if and when you're ready to level up and be the person who is most helpful to you in realising your goals.

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for "You" is Fluid**

To implement the Consideration "You is Fluid", remember that we constantly change our minds, thoughts, habits, behaviours, and emotions. Not only is it happening, but it's also ok for us and others to change our minds!

To quote Nicholas Cage: "Well, a lot's happened since then" after being challenged for changing his mind from five seconds earlier after finding out his girlfriend is pregnant!

Events, situations, and other people's perspectives can change who we become and how we act instantly, and it's all ok.

Your personality today is what it is *because* of what you know, think, and have experienced up to this point in your life. Not only has it changed many, many times over the years, but it's now what it is because it's what you've chosen to adopt now.

Being aware of this allows you to adapt your personality (positively, of course) to help you.

You can change your personality and behaviours in an instant once you know how you want to be.

Using the five OCEAN factors is a good starting point for change. While we often lean toward one end of the scale for each of these, as you learn about them, the goal is to know when they serve you, when they don't and how to adapt to the situation, people, and environment.

Take a minute to think about your OCEAN factors in your last challenge, argument, or success. Did it change after getting more information? Would it change now that you know how and why you behaved that way? Don't forget to read Appendix 1 if you need more on OCEAN!

**How to recognise when this Consideration could be a factor:**

Conflict, change, and new situations often throw people into re-action mode. We become less open to what is not safe and familiar. We can become less agreeable if we don't understand what's going on. We can become more introverted when uncertain or more extroverted when feeling defensive.

A change in someone's personality or behaviour or assertiveness in new or different situations, environments, or unfamiliar people signals someone struggling with who they are and who they think they should be in that situation.

**What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

What could you say to someone who is being overly neurotic, nicely?

What could you say to someone who is low on the Agreeable scale in a positive way?

Think about how you could respond to each of the OCEAN factors. Seriously. When you've run it through in your head at least once, you now have an "instead of" scenario to fall back on. (coming up in Consideration 8!)

After you get into a heated discussion, what can you do to recognise if you were high or low on an OCEAN factor, and

what can you say to yourself and/or the other person to help when you regroup with your thoughts?

And remember: every situation is different. Just because someone was not agreeable or was overly neurotic in the past, it doesn't mean they will be in the next situation. Use the questions:

- How do you feel?
- What do you think?
- How does this affect you?
- And how can you see this working?

These are a good start, as long as you're open to listening and taking in their response.

#### **REMINDER:**

Often it's better to address a situation or conflict after everyone has left and come back together at a later time, even if it's five minutes. Trying to get someone to "see" your way in the heat of a discussion or argument rarely helps anyone calm down or be open to change. Discuss how it could have gone differently if everyone was more Open, Agreeable or less Neurotic. What would that look like?

# CONSIDERATION 6: FLAT TYRE SYNDROME

*AKA: Are you really the problem?*

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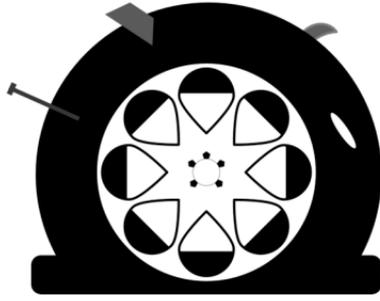
*“Too often, we treat the symptom as the cause. Too often, it is something often considered insignificant that’s at the root of the bigger problem.”*

I THINK THIS

---

I WAS fortunate to have a flat tyre at about the same time as writing this Consideration. Fortunate because something happened that gave this section a bit more depth. (Everything is relevant!)

I did exactly what most people do when their car starts feeling a bit wobbly. I got out of the car, looked at the flat part and thought “I have a flat tyre.” The symptom, the flat part at the bottom, was the clue something was wrong.



My next thought was, “OK, I know why.” I’d noticed the tyre, which was only a few months old, was noticeably wearing a bit thin on one side and had already booked a slot to get it looked at and replaced the next day.

So far, I’ve noticed a symptom, then thought I knew what the cause was.

When we took the tyre off to replace it, it was mind-blowing.

The tyre was so worn on the *inside* of the tyre that it looked like a piece of paper! I couldn’t see this from the outside. The wear I *could* see gave no indication of the underlying problem inside, and, thankfully, the tyre deflated as I entered a car park. I had just been driving 70 miles per hour on a dual carriageway a few minutes earlier, with my daughter in the car!

The point of this is that, as you learn the other Considerations in relation to a specific situation, you’ll notice obvious clues that something is wrong. These are often the glaring symptoms.

- Someone is angry at a co-worker they always seem to have a conflict with.
- A job isn’t getting done correctly, or at all.
- Production is down.
- Team morale is down.

- A relationship is suddenly feeling strained.

These are all symptoms. Based on some surface-level information, you may also think you know where the problem is (and you may be right). The important thing, though, is to dig deeper sometimes and inspect all attributes, both obvious and not.

- It's easy to address someone's anger but digging deeper to find out where the frustration is coming from would be better.
- It's easy to tell someone to do their job better, but digging deeper to find out why it isn't getting done would be better.
- It's easy to find someone to blame for why production is down but digging deeper to find out where the bottleneck is would be better.
- It's easy to put on a song and dance to lift team morale but finding out what's going on to cause it and correcting it further upstream would be better.
- It's easy to ignore a personality or relationship issue and hope it will go away, but digging deeper to find out if there is a communication problem or OCEAN behaviour conflict would be better.

Look beyond the obvious. Dig deeper if something seems out of place. Question everything until you know you've got it all covered because when you think you know what's going on, you'll realise Consideration 11: You are missing something!

And always look inside. Yes, that means looking at yourself before looking out.

Sometimes we react to others because something is going on with ourselves!

One final note on the flat tyre syndrome. If you get a puncture from a nail in the middle of the tyre, it's something that can be sorted out. Too often, we look at one small incident, which brings us down, or deflates us, pun intended. It's easy to pass judgement on others because of one thing they did. At times like this, it's important to remember that the other 99.9% of the tyre, or you, or them, is still perfectly fine. You just need to patch a hole and get back on the road!

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for The Flat Tyre Syndrome**

To implement "The Flat Tyre Syndrome", remember to look beyond the presenting symptoms before re-acting or responding.

- While all flat tyres may look the same at first glance, the cause will likely be different.
- Look in before looking out; what you can't see could be the cause.
- You, and others, are 99.9% ok most of the time and often only need to sort out a minor problem to get back on track. Don't let it get you down!
- Sometimes what is wrong is exactly what you see! It's always good to check everything else to be sure.

Don't forget the Flat Tyre Syndrome!

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

When you have a recurring problem, for example, a task not being done despite being addressed multiple times, it's time to dig deeper and ask questions.

Identify what seems to be the obvious cause, then ask what else contributed to that factor, seeming to be the cause.

If someone snaps at you, could it be something is going on in their life?

**Did you have an insight here? What was it? Who can you share it with?**

You've probably noticed a common theme in dealing with the Considerations. That theme is to ask questions.

Try to avoid making statements.

How could you start your sentences with "I" instead of "you"?

For example, "I see/ get/ feel/ hear your frustration. (depending on your or the other persons learning style if you know it! See Consideration 19) I'm sure there's a reason for that! Is there something else going on I need to know, or you'd like to share to help here?"

Anticipate the answer being no! If that happens, how could you respond in a way that can help? Could getting another person involved help? Could reassuring the person that when they're ready, you will be available?

# CONSIDERATION 7: LIFE IS LIKE A LAZY RIVER

*AKA: Is it me, or is it you?*

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*“You are an external force to others as much as they are an external force on you. Either can be a positive or negative force and is often influenced by our own internal state. Take control of you first, and the outer influences will feel less scary.”*

I BELIEVE THIS

---

IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN to a water park, they usually have a river that's on a never-ending loop. You can sit in a rubber tyre or inflatable floaty bed thing and just float around and around, enjoying the flow, the sun, and the company.

Sometimes you stop on the inner side, find a warm or cosy spot with friends, and feel safe there. It's easy to forget to get back in the flow and enjoy the ride. It's a safe space, and if there's a bar, well, it's easy not to do anything.

Sometimes there are obstacles that build up and restrict the flow, usually other people or objects. You can't usually control them, so you learn to accept and wait and move through in good time.

On the outside of the lazy river, there are often lifeguards. Some are mean and rude and don't let you do anything. Some are there to help you through the tough spots, get things moving and help you enjoy yourself.

You've probably guessed that this is an analogy for life and our environment. There are internal factors that we control: Where we stop, for how long, and how we occupy our time and thoughts. These internal factors can be either helpful or unhelpful, and the critical thing is that WE control them.

As you go through the rest of this book, I want you to think about this part. Most of what you want and are doing to achieve it depends on these internal factors that you control.

*Not* doing things you should be doing is as bad as doing unhelpful things. Neither will get you where you want to be.

On the other side, external factors are often out of your control. Sometimes they will help you, like a supportive partner, a boss with great leadership qualities, or your fitness coach who pushes you beyond your limits despite the screaming!

Other external factors may limit you, restrict you and hold you back.

The point of this Consideration is to reflect on what is stopping you from achieving your goals or purpose and not put the blame on things out of your control.

Is it really an external factor, or are you feeling safe and not taking action on what you can control.

Are you looking for someone or something to blame instead of taking ownership of yourself?

Is there an external influence you've allowed to stop you but are ready to eliminate it?

These are some of the questions I ask my clients after they've had RAMP-IT training because being TRUE and answering questions like this honestly is one of the most important qualities and attributes of positive change and growth.

I know that I let my concerns about publishing this book hold me back. It wasn't anyone else. It wasn't my kids needing rides. It wasn't my dog needing walks. It wasn't my job teaching taking up my time. *I* was not making the time and not getting the help I needed to see it through.

When I joined the right community (external factors, resources) and got the structured support and process to push through, strangely enough, I found the time to commit to finishing and got it done. How do you know this is true? If you're holding this book and reading it, it's because I followed through and finished.

When we deal with people who are not self-aware, not in control of their inner influences, and expect everything external to drive them, it shows itself as a "victim" or "closed mindset" mentality... in *that* situation. See how it's all relevant?

The important thing to realise is that most people are not as self-aware as they think they are. They may be aware of what is happening "to" them or around them. However, they don't stop to think about how they are influencing what is happening and how their own thoughts and actions can change their personal situation for the better.

This can be at work with people who feel they must do things a certain way or management believing the way things have been done is the only way.

The pandemic proved to thousands of companies that people could work from home as well as, or better than, working in the office.

Encouraging people to look at their personal thoughts and actions in a positive way as a mentor or leader will help them see you as a positive external influence.

When I worked at an apprenticeship company, I had to deal with an employee who was being bullied by their manager. This stemmed from someone else in their department feeling as if they had run out of options and had become condescending, rude, and belittling in email correspondence. As a result of this, the employee felt they had no options other than to prepare their resume.

When I met with him, I was annoyed at what was happening, however, it was out of our control how these other people were acting due to their own lack of self-awareness and leadership skills. What the employee *could* change was what they did. I asked him what he *could* do. No one had asked him that before. No one had asked him how he learned better and made an effort to help him because they assumed he could, or should, learn the same way as them.

Once he realised there were things he could do, he put a plan together. It wasn't perfect and didn't solve the entire problem at first. However, it did allow him to keep his job. He changed his internal focus from being a victim to having control and choices and realised he had the skills needed and made appropriate changes.

Unfortunately, the managers, his external influencers, were not helpful and did not see themselves as negative external

factors. If they had realised that what they knew about how to deal with the situation was not enough, they may have gone elsewhere to find a solution sooner.

I'll give one more example I've heard both at work and home.

"That person made me feel that way". Or, as my daughter says, "You're making me so mad right now!"

It's tough knowing that these are just thoughts, and she has a choice in how to respond. And of course, I can't say, "I'm not doing anything to you. Those are your thoughts!". Ok, so maybe I did once. It didn't go well. I don't recommend doing it to someone at work or your partner either! Maybe just hand this book to them with a couple of relevant pages dog-eared!

Thankfully, my daughter is better at coming back to calm faster than I am, and she helps ground me when I need it!

So, if you are the person getting upset, start your sentence with "I'm feeling" or "I think". If it's someone else who is upset, start with "I understand your frustration. How can I help?" If nothing else, it will probably make them stop and wonder why you want to help!

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Life is a Lazy River:**

Look in before looking out. Be aware of what is influencing your progress and determine whether it's internal factors you control, *including* what you're *not* doing or external factors that you can either live with or change.

When you face conflict, first look at what you can do to change the situation with yourself. Then see if you can help the other person discover what they can do themselves to change the scenario.

Then look at the external factors. Remember, you are someone else's external factor! Are you a helpful one or not?

When you work with other people and feel they have the potential to do better, take the time to ask questions to help understand where they are coming from first. Then see if you can find a solution together.

It's been shown that employees with more autonomy frequently do better than those who are controlled, but we'll talk more about that in Considerations 9 and 10!

**How to recognise when this Consideration could be a factor:**

People often take credit for when things go their way but want to find blame when they don't. Leaders and successful people take responsibility whatever the outcome. Look for signs of blame, deferring responsibility or frustration associated with demanding, controlling or "toxic" work environments.

Remind yourself and others that you do have control, even if it means walking away for a few minutes or forever if warranted.

**What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

I was at a meeting when someone complained that her training material was terrible and she could do better. Looking for a reaction from me, I simply said, "So why haven't you created something better?" The look on her face was enough to show she'd had an insight, realising that she could control what was happening!

Think back to a time you believed you had no choice. If you could go back, knowing what you know now, what solution could you have provided?

Next time someone comes to you believing things are out of their control, ask this question: "If you could change the situation, what would you do?" It may not be feasible or appropriate, however, it gets them to stop and think, and those initial thoughts could lead to an actual shift in ownership and solutions being found.

Other questions you could ask:

- What is in your control that you can change?
- What is in your control that you can strengthen and develop?
- What is an obstacle that you can deal with yourself?
- What is an obstacle outside of your control that you can bring to someone's attention?
- What is outside of your control that can help you?
- What is out of your control where you can influence change?

# CONSIDERATION 8: INSTEAD OF

*AKA: What's the alternative for you?*

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*"Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives - choice, not chance, determines your destiny."*

*ARISTOTLE*

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WHEN I STOPPED SMOKING in 2004, I did it in one day. This was *after* setting myself up for success weeks ahead. I'm not saying it wasn't hard, or I didn't have withdrawal symptoms or I wasn't sick. I had all of it. It's as if my body knew that this time was it and was ready to purge!

The worst part is that I was horribly sick from this for a few days while my wife was recovering from a c-section!

What kept me going and, more importantly, stopped me from buying more cigarettes were those two words.

“Instead of.”

I had set a day when I’d stop smoking. It was the day my daughter would be born.

Weeks before that, I’d figured out when I smoked, how much, and what triggered my smoking.

For example, I’d buy my cigarettes when I bought fuel.

I typically had a cigarette or two on the way to work, depending on traffic.

After picking up my son from school, I’d have a cigarette on the balcony. He was always inside!

I’d often have one after dinner.

Then I set up my “instead of” statements.

The first one was the most important. When I’d buy fuel, instead of saying, “Pump 3 and a packet of cigarettes, please”, I’d say, “Pump 3 and the receipt, please.”

I was still asking for something, still receiving something. However, I would not go to the car and light up the receipt!

Then the drive. Instead of swerving off the road to buy cigarettes, I’d say to myself, “instead of smoking in the car, I’ll open the window and breathe in the fresh air.” If it was cold, I’d change it to “I’ll sing along to one of my favourite songs.”.

In every situation, I had an “Instead of” choice.

This was way before I developed RAMP-IT. My purpose to be a healthy dad who didn’t smoke was strong. I was mindful of my feelings and emotions around smoking, which I’d been doing since I was 11 years old. I used my phrases as my resource, and reciting them in the moment was making myself accountable. That was the plan that I held myself to while keeping the end goal of being a non-smoker in mind.

And yes, this paragraph just summed up the RAMP-IT framework too!

This is one of my favourite Considerations because it's a game-changer. These two words, "instead of", can help you overcome bad habits, addictions, inaction, not doing anything, unhelpful activities, and more simply by being aware of them and giving yourself a conscious *choice*.

We humans like having a choice, especially when we need to stop doing something or are asked or demanded to stop doing something.

As a child, I heard this phrase a lot. "Stop doing that, Nolan".

Ok, what should I do instead? If there wasn't an alternative, I'd revert to what I was doing, adding to the frustration of anyone who knew me. It may seem "common sense" to you that I'd figure out what else to do or that the co-worker or your partner would think of something else to do instead of what is annoying you.

I'm going to add this quick thing here as it just happened while walking my fur boy Saxon -my dog! I happened to walk past a family where one of two small children was getting in the car, apparently to the wrong seat. The dad angrily said, "No, you're not going to do that; you know what to do." The child seemed determined to go where he had decided to go. Dad again; "I said no, don't do that."

As I walked away, I could still hear the frustration. What could have helped here is telling the child; "Instead of sitting there, can you sit in the other seat because..." The "because" part answers the child's natural tendency to ask "Why?". Making a declarative statement with an "instead of" means you acknowledge what they want to do, or are doing, yet gives a more polite choice that is typically not taken as an actual question!

When you have a choice or are given an alternative, it means your brain must stop and think about the options. When you are self-aware and thinking consciously, or the new option is easier or more beneficial, it's easier to make the more beneficial and harder choice over the familiar, comfortable, tasty, or easy one.

There is a cheat sheet on RAMP-ing Habits in the resource area for this book.

*The point of this is that you must have an alternative option to the unhelpful habits and behaviour that is not beneficial, so you have an alternative to choose to act on at the crucial time.*

If someone is late all the time, don't just say, "Stop being late". Instead, suggest they set their alarm earlier or try to be at work earlier. Also, you must actually say it to them. What seems like common sense to you may not be the first thing someone else thinks of or the tenth! Even better would be to ask them what solutions *they* can think of to overcome the unhelpful behaviour or act, and when they come up with a solution you can both work with, make the statement; "So, instead of – insert unhelpful action here – you're going to – insert solution here." Once they agree, get them to write it down and put it somewhere they can see.

If you know your first instinct is to react to a family member negatively, instead of waiting to be triggered by them, anticipate seeing them, and plan out what you can say.

Doing what you've always done, letting your emotions take over, or trying to use willpower in the moment to control yourself rarely works. Think of a pothole when driving. Driving over the same obstacle and hoping *it* moves for *you*

won't solve the problem! You think about what you can do instead of going over it. And then think about it before you hit the pothole the next time and drive around it. Or have another route planned.

If eating food that is unhelpful to you is something you want to stop doing, set up your *"instead of"* food items and have them ready at hand. Remind yourself of your *"instead of"* choices. Know when you snack or take a break and have your *"instead of"* statements at hand. And set yourself up before you go to the grocery store, knowing what you'll buy *"instead of"* the unhelpful foods. Or order online!

This also works when you interact with people who, until now, may have annoyed you. Often it is *you* making the shift that changes the dynamics.

Think: *"Instead of"* getting upset, I'll pay a compliment.

Or: *"Instead of"* being short with someone, I'll ask a question. (not with an angry face!)

I'll come back to this Consideration a few times in upcoming segments, and eventually you'll get the hang of it.

Here's a bonus tip: Make the instead of action, thought, or phrase small. It helps when it's easy to do as there will be less resistance. You can also use Mel Robbins' 5 Second Rule, and when you need to do your *"instead of"* yet feel a little friction, just think 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and do it.

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Instead Of.**

Think of a habit or situation that you know is unhelpful to you, and you tend to react to or be triggered by it.

Think about how you usually act, or re-act that perpetuates the habit or behaviour.

Think about the times something happens and you re-act with the unhelpful behaviour.

Write down - yes, WRITE DOWN - what you usually do, and then your "instead of" statement next to each situation or trigger.

Do this for your habitual reactions and emotions.

You can do this for multiple habits or behaviours.

- Eating
- Exercising
- Watching TV
- Spending time on social media
- Doing things for your partner.
- Spending time with kids
- Mentoring people at work
- Learning about finance
- Reading / watching educational material
- Having fun!

You could even use Google Keep notes app on your smart-phone to keep track of them and read them in the morning before you go to work or meet with the family and remind yourself of your new choices.

Instead of thinking, "this is a cool Consideration", do the activity right now. Once the "instead of" statements and choices are conscious, it makes it a lot easier to do what's more helpful for you!

You can also use this activity if you're a manager or leader at work with someone who is not acting or working in the team's best interests or the company.

And if they say "Instead of working here, I can work somewhere else", that may not be a bad idea!

. . .

**BONUS**

Take this a step further with two additional statements. This will help solidify your purpose in the statement and keep it in mind easier.

Instead of.... So that... Because.

The “Because” part is an effective way to not only get other people to do things for you and has been shown in studies to work better than just asking for something; it will also help remind you of your own reasons for making the right choice.

Here are a couple of examples. Replace items with what suits you.

*Instead of buying cigarettes, I'll ask for a receipt so that I can stay healthier because I want to have more energy to play golf, or play with the kids, or be more intimate with my partner.*

*Instead of getting upset with, name of person you get upset with..., I'll pay them a compliment so that we don't argue because it sets a good precedent for the kids / other team members who are watching our every move!*

*Instead of eating junk food, I'll eat an apple (or your choice of healthy food) so that I can keep to my health goals because it will help me lose weight and fit into my kilt.*

*Instead of putting off my project until the last minute, I'll set up a reminder system so that I can help my team because I want to keep my job!*

Try it yourself.

**What was your insight for this Consideration?**

To implement the Consideration “Instead of”, imagine yourself in the best possible outcome and what you would need to tell yourself to achieve it.

How would you feel?

What would you think?

What actions would you take?

What habits would you have?

How would you overcome falling back to unhelpful habits?

Another way to do this is to imagine a friend came to you with the same problem. What would you suggest they do or say instead of their current choice? It *is* about choice. Not having a choice often leads back to default or “safe” unhelpful behaviours.

# CONSIDERATION 9: YOU GET TO CHOOSE

*AKA: Where's the ball and chain?*

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*"Attitude is a choice. Happiness is a choice. Optimism is a choice. Kindness is a choice. Giving is a choice. Respect is a choice. Whatever choice you make makes you. Choose wisely."*

ROY T. BENNETT, THE LIGHT IN THE HEART.

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YOU CAN ONLY CHANGE how you behave, think and act. And it can be instant.

I've changed jobs more than a few times, and each time I had to learn new ways of doing things and meet new people I had to get along with. I don't dwell on the past too much or too long when I changed jobs, as most people don't. What happened at my last job may or may not help me, and dwelling on what I thought was a good idea won't help me if the new place doesn't do it.

Whether in a new job, working with a new coach, in a new relationship, or learning a new skill, choosing to take in new information and do things a new way makes life a lot easier for yourself and the people you now associate with.

You can refer to Consideration 5 and the section on OCEAN and Openness if it helps here! Everything is relevant!

This does not mean being weak, a pushover, or not standing up for yourself when it matters. It means you have the ability to adapt at a moment's notice when it matters, accept that there are other ways of doing things, and you have a choice how to act.

And the change can be instant.

When you want it to be.

If the thoughts you have aren't helping you, change them.

If the actions you're taking aren't helping you, change them.

If the actions you're NOT taking aren't helping you, do them!

As I said in the introduction, I'll get hammered for this section from psychologists and therapists; however, I stand by it because I not only know it's true, every successful person and each of my clients who have had a transformation or breakthrough will tell you the same thing.

You do have a choice.

This book is aimed at people living in most first-world democratic societies where we have freedom of choice, the ability to read and listen to what we want and access to the internet, libraries, schools, and online courses. We also have access to counselling, coaching, and law enforcement, that is just and helpful for the most part.

Staying in a situation that is unhelpful to your progress is a choice. Yes, it can create hardship until you get sorted out or

get help. Yes, it can be difficult, and you may think there are no solutions. I've seen first-hand the effects on people who have this mentality that they don't have a choice and those who find a way forward despite not knowing what will happen next. The former always has it harder and makes it harder on themselves.

Choose to do what helps you fulfil your purpose and goals, and remember that the reason you haven't made the change you know you could or should be making is only that you haven't chosen to act on it... yet! Let me reiterate here that I'm assuming you know what you could or should do.

Choice can also be not to do something. When I stopped smoking, I chose to change my habits and not buy cigarettes. Now, I make a choice not to buy alcohol very often. I still struggle with the sweets/candy aisle at times, however, I make a conscious choice to either skip the aisle completely, have an "instead of" item to buy on the list, like carrots or cucumbers, or deliberately go down the aisle and don't buy anything to prove to myself that I can do it.

I never said all this would be easy or *all* of it would be instant. Being aware of what you're doing, thinking, and feeling is the first step that allows you to make better choices!

### **Where *is* the ball and chain?**

You may be wondering why I put that at the beginning of this Consideration, so I'll keep this simple. I've been a trainer and coach now for many years, and something I hear a lot is, "I can't do that because someone is holding me back." These people got up, got dressed, got in their car, went to work, and came to my training, all by themselves! My question to them was this: "Where is the ball and chain

around your ankle that stopped you from getting here today?”

After looking at their ankle, they invariably say, “There isn’t one.”

Unless someone is physically restraining you, in most cases you have chosen not to do something and justify it by believing someone or something is holding you back.

The reason we choose to blame someone else and take on the role of victim, where things are not in our control, is usually because there is a lack of knowledge or clarity around either what you want or how to get there. Accepting you won’t always get the support you’re looking for from the people you think and hope are there to support you (Consideration 15 – Let it go) will help you realise you don’t NEED everyone’s support to take the steps you need to change. You just need the RIGHT people’s support.

In most cases, you must choose to get answers, ask more questions, go to more people, and realise that when you do get your answers, find your clarity, and achieve your goals, the people you thought were holding you back will either have let go and not be in your life or holding on for dear life as you drag them along with you.

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for You Get To Choose:**

You have a choice in all you do, whether to stay, go, stop specific actions that are not helping you, and start to do things you haven’t been doing that can help you.

Making these choices can bring challenges, pain, and discomfort. Anticipate this and find a resource to help you through. Then figure out what the first step is. Is it having an “instead

of" alternative? Is it getting help? Is it just making a choice and sticking to it?

You CAN do this!

When it comes to other people and expecting them to make instant choices to change, read the following few Considerations, it will help you not get frustrated when they don't "get" what you do or want them to do straight away!

Too often in a work environment, people do things because "that's the way it's always been done", or it's a cultural thing, or a teacher taught them that was the only way, or a family member taught them how to do something.

We're all born with no beliefs about anything. We take on other people's beliefs until we are old enough to make our own choices and decisions. We often forget we can choose to question everything. Too often, we forget that we can make our own choices after a while.

As a coach, my goal is always to help people move towards their purpose and actively encourage questioning their beliefs when it is not helping them.

You can too.

It's easy to tell someone they have a choice in what they are doing because you want them to do it. However, choosing to do something comes from it making sense first or having an insight first. Instead of telling someone they can choose to do what **you** want them to do, revisit their understanding of the purpose, their thoughts based on their own experience, whether they have the right tools and training, and if the steps are clear enough for them to have their own insight through understanding, so they voluntarily say "Yes, I'll do it!".

This way, it really does become their choice.

. . .

**How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

Similar to other Considerations, feelings of overwhelm, lack of options or being controlled are symptoms of emotions around or believing that we don't have a choice.

People who say they're "stuck" or in a toxic environment are effectively blaming the external factors in their environment. Often it's because they don't realise or know they have an alternative solution.

**What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

One client told me they felt trapped in a job with a "toxic" manager. I asked them what they'd do if the company closed tomorrow.

Their answer, stated factually with no hesitation or emotion, was this: "I'd get another job".

They realised at that moment that they had a choice, and they did indeed get another job within a couple of weeks!

You're never as stuck as you think you are. There are always places to go and people who will help you.

# CONSIDERATION 9B: EMOTIONS ARE THOUGHTS.

AKA: *Is it as bad as you think?*

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*"You are one thought away from happiness, one thought away from sadness. The secret lies in thought."*

SYD BANKS.

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WARNING: *What I'm about to tell you will probably fire up some emotions! We've all been conditioned to think a certain way by our peers, parents, professors, and environment. It's not your fault you think this way or anyone's fault. It just is the way things have been for too long. Too many things if you ask me!*

*We have been trained to believe we have a right to get emotional and let our emotions lead to a secondary physical response. The first being our initial "feeling" and instinctive reaction and the second being our fight, flight or freeze response.*

*Here is a different perspective:*

. . .

*You have a right to be calm, in control, confident and choose how you respond.*

*This Consideration's purpose is to give you an insight that gets you closer to this goal.*

When I trained new staff in restaurants, I would occasionally get emotional about a new hire's lacklustre effort, unwillingness to learn the menu, or fear of talking to customers, the very reason they were hired! If only I'd known then what I know now!

I still get emotional about some things, yet most things just don't bother me anymore because I know that I don't have to get emotional. The saying "Don't cry over spilt milk" is apt because it has already spilt.

The deed is done.

In the time it takes to get upset, have a meltdown, blame someone, the fridge, the bottle and regroup enough to clean up aggressively, you could instead realise it can't be undone, accept it, clean it, and get back to what you were doing.

*Based on many recent breakthroughs in self-inquiry and personal development and my evaluation of them, I am confident you'll find this chapter one of the most beneficial for you in your quest to stay calm and in control in more situations.*

I agree with Syd's quote above. However, his other popular quote:

"All **feelings** derive and become alive, whether negative or positive, from the power of **Thought**." I disagree with.

I disagree because feelings and emotions, which is what he is referring to, are two very different things. Yet we've been

trained to believe that feelings *are* emotions. When asked how we feel, most of us instinctively reach into our minds for the emotion du jour. I'm sad, hurt, happy, angry, positive.

Instead, we should be tuning into our bodies and realising how we hold ourselves. The realisation, subsequent breathing, releasing and relaxing, and being aware of our thoughts can often reduce or eliminate strong emotions.

Emotions are *words* to describe the combination of how our body is reacting, how we physically feel (feel-ings), and what we think about that reaction in context to a specific situation. They are descriptors of the *combination* of our thoughts and physical sensations combined with the situation and our past experiences, AKA our story.

The duration of the emotion is relative to how long we keep telling ourselves the story. When we choose to create and tell a new story, whether it's moving in a new direction, taking on a new course of action, or doing something that doesn't allow us to keep the negative story alive, we soon forget it. Until we get stuck again, and the negative story, and associated emotions, become the "go-to".

Remember the last Consideration, Instead of? That's a good one to review after this Consideration!

Now I'm not saying you should try to get rid of good and positive emotions quickly. You want to keep those good and positive stories alive, especially when the bad stories want to try to surface their ugly heads again!

I know many people still believe feelings and emotions are the same thing, however I've found it beneficial to my clients to separate them, so they can fully understand the mind/body connection. Just as "thoughts", that initial primal, reactive, safety-driven response, and "thinking", the aware,

conscious decision, and subsequent choices we make, are different and impact us differently, so do physical feelings and emotions.

I'm sorry if that took the fun out of passion for you. I'm here to help you find inner calm, clarity, and confidence. To do that, it's important to understand how we create and define emotions so we can control them consciously, even in challenging situations, and not be controlled by them.

When you think about the Basic Six Emotions, as defined by Dr Paul Eckman in the 1970s – Happiness, Surprise, Sadness, Anger, Fear, Disgust, it's important to note that only one of them is positive, one can be either (surprise), and the rest are deemed negative.

Love is not there. Passion is not there. Jealousy is also not there. They are considered variants of the others.

I want you to think about this: If all emotions are thoughts, and all thoughts can be controlled, why is it so hard to let go of negative emotions?

In my opinion, and as I've said, most of this book *is* my opinion and summary of everything I've learned and experienced, emotions come from four things at a base level:

- gain or loss,
- sense of worth or value,
- sense of safety, and
- lack of knowledge or understanding.

The depth of the emotion comes down to the scale of each of these four basic factors.

Positive emotions come from gain, feeling safe, feeling good about yourself and a common understanding of the situation.

When we are happy, in love, or passionate, it's because we feel good about ourselves, the people we are with, the situation, that we are safe and that we have a good level of understanding of ourselves and the situation and feel in control. Our physical feelings tell us we are ok based on past experiences and our thoughts and outcomes in those situations. If they were positive before, they should be positive now.

Negative emotions come from loss, a lack of safety or security, a lack of self-worth and a lack of knowledge or understanding.

When we are sad, angry, disgusted, or fearful, it's often because we don't feel valued, are uncertain about what happens next, fear something is being taken, or a combination of these. It can also include not understanding how we got there or how we'll get out of the situation, AKA lack of knowledge.

Our physical sensations in these situations are different and may feel as unfamiliar as the situation we find ourselves in. When our body tightens, our breath gets faster, and our pulse quickens, in the context of not feeling safe or sure about what is happening, we attach a negative emotional descriptor to it.

*Take a minute and read the last section about negative emotions. Now think about someone you know who isn't happy, whether at work or home. How can you talk to them and find out what is missing and help them fill in the gaps?*

*If you are a person who is not happy, ask yourself the questions below, or join my community and ask for help.*

When you experience emotions, the goal is not to hide them, ignore them or push them down. Doing that only makes them surface later and often in a bigger and uglier form. Negative emotions can also be helpful, especially when keeping you safe!

Acknowledge your emotions. Be aware of them, and then ask yourself these questions.

- Do I feel safe right now? If not, why not?
- Do I feel my self-worth is challenged or damaged right now? Is it my sense of value or worth, or something else?
- Am I losing something? If I am, how bad will it affect me now or in the long term?
- What don't I understand right now that's causing me to be fearful or apprehensive? How can I get the information I need to understand better?

It sounds easy, but like everything, it takes being aware of your emotions before you can step to the side and evaluate where they're coming from and gain the control you want to approach any situation objectively and in control of the emotions.

As with all situations, there can be extremes that take us by surprise and can be overwhelming in either a helpful or unhelpful way. It's like a wave that comes over you. I've been there, at both extremes. When that happens, ride the wave. Let it happen, find someone to share it with and when the wave starts to ebb, come back to your "thinking" and figure out what happened, how it's affecting you and what to do next *before* it crashes to the ground or the next wave comes in and overwhelms you.

Once you've done the evaluation, the next part is vital.

- Ask yourself how you *can* feel safe and take action.
- Remind yourself that you are the best you can be today, right now, and that is enough.
- Remind yourself, "There is a reason for that", and you

may not know the reason straight away, and that is ok.

- Ask yourself what you don't understand about the situation and *choose* to learn more.

Remember, I'm simplifying things here, not writing a psychology paper. If you want to know more about emotions, read "How Emotions are Made" by Lisa Feldman Barrett.

Positive/negative and helpful/unhelpful emotions come from the thinking we do after having a physical feeling, which comes *after* our instinctive "am I safe?" thoughts kick in.

Let me tell you a quick story about my son's arrival into the world.

When my son was born, or rather, yanked out of my wife with an emergency c-section, I was able to watch the operation. This was not the intention of the nursing team, who tried to raise the flimsy paper curtain separating my wife's head from what was happening on the other side. Thankfully, being 6'5" allowed me to peek over the top!

It was interesting. On one side of the "curtain" was my wife, who was on some pretty powerful drugs after 24 hours of labour and looked stoned. On this same side, I was there as a loving husband, holding her hand and feeling the emotions of the imminent arrival of our firstborn.

As I peeked over, skilled surgeons were performing an operation. Dr Padovano was calm, collected, deft and swift. A swish here, a tug, a pull, and out came this wrinkly purple grape-looking baby. For me, there were no emotions watching the surgeon, just anticipation. It was as if I was watching it on the TV. Then a baby came out. On the realisation it was *my* son, I was flooded with emotion.

Oh shit! It's real! I'm actually a dad! We have a baby. What do we do now?

The point of this is that this range of emotions, and lack of emotion watching the operation, was a combination of the love we felt, the safety and confidence in the surgeon, and the almost immediate realisation that we now had this tiny human to care for and be responsible for!

OK, you came here to know how to deal with people, so let me put all of this in context.

If you are like I was as a teenager, anticipating the holiday gatherings was a medley of tightness, shortness of breath, nausea, and exhaustion, all at the thought of going. This was before we'd even left *our* house!

Work or meetings often have the same effect as an adult.

This is because there was inevitably an argument, or someone trying to do things one way and someone else wanting to do it slightly differently. There was someone judging people. Someone was rude or nasty or snidey, and the person we all adored trying to stay pleasant and happy would snap at someone.

A big reason for writing this book was because of one of the last team meetings I attended before the 2020 lockdown. I wish I'd had all this in writing to give to a few members of the training team who were very unaware and getting bent out of shape over the definition of a "teacher" vs a "trainer"! I thought one guy was going to burst a blood vessel in his forehead!

It's hard not to feel all that when you let your emotions take over!

The trick is to be aware of your thoughts and actions. Remember, you can't change other people. And unless they read this

book or have done some personal growth work, they are likely unaware of what they are doing or why or its impact on others. That will not change even when you try to point it out to them! Let me guess; you've already tried that haven't you!?

So being aware of your thoughts and feelings, thinking ahead, anticipating who you're going to see, and planning how you're going to act or respond ahead of time will help you take control of your feelings. This is because you will have a higher level of certainty, clarity, and confidence about the interaction. When you have better control of your feelings, you have better control of your emotions.

But what if they throw something out of left-field? Or someone new says something hurtful?

Again, choose to have something at the ready. It could be to take a deep breath and go to another room for a few minutes. It could be to simply say, "That's an interesting thought. Tell me how you got there!"

If you feel yourself shaking or not feeling good, acknowledge it. Remind yourself that physically you are safe. Mentally you are in control of your thoughts, and while you may not have the thought you want coming to mind immediately, that's ok. Try not to just blurt something out, feeling a need to say something, anything, to defend your position.

Emotions can be troublesome little critters when you let them run rampant in your mind. Remind yourself when you're feeling down or negative that you can choose what to think and how to feel and how to act.

Standing up straight, smiling, dancing to your favourite song, completing a task, giving yourself a high five in the mirror (Thanks Mel Robbins for that one!), or doing something for someone else are all ways to get a little feel-good juice flowing.

I'm not saying you must be fake and upbeat and positive all the time.

Embrace the good emotions, let them flow and enjoy every second of them.

But being ready for those moments you dread and having a couple of thoughts prepared to go to; your "instead of" thoughts, you'll find dealing with the difficult situations gets easier, and you'll stay calmer longer and come back to calm faster.

I'll add one last thing from a video I watched with Simon Sinek, talking about introverts and extroverts. I'll try to summarise it.

"Introverts" go to a party with five coins, and each time they interact with someone, a coin is taken. After a few interactions, they feel depleted.

"Extroverts" go to a party with no coins, and for each interaction with someone, they gain a coin. At the end of the party, they feel energised and rich!

Simon, having introverted tendencies, was questioned on what he does when he goes to parties. His response? He takes someone more extroverted in social settings with him.

Be aware of your energy levels because it's easier to fall back into old habits of attaching emotions to situations instead of realising that you are drained when you're drained. When you're drained, you feel more vulnerable, leading to not making choices and re-acting instead.

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Emotions are Thoughts.**

There's a reason this is Consideration 9b. Making choices is all about being fully aware of your reactions, feelings and

emotions. It takes practice and time to manage them consistently and on cue. However, when you are self-aware and stop to think about how you are reacting and what you could do the next time instead, finding that calm state and having a clearer mind gets easier and easier, like learning how to ride a bike!

When you're calm, it's a lot easier to make those helpful choices that will contribute to fulfilling your purpose or goals.

To implement this Consideration, being aware of your **body more** than your thoughts to start will help. As you begin to feel tension, do something to break the thought pattern. Laugh, clap your hands, pinch yourself, pause and breathe. Whatever it takes, just stop long enough to realise what emotions are about to hit you and choose how you can move forward with more thinking and less emotion. And yes, it takes practice!

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

I remember watching Elon Musk's reaction when his "unbreakable" Cybertruck window cracked when a metal ball was thrown at it. He laughed it off, saw the positive in the situation, that the ball did not break all the way through, as it would have done with any other window, and said, "Not bad!"

He could have become angry, blamed someone for not testing it, had a tantrum on stage, and been embarrassed. He chose not to. In that situation, he showed he was in control of his emotions even when something negative happened.

People who overreact, get in your face, raise their voice, throw their toys out of the pram - a great expression I learned only a few years ago I just had to get in here somehow - or

generally lose it when even the smallest things go wrong, are not in control of their emotions.

“But I’m an emotional person”, I’ve heard from time to time. Positive emotional, great. Negative emotional, not so good. If your outburst or emotions are not helpful or are a way of being negative to others, that is a lack of control. (and can be an indicator of a controlling person)

Remember what I said earlier:

*Bad / negative emotions come from loss, a lack of safety or security, a lack of self-worth and a lack of knowledge or understanding.*

If you or someone you’re with has a negative outburst or episode, ask yourself why instead of getting upset yourself.

### **What was your “aha” insight from this Consideration?**

I’ll say this again and again to remind you of my purpose and focus with my books, training, and coaching.

### **I aim to help people move forward purposefully.**

There are many books on dealing with emotions, and my goal is always to give you an option to take action now that will move you away from pain, confusion, or hesitation and towards calm, clarity, confidence and pleasure.

When you are involved in an emotional episode, whether you or someone else, start by asking the following questions.

- Is there really a story here, or is the emotion hiding something else?
- Do we have all the facts?

- Is this as bad as it seems, or will we get through this?
- What's the first thing we could do once emotions settle down.
- How do we do that now?

### **REFLEX REFLECTION: What NOT to do!**

I made this mistake with my kids on more than one occasion and thought I'd put it in here to help you avoid doing it too.

It's easy to assume other people know the same things as you, especially when you have little epiphanies and insights and think, "I can't believe I didn't know that already!" It's easy to think you were the last person to hear it or have the insight.

Before they'd read this book, I made the mistake of telling my kids, "You have a choice in how you're behaving right now." The reaction, unsurprisingly, was like telling them to stay calm. This was followed by a mini eruption, more emotions, anger, and that look only a child can give their father when they know he doesn't understand them because they are teenagers.

Yes, *that* look!

Whether it's a partner, child, or co-worker, knowing these Considerations, understanding them, and realising how they affect what people do, does not make it ok just to say "You can make a choice" or "What's the real problem?" or "You need to just... instead of..."

My first suggestion would be to get this book for them.

Then have open discussions about each of the Considerations. There are 20 in here. One a day for 20 working days would

cover all of them. Or one a week in a company newsletter or post it on the fridge for the family to discuss.

Always discuss the Considerations when there is *not* an emotional outburst or “situation”. Ask if they can see where the Consideration could have been a factor in the past and how they would recognise it in the future.

And always ask questions first. Always.

We can all choose to be leaders, and leaders bring out the best in others by asking questions, listening, and guiding.

This leads me to the next Consideration...

# CONSIDERATION 10: CONTROL ≠ CONTROLLING

AKA: Let the blood flow!

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*“Creation, not control, creates opportunity.”*

I THINK THIS

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CONTROL IS BEING ADAPTABLE. Controlling is rigid. Think about it.

I saw this a lot with the employers or managers of apprentices I taught and have experienced this with other managers in the past. Note I didn't say leaders. Some people like to be what they consider “in control”; however, they are being *controlling*, not in control.

When you are being controlled or controlling others, it is limiting, restrictive, and stops growth.

When you are creative, you can still maintain control. It is an attitude of being open, expansive, open to new directions and allows growth.

Following on from the last Consideration, it's easy to fall into the trap of knowing that what *you* know as the answer to the problem is the only answer, then trying to force it on someone who doesn't believe the same!

As far as control, there is a difference between being in control and being controlling. Think of driving. Being *in* control means being *deliberate, decisive, yet adaptable* with your actions. If a car stops in front of you, you are still in control by slowing and stopping. Being controll-ing would be flooring the gas pedal and expecting the other car to get out of the way because you want it to. Or believing you can just go through them!

Think of conflict as a narrow two-way road that is wide enough for one and a half cars and there are passing places spaced along the road. Sometimes you have to move over a little to get by. Sometimes it's the other person. But if you both think you have the right of way and don't budge, you could be there for hours!

### **Control vs Autonomy**

I'm adding this here because I've seen so many posts recently on LinkedIn and social media relating to the effects of people working from home.

*One post said this: Coronavirus has shown us that people can be trusted to get their work done, wherever they are.*

*My reply was this: You can't just say "People" and think you are including everyone. It's like saying "People are stupid" or "People are sheep". Of course, those statements don't apply to us, right? So which people are you referring to? The ones with good leaders who encourage autonomy. (read – in control, not controll-ing) Or the ones who have bad managers who still try to micromanage and create more mental strain and stress, usually with people who thrive on social engagement. What this has proven is that while some*

*people have adapted willingly, others are more stressed than ever but do it to keep their jobs. There is no "people" as a whole that speaks to everyone.*

My point behind this, and I can give it better context here, is that people who feel controlled will do what they have to until they don't have to, or find another job.

The success of working from home comes from the fact that many people, not all, but many, prefer the autonomy of being able to make their own choices, do their work in their own time frame, and feel trusted that it is going to get done. This autonomy helps people thrive and is what has driven the desire for many to continue, or insist on, working from home.

For many countries, the education system revolves around a lack of autonomy or free-thinking and is rarely encouraged to the degree it should be. Students struggle with moving into the workplace because they have not been encouraged enough to think for themselves. Encouraging independence, trust, and autonomy (I wanted to see just how many times I could get the word in this chapter!) are like letting a caged animal out onto the grass for the first time. Do a YouTube search if you haven't seen that before! It's liberating and exhilarating and guess what, the level of work in most cases has not suffered!

Controlling behaviour from companies stifles this independence. Controlled leadership encourages it.

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Control ≠ Controlling.**

Being in control is having a deliberate end goal you're aiming for, and making decisions to achieve that goal, yet also understanding you will have to move over or adapt from time to time.

If you are in a position of authority, remember this Consideration when you want to get someone to do something. It may be frustrating that it's not as simple as just telling them to do it "or else". That may work in the short term.

We can't make other people do things without them deciding to do it, so instead of using force or coercion, use what you've learned in the rest of this book to ask questions, get input, be open to other ways of doing things, and accepting there could be another way that makes sense to the other person.

There are, of course, times when someone is in a role where they need to do what is asked of them in the moment.

Sometimes it helps to anticipate how people will react and you can explain before they get defensive or difficult that there are times they will be expected to do what is asked without explanation. This does not work all the time, especially if what you're asking them to do is not clearly aligned or explained with their role, goal, or purpose.

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

Whether it's a work or personal relationship, being controlled is never fun. Being micro-managed, having to account for everything you do, being constantly corrected without instruction, and not having any say in what works for you are all signs of being controlled.

When someone has lied or felt the need to omit part of the truth, this can indicate a fear of repercussions and is a strong indicator that they are feeling controlled and unable to speak freely.

Are there situations where you've been controlling?

Are there situations you've felt controlled?

Do you see someone being controlled by someone else in your life?

Can you ask questions to guide them to be in control, not controlling, and ask for input from others?

By the way, I know there are situations where something must be done a certain way, or there can be severe consequences. However, in most situations realising that controlling = stagnation, contraction and restriction, and in control = creativity, flow, and expansion, when conveyed well, can help a controlling person be less so.

*If you try but don't succeed in helping someone who is controlling be less so, you could always highlight this sentence, then leave this book with this Consideration bookmarked on their desk.*

Anonymously, of course! Unless it's your partner or there are only two of you at work!

### **What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

Read the action section above again and ask questions.

Can I offer my own view?

Can we try this another way?

Can you show me how...?

Under what circumstances would you let me be more autonomous?

If the answer to any of these is still no, or none, then it might be worth going back to Consideration 9 – You get to choose and decide if you are in the best situation for your own well-being and growth.

# CONSIDERATION 11: YOU ARE MISSING SOMETHING

*AKA: You really think you know everything?*

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*"Just the facts, ma'am."*

SGT JOE FRIDAY – DRAGNET.

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I HAD a great discussion with my son recently about coffee. I asked him how many coffees he drank a day at work. He told me that he'd "explained" to me a week before that he only drinks one coffee a day. I remembered he'd bought milk for work a couple of days prior to our conversation, and only the day before I'd offered to buy him milk, however, he said he drinks it black at work.

He forgot the two events that stuck in my brain about how much coffee he drank.

I forgot our initial conversation.

Neither was wrong or being intentionally forgetful, difficult, or obtuse. It's just an example of how our brains work.

Our brains make tens of thousands of decisions each day, and 80-90% of those are made in the subconscious. These are decisions like: should I breathe, or step away from the edge of the cliff and preserve myself, or which chemicals are released for what reason, digestion, interpreting what you see and much more.

The funny thing is that your brain does a lot of these things based on previous decisions, so you're only aware of a part of it. It's like doing things at home for your partner or kids or habitual tasks at work without bringing it to someone else's attention. You just get on with it because it doesn't affect the bigger picture enough to warrant an entire conversation.

A small percentage of decisions you make, and subsequent actions, are made consciously. These can include what to wear, what to eat, what to say, and which way to turn when you see an obstruction in the road.

To reduce overwhelm, your brain also compartmentalises information, so the most important stuff is front and centre. These thoughts often revolve around what keeps you safe, and what is necessary for the task at hand.

How this translates to the real world is that when you're asked for information, your brain gives you access to what it deems important. This is the short, summarised version of a very long and detailed science.

This affects not only you but also the people you engage with, so when you talk to someone and miss information, it's unlikely you were trying to be mean and missed it to spite them. See, it's not misinformation; it's missed-information!

Here's another example; have you ever asked for directions when you were late?

Take the first left, then after the stop sign turn right, go over the roundabout and your destination is on the left.

You get the directions, and as you leave the person, you suddenly realise you don't remember half of it consciously?

When you start taking the first steps, you question what you remember. Then, as you hit a roundabout, suddenly other parts of the directions pop into your head!

There are many reasons why this happens, and it's just another example of how the brain can subconsciously filter information for you, not to overwhelm you.

Think about times you've had a conversation based on what you remember, and the other person insists they told you. Chances are they did, and your brain just thought it wasn't important!

My son and I used to do this with each other. "I already told you...".

Now, *instead of* assuming he heard or took it all in, I do my best to remember to say it again, nicely. After all, if he remembered, he wouldn't be asking again. I had a lot of practice with this with my students too! I could explain a task, and as soon as I let them start, I'd almost always have someone ask me what the first step was! (See how I used "instead of" there?)

At family gatherings, most people don't share everything going on in their lives. Some do. Some overshare. Just remember that the other members of your family are just like you and if you're not going to share everything that's happened since you last met, be pretty sure they are not going to either.

This means any comments any of you make are based on a superficial level of knowledge and understanding of the whole truth.

## BONUS

Depending on your learning style, although anyone can do this with practice, this technique will help you remember more.

Tell stories. One of the reasons I include stories and examples of how I've used the Considerations is to help give them context.

When someone is talking to you or explaining something, visualise the steps, turn it into a story, or simply ask them to give an example are all ways of creating a story.

Try it next time you need directions.

## ANOTHER BONUS

I was on social media today and saw a video of a guy talking about how men and women approach difficult conversations. Part of the content focused on his thoughts about how men are being encouraged to share their feelings and thoughts more, yet many women are being told by their friends, magazines, or social media, how men really feel and think!

According to the man, this leads to some women thinking they know how a man should think, so when they try to explain how they actually feel and try to be open and vulnerable, as we're being encouraged to do increasingly, the woman does not believe them.

My point here in context to You're Missing Something is that while we may not have all the details, sometimes the people we interact with have been given the wrong information and bring it to the table, believing it to be true.

This can create a problem in itself, yet being with a partner, work colleagues who are open enough to read a book like

this, or are already self-aware, can lead to more open discussions.

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for You're Missing Something.**

To implement the Consideration "You are missing something", it's good to know how to ask questions. Use the 5 W's. Who, what, when, where, why and how.

- E.g., Where did you get that information?
- How did you come to that conclusion?
- What makes you think that?
- Who can we talk to for more clarity on this?

Be cautious with using "why" as it can seem confrontational. Now come up with your own and **be open to hearing the answer!**

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

Be aware of phrases like "You don't see it". Or "I don't hear you" or "I don't grasp what you're saying". This is usually the first sign of you each taking in information based on your kinaesthetic, verbal, or visual learning styles.

Also, listen for, or watch for in emails, using the phrases "I already told you", "I don't remember that", or "I was never told...". It may be true, yet sometimes we throw too much information at people at once and expect them to remember it all!

**What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

What situation came to mind where things were going off track until a key piece of information was introduced? How did everyone react or respond? Could it have been better?

Next time it happens, what could you say, or what questions could you ask?

You've probably seen the image of a number 6 on the ground and two people standing on opposite sides. One says, "It's a 6!" the other states ", It's a 9!".

This meme implies that neither is willing to concede. Once you are more self-aware, you can do any of the following to fill in the gaps:

Ask the person if you can explain *to them* what you think they know, remember, or see.

Ask if they can do the same to you, so you can see what each other understands about the other's perspective and where there are any gaps.

Be open to hearing what is missing, as well as what is understood.

Be willing to admit you don't remember everything that was said. It's ok and human!

# CONSIDERATION 11B: HOW TO CATCH A GAMMON

*"Honey, what does a gammon look like?"* my ex-wife on her first visit to the UK.

SINCE THAT DAY, my kids and I rarely missed an opportunity to tease her about that question.

On eating at restaurants when gammon is ordered: "This must be taking a while as they had to catch the gammon first!"

On shopping: "Don't forget to pick up treats for the gammon; they can be quite picky!"

I've even claimed to have seen a sign in the countryside offering free-range gammon!

It's a good inside joke, and she still takes it with good humour!

By the way, if you're not from the UK and are still wondering what it is, it's a type of ham that is typically cured or smoked and sold raw, needing to be cooked.

The point behind this is this:

You don't know what you don't know... so you fill in the gaps with what seems plausible.

A more common example of this is the Black Swan Fallacy. There was a time when academics believed that all swans were white until a black swan was discovered on an expedition.

At first, they didn't believe it was a swan because it was black.

Others didn't believe it was so because they hadn't seen it themselves.

Whether something does not fit into what you believe is possible, or you haven't experienced it yourself, it does not mean it's not possible or true.

I added this as 11b because it ties in strongly with "There is something missing".

Sometimes we get frustrated because we've explained something the way we see it or have experienced it ourselves, yet they don't want to believe it.

As frustrating as this may seem, it boils down to how we take in information and whether it correlates with what we think we already know.

If we don't absorb information the same way it is being presented, for example, kinaesthetically, visually or verbally, it may not make sense or even register in our brains.

See Consideration 19 – Excuse Me, Please?! About speaking the same languages.

And then there is also the fact that someone just doesn't know something because it has never been presented to them before.

*You don't know what you don't know, and it's important to know that, so you're open to receiving what you didn't think you needed to know!*

I did this when teaching digital marketing sometimes. Training the same material repeatedly makes it easy to forget what I've said or not said to different cohorts.

I'd often start talking about a subject and set a task for a group of learners, only for them to look at me as if I were speaking a foreign language! "You've never covered this before!" they would claim.

In my head, I'd covered the material several times before and could have sworn I'd done it with them too!

I also had students who had taken the same GCSEs at different schools and frequently did not learn the same material to the same standards, leaving both the students and me having to fill in gaps as we went.

Think about a time you've spoken to someone and assumed they knew something you know. "Because it makes sense to you, and they *should* know".

If you can't think of a situation when you've done it to someone else, maybe reflect on a time someone has had that expectation of you.

Most of what I teach and coach revolves around being more self-aware and by design, being more aware that others are just like you.

No one has the exact same information as everyone else because we have not had the same experiences. We don't know what we don't know. We also don't know what others don't know, whether through lack of exposure or a difference in absorption of the information.

**REFLECTION and ACTION for HOW TO CATCH A GAMMON:**

To implement this Consideration, essentially “you don’t know what you don’t know”, as an extension, of “There is something missing”, assume someone is telling the truth when they say “I haven’t heard that before” Or “I don’t know that” or “I don’t remember it that way.” And even “I’ve tried this another way, or seen it done another way.”

The easy thing to do would be to ask questions to validate what you think they *should* know or validate your belief of what they have been told before. BE CAREFUL with this approach as it’s also easy to look for what you want instead of listening for new information. The former approach is being controlling, or trying to be. The latter, listening for new information, is being open, creative, and adaptable.

The better solution would be to explain it again and have them write it down or explain it back to you as they “see” it or show you if possible.

Going back to earlier Considerations, don’t expect everyone to remember everything you say, especially if they don’t use the information often.

When I taught digital marketing, we would have processes for obscure situations that were not documented, so each time it came up, maybe two or three times over three years, I would ask my manager how to do something. Thankfully my first manager was amazing and would tell me again. My next one would get upset and tell me I should know how to do that by now.

Anticipate having to say the same thing a few times. Alternatively, and this is going into RAMP-IT territory, you could document every process and have them in a searchable system, whether index cards or online and make sure

everyone knows where to find the information. Anticipate what is needed, create a process, and make the resources known.

One last thing on this, as an example of someone who has done this documenting process well.

The people who helped me publish my books have a Facebook group where new people join pretty regularly and frequently come to the group with the same questions as they go through the course. The trainers put together two PDF documents. One has the top FAQs asked; the other has the top resources mentioned throughout the course.

Now, when someone asks a question, they are directed to these documents first, and only if the answer is not there are they allowed to ask the question in the group. Unsurprisingly the number of questions has declined considerably! This idea is a resource. How can you put it into action if you don't already have something like this?

**What was your insight from this extra Consideration? Write it down and post it online and use #theresareasonforthat or #justrampit**

# CONSIDERATION 12: TODAY IS DAY ONE.

*AKA: What is important to you right now?*

---

*"I believe in one day at a time; you've got TODAY, that's what you've got."*

AL PACINO

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TEACHING apprentices gave me so many examples for my books and coaching. And here's another one!

I often had students come to me and tell me they were so overwhelmed.

"My boss keeps giving me more work and I can't do it all in one day. I'm about to blow my top!"

I could see their eyes twitching uncontrollably as they visualised all the work they had to do when they got back to the office after the week of training in London, away from their desk but not away from the mental load placed on them!

Here was my advice: Figure out what you can do each day and let your manager know. If they want something else done, explain to them politely that you'd be happy to do it, however you'd like to know which of the other tasks they think you should put off to get their new task done.

Sometimes the managers or peers would have expectations of how much work they believed could get done in a day, frequently despite not having ever done it themselves.

The same goes for home relationships, where one partner often feels overwhelmed, and the other has no idea just how much is getting done each day!

My advice: Let your manager / partner know what you believe you can get done, then ask if they know a way to get it done faster without sacrificing quality. Either they do and will hopefully be a good mentor / partner and show you, or they may realise that some things need a certain amount of time.

They may even offer to help, or find another resource to help!

Yes, it does come down to prioritising work too and for that, I recommend the book "The Power of an Hour" by Dave Lakhani. He has a ton of takeaways and I think I've listened to the audio version at least three times so far.

Whatever you're striving for, today is day one. Focus on today, and make sure whatever you're doing is not only helping you achieve today's goals, but is also helping you move towards your purpose in that life area.

This ties in with the theme of everything I do, teach, and coach. The past is the past and you can't change it. You also can't work on tomorrow today. As Eckhart Tolle explains in *The Power of Now*, there is only the now.

So what does this mean to us mere mortals? It means whatever you're striving for, and while it's great to have long term

goals to strive for, we should focus on waking up every day and taking action today with the thoughts and actions and mentality that will help you get closer to achieving your goals.

It doesn't matter what happened yesterday. You can't change it.

Let's take breaking a habit, like smoking as an example. Every day focus on not smoking that day only. The next day, focus on not smoking that day. You only have to make it through one day at a time.

If you have to deal with difficult people at work, get your "instead of's" lined up and be prepared to handle whatever they throw at you for one day. The next day, focus on getting through one day. Of course, nothing is stopping you from taking other actions like upskilling to get a promotion, change department or get another job while you're being the best you and dealing with them every day.

If you are working on your health, focus on exercising today and eating healthily today. And tomorrow, you focus on doing it for that day. It could be that you only focus on eating a healthy breakfast each day. Once you've got that habit down, maybe after a couple of weeks, then start adding some exercise each day, for one day at a time.

Once you realise you only have to do things one day at a time, and you start doing it every day before long you'll realise you've done it, whatever it is, for days, weeks or months at a time. And you did it *one day at a time*.

If one day is too much, take it down to one hour at a time. I had to do that when I first stopped smoking.

Here's one more example: If you want to improve your relationship with your partner or kids, focus on doing one thing good for them today. Then after a few days or weeks, add

being more patient. And then add being more supportive. Just to make this clear, this is for both sides of the relationship.

Ah, but what happens if I don't make it through the day without falling back on a bad habit, or not completing everything, or not behaving as well as you want to?

It was one day. Try again tomorrow. Was your purpose clear? Have you considered your thoughts and feelings and addressed them? Do you have the right resources to be more successful tomorrow? Have you anticipated where you might need a better plan tomorrow and either written down what you'll do "instead of" what happened today, or visualised it?

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Today is Day One:**

Take your steps to improve one day at a time. Nothing is stopping you from working on your relationship, work, and health simultaneously, one day at a time. Know what you want to achieve each day and be mindful of your purpose, and keeping to it with the right resources and action steps today.

People often get so bogged down in long term goals or big projects that they forget to focus on what they can do today. If you're dealing with someone who is overwhelmed and they need a little external support and accountability, ask them what they can do today to move them closer to the goal. Then go to the Accountability section and make sure they are clear on purpose, know what the System is and how they fit into it, and review the plan of action or individual steps they can take right now.

At the end of each day, look at what you completed, then ask yourself if it was enough, not enough, and how you can do as well as today or better tomorrow.

. . .

**How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

Like many others, overwhelm is a big clue in this one. So are burnout, multitasking and appeaser meltdown. This is when you get someone who just says yes to everything they're asked to do, then gets to a point they can't take anymore and explodes!

**What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

How can you help someone who isn't living or working in the moment, and trying to get tomorrow's work in today?

Ask questions, of course!

- Are you ok?
- Can I help with anything?
- What would help you right now?
- Can we revisit the current processes to see if we can make things easier?
- How do you think we can get through all this?

An important thing to remember, is listening and being open to what they have to say.

# CONSIDERATION 13: ACTION CREATES TRACTION

AKA: Let me repeat that again!

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*"If action creates traction, then dis-traction causes in-action."*

I SAID THIS TOO!

---

LEARNING IS no good without doing again and again and again...

I took a motorcycle course recently to ride my Yamaha FJR1300 sports tourer motorbike down to France and see my dad and his family for the first time in three years. In one part of the training, the instructor, a former police motorcyclist, told us to brush our foot across the floor, barely putting any pressure down. Of course, it was easy to slide my motorcycle boot across the floor. He then instructed us to put more weight on the foot and keep trying to slide it.

It became increasingly harder until we couldn't move our feet. This exercise was taught in relation to braking on the

motorbike, which brake to use, and when and grip in turns. The important part was that the bike was moving, and the force as you applied the brakes created greater or less traction depending on where the weight or pressure was applied. I'm a pretty big guy and adding a pillion passenger to my bike added more weight to the rear, giving more traction to the rear tyre and less to the front. This changed my riding behaviour and especially my braking habits.

When we take on any task, we get more done when we commit to a certain amount of effort and time. The more time and effort (note: weight and downward force) we commit to a task, the greater stickiness or traction we get, often finding ourselves working on a project for hours on end without a break. This also makes it harder to lose traction or get distracted! See how it makes sense now?!

When we multitask and try to go back and forth between tasks, we lose traction also known by its more familiar name – **distraction** - and I've seen multiple books reference studies claiming it can take from five minutes to an hour or more to refocus again. Think about how much time is lost if you're going from a project to a team meeting, to checking email, to an online meeting, to your project, to checking Facebook and trying to fit in mental and physical breaks too!

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Action Creates Traction**

Trying to do too much without being able to focus creates a disjointed work pattern, and less work gets done.

I see this happen a lot in home relationships, where one partner is overwhelmed with work, housework, and dealing with kids. It could be they are trying to take on too much and being pulled in different directions, and not being able to focus.

A simple way to address this is to divide and conquer. Offer to take on a task to give your partner time to focus on another project or task for a longer time. Or you could get help if it's in the budget.

I know some cultures believe that women should do the housework, and if that's what they *want* to do, that's fine. However, I did as much cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of the kids, and nappy changes as my wife, and it means more gets done, *and* there is less resentment. And we had more time for each other! I like to think this is happening more and more in all relationships and hope it continues.

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

"There are not enough hours in the day!"

"I feel like I'm pulled in different directions!"

"If only the phone would stop ringing, emails would stop coming in, people would stop dropping by my desk with questions...."

I could write a whole chapter on finding the right resources, and processes and setting expectations for others to overcome these but I'll keep it simple.

Know what you can do.

Accept what you can't.

Set expectations with yourself for making dedicated time to address distractions.

Set expectations with others for when you can be disturbed.

### **What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

Here are a few questions you can ask someone, or yourself if you feel this Consideration is a factor:

- What is a priority?
- What can be assigned a dedicated time to deal with (email, phone calls, q&a sessions with the team)
- What system can I use to keep myself on track (software, timers, other people)
- Is what I'm doing helping me achieve my goals or in line with my current purpose?

### **BONUS RESOURCES**

I've already mentioned these books: *Atomic Habits* by James Clear and *The Power of an Hour* by Dave Lakhani are both worth reading for some straightforward ways to overcome a need to multitask!

Oh, and "How to Work from Home", by Alice Dartnell.

# CONSIDERATION 14: INTUITION IS LEARNED

*AKA: Are you ready for another lesson?*

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*"Intuition will tell the thinking mind where to look next."*

JONAS SALK

---

IT'S FUNNY, but the natural strengths and gut reactions you experience get better the more you know, the more comfortable you are with the topic and the more experience you have.

Your brain is like a supercomputer, and, like your Mac or HP, it is constantly working, "thinking", running programs and solving problems without you even realising.

The trick to it being able to do more is to give it more information. The more information, the more computations it can make. And yes, I'm talking about your brain now!

Why is this important? If you've been surrounded by supportive people who had great leadership qualities and

had access to a better than average education, you have more information, life experience and knowledge than someone who has been repressed at home, work, or school.

**Sidenote:** *I'm going to reiterate this for those reading this who instantly think, "Yeah, that's me, I've been repressed, that's why I'm unsuccessful!": It doesn't matter where you've been; it only matters what you do with what you know NOW! And keep learning, of course!*

You may start a work project or be in an unfamiliar situation and find things come easy to you. Why? Because you've been in enough situations for your brain to fill in the blanks and make computations on a subconscious level before it gets to your thinking, conscious brain.

I keep saying I want this information to make sense, and I could make assumptions that everything in here is on the internet, so everyone should already know all that's in here. Yet I find that someone has a revelation or insight they'd never had before in every training I do, every workshop, every coaching session. Maybe what's in this book is common sense to you, and you know it all already, but do you realise the person next to you, the person you work with, or the person you're in a relationship with has not had it presented the same way?

You may be able to approach a situation and assume it makes sense for everyone. That is your intuition putting pieces together for you, and the more you know and experience, the more intuitive it seems to be.

Too often, I've seen managers come down on subordinates for not knowing how to do something that the manager believes is common sense, or intuitive. Too often, it's a matter of never

having been in that position before or not having enough information to make an educated or intuitive guess.

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*We don't know what we don't know, and assuming someone should know something won't change the fact they never knew in the first place!*

---

**Read that again if you need to.** This could be a good time to ask someone "Have you ever learned how to do this and understood it?"

Then we encounter something new, and because we haven't been exposed to it, there is no intuitive reasoning, and it becomes problematic. Some people say "I don't get this," and give up. I did this with West Coast Swing years ago. I could do ten different dances in International and American style Ballroom, Latin American, and even Country Western; however, West Coast Swing eluded me until a friend, Karen, took me to one side and showed me how to do it five different ways. The last one clicked, and it's been one of my favourite dances ever since!

What made this even better was that once I got West Coast Swing down, all the things I had learned in other dances came together "intuitively" to help me learn more complicated moves faster.

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Intuition is Learned**

Keep "It's all situational" in mind here because we find some subjects easy and other's hard, depending on what we know and have experienced.

The more we learn, the more information our subconscious mind has to work within the background, so when we find ourselves in a new situation, our brain has already been using what it knows to handle that situation.

In a work environment, constant learning leads to expansion of the mind and increased creativity, and it also helps you become more intuitive. This leads to greater autonomy, less micromanaging, more productivity and less stress.

In other words, work should be an environment of continuous learning as much as possible.

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

If you're with someone who is just not getting something yet, remember that what may be intuitive to you may be like trying to decipher binary code for them.

I see this a lot in companies where the nerds can do calculations and programming with their eyes shut yet lack the social skills that many assume are common sense. There can be other reasons for this like Asperger's Syndrome, autism, family etc.,

Instead of getting upset, think about how you can be an influencer and help them, and be mindful that you may not be the best person or resource to help them or teach them.

### **What was your "aha" insight from this Consideration?**

Try asking questions when you're confronted with someone who thinks you should know something already:

"I'm not familiar with the way you're presenting this or asking for it to be done. Would you mind showing me?"

“Could you explain this another way? I’m not hearing/seeing/getting the solution yet.” Adapt to your style of learning. Try to listen to how the other person is presenting the task too!

“Here’s what I get so far; what’s next? Or what am I missing?”

If you are with someone and not clear what they’re trying to convey, try the above questions but in reverse:

“I see this hasn’t clicked yet for you. Or I get that you’re not seeing the solution. Do you mind if I show you again?”

“Let me try explaining this another way and if we still can’t find a way forward, let me see if there’s someone else who can help.”

“Tell me what you understand so far, and I’ll try to fill in the gaps or give you the next steps.”

### **CAUTION:**

Never make people feel stupid or less than for not knowing something. It’s easy to get impatient and start talking down to them. Be self-aware and remember how easy it is to do this when in a hurry. Be mindful that you take your time and being patient makes it easier for everyone in the long run.

### **ALSO:**

If someone IS trying to help you, don’t take offence and think they believe you are stupid. Take the emotion out of it, as if your best friend was trying to help you. You know, the person who never judges you no matter what.

People, in general, are not malicious... at first.

People get rude, malicious, or nasty often when they have tried to help someone and they've been rejected, pushed away, or treated badly.

Be self-aware of what you're saying, HOW you're saying it, and the fact that you're an external influence that can have far-reaching after-effects.

I'll also admit that I've done this in the past and been a real butthead. I can't go back and change it, but I recognise now when I get that rising feeling of impatience and I take a breath, remember that I have a choice and that I can be remembered as the guy who helped or the guy who was an ass.

A quick reminder that this chapter was about Intuition. The more you learn or teach, the more your brain has to work with. The more positive those lessons are, the more open your brain will be to try new things without feeling you could be rejected for trying and it could even lead to more creativity!

# CONSIDERATION 15: LISTEN TO ELSA! LET IT GO.

*AKA: What are you waiting for? Let it go already!*

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*"Let it go!"*

*ELSA - FROZEN.*

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WHEN I STARTED STUDYING Specialised Kinesiology (using the body, meridians, and other "tools" to assess where discomfort and pain originates - and whether you understand it, like it, or not... let it go!) about 20 years ago, my first thought was "This is so bogus, silly and does not make sense". I showed up to my first taster session with my arms crossed, believing I would walk out with the same belief and back pain I walked in with.

I was a fully trained and qualified clinical massage therapist and had my practice helping people with *real* problems with *proven* techniques. This Touch for Health™ Kinesiology malarkey was a bit out in left-field for me, as in the ticket booth at the entrance to the car park at Disney left-field. (it's

enormous and the ticket booth is a loooooong way from the entrance!!)

Within an hour, Arlene, the instructor, had picked on me, gone through a very detailed assessment process, “tested” a couple of muscles then proceeded to rub a point on my back between two vertebrae. At the same time, I rubbed two points on my front, sure something amazing was going to happen.

I had gone in with a fixed frame of mind and expectations, believing I knew more than I thought I did and was only there to appease one of my clients who believed I would enjoy this and want to do it.

**Expectation:** noun

1. Believing something is going to happen - e.g., results within a timeframe
2. Believing something should happen a certain way - e.g., someone should behave a certain way, or an outcome should be a certain way. –

There are two types of expectations. Mental and Tangible.

Mental expectations are what I’ll be talking about here. Most of these are based on what we or others *think* should be happening.

Tangible expectations are what we put with an action plan and have a consequence if not met. For example, you may have a realistic expectation to finish a project by a specific date. These expectations are more like SMART goals. These are reasonable expectations as they hold people accountable. Tangible expectations are not covered here.

We were still rubbing my back and chest as I sat on the edge of the massage table, feet dangling over the edge like a child

waiting for something to happen. I didn't "feel" any different. Strangely, I didn't "feel" anything.

We stopped, and Arlene asked me to stand up. As I did, I realised my back and neck pain was gone, I felt more "together", and I felt about 2" taller. I'm 6'5", and after a car accident a year early, I'd felt somewhat shorter as I protected my neck and shoulders and "pulled" away from the pain, down into my body. Now, I felt taller and straighter.

I had a million questions about how, what, and why this worked. Arlene's response was simple. "You'll get there."

My only other question was, "How do I get started". I then took almost every course in Touch for Health™ and Professional Kinesiology Practitioner™ I could attend, even becoming a trainer for Touch for Health™.

I had gone in with certain expectations, half expecting it not to work. Yet once open to trying something new, it opened my mind to new perspectives. It allowed me to help many, many people find relief, get out of wheelchairs, dance again and more. This was one of the most fulfilling chapters in my life.

There is a good chance you have an opinion on everything I'm putting in this book. Some of the things I say you'll agree with, others you won't. You may be tempted to say I'm wrong, or I should have explained it a different way, or even that "This is the best perspective you've ever seen" (I've had 30-year business consultants and corporate managers say that. Not my words!)

You may have already read this far and assumed you know what's coming, how it all works and what I'm going to say next, and already think this is a waste of time. You may read this and, like most people, mentally apply it to what you are

already *succeeding* at in a specific situation and think, "I've already got this down."

These are your expectations of what you think will be in here, how I should say things, how my ideas stack up to the last book you read or expert that spoke at your company etc. And this can happen in many situations:

- Changing jobs: We didn't do things this way at my old place.
- Relationships: My last partner was more emotional or hugged more.
- Teachers: Why can't you be more like your sister/brother or Sally?
- Managers: You're in the same role; why can't you work as fast as your co-worker?
- Work: My idea is the best; I'm going to throw my toys out of the pram if you don't use it.
- Parents (to kids): I just told you the same thing as your friend, but you didn't listen to me!

As we get older, it's harder to take on new perspectives and viewpoints because we've often already decided how we want to behave in certain situations or how we think things should be because of what we've experienced in the past. And by older, I mean over ten years old, as that's roughly when beliefs and behaviours get "cemented" in our brains!

The main reason it's harder is that most people reduce the amount of new information they take in through reading, courses, training, or proper mentoring. This also ties into Consideration 14 – Intuition is learned!

Expectations are also reduced when we're open to more possibilities and allows us to let go of existing methods easier.

As a side note, limiting beliefs are not cemented. They are more like that sticky spot on the stove. If you put enough effort in, you can get rid of it!!

Let me be blunt. You either downloaded this book or were given this book because you were looking for a way to change that's not difficult to understand, makes sense and can be applied without too much pain while giving you the best possible outcome.

For change to happen, I'm going to ask, no, *insist*; *you* let go of your expectations, preconceived ideas, thoughts, rationalisations, and beliefs. Read the whole book and think about how you can use what's in here to enhance your life, situations, and self, even just one idea at a time, from this point forward.

You may realise you're already doing some of what is in here. You may realise there are new ways of looking at things or approaching people and situations that will make what you're doing now seem less effective. There is a bonus Consideration online that covers this a bit more.

Even one small shift every day can make significant changes to the world around you, and you may not even realise at the time the impact it is having on both your life and the people around you. You will when you look back and see how far you've come and how much easier it's become.

Change can be immediate or slow. Don't set the expectations of a miracle happening overnight or that this book will change your life today.

You may have a "Po" moment. In Kung Fu Panda. Yes, the cartoon film. Po, the Panda, finds enlightenment quickly, much to his Master, Shifu's, dismay! Those moments of clarity are called insights, and they come when you least expect them! You may have several lightbulb moments. You may

not. However, you *will* look at things differently, even subconsciously, IF you are open to letting go of the past. This is a book of ideas and perspectives. How you apply what you learn here to ALL areas of your life and situations will determine what you ultimately get out of it and will be determined by how much you're willing to let go. And it can be a-ma-zing!

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### **SIDE NOTE**

*Something to think about here: In today's tech world, many 20-somethings are starting up companies and making a ton of money. These are Po moments. They get behind an idea, find a mentor who can shortcut the learning curve and go all in. If this frustrates you, realise that success has no age restrictions. You can start now if you want to.*

*While I've had past successes in my life, writing books and launching a membership and online community and daily emails may seem a lot for a 50-year-old, but if I think I'm too old, it is just a thought and not reality. I had to let go of any ideas that I was too old, too tall, too loud, or too late!*

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### **THE STARBURST EFFECT**

Another thing to mention here regarding expectations that I've both experienced and witnessed; As you read this book and start implementing the attributes, you will notice changes around you. Some changes will be good. Others will not be as good. The people around you may notice a difference in you and like it. Others may not, and sometimes they will vocalise their dislike.

. . .

**Do not stop if people don't like it when you start acting in a better way for yourself.**

You may also start holding others to *your* expectations based on the new ideas and perspectives, and methods you now know and may even hold it against them if they are not behaving in a way you know could be better for all of you.

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**Other people are not aware of the same things as you, so do not hold them to your new expectations. They won't be able to live up to them. Well, until they read this book too (hint, hint!) or learn what you've learned.**

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Over the past 30 plus years, I've seen people come back from training workshops all excited and ready to share what they learned and implement it with everyone. I call it the "Starburst Effect" as they shine bright for a little while, then slowly fade. They come back to a team, or family, who was not at the same training, did not get pumped up by the speaker, and all they got from their "team" was a lack of interest, lack of engagement and often criticism because "change" was involved.

Eventually, they fall back to where they were before, believing the course or training was not good.

MINI BONUS: I'll give you a RAMP-IT freebie here - The reason it often fails is that the excited person, who is trying to be Influential by sharing, leads with the Action steps before revealing and embedding the Purpose and not being fully Mindful of how everyone will want to, or not, adopt this new perspective!

. . .

**Anticipate this may happen to you. Don't stop. Keep going because as long as you are doing what is right and good, taking control of *your* life and making the right choices, you will grow, learn, and keep growing. Even if it means finding a new community and spending less time with the people who don't "get" you.**

Remember, *they* don't have to get you!

### **Expect to be judged!**

It's tough going to a family event where you know you will be judged on what you've done, who you're with, and what progress you've made since the last event. I used to get a knot in my stomach, believing I had to prove myself or justify my actions to other family members.

Sometimes we may be starting something or just ramping up and aren't ready to share. Sometimes you tell people what you're doing, and they tell you what they think, and it's usually not helpful, leading you to wonder if you're making the right choices.

Something to remember here, and I cover this more in the RAMP-IT book, is that when you anticipate these things happening, anticipate how you'll react, and have your "instead of" thoughts helping you stay positive, the judgment feels more like swallowing a liquid capsule than a horse tablet!

It's also important to remember, especially if you're an entrepreneur or small business owner, that your family may not be your ideal customer, so you may not see a need for or fully understand what you offer. They may not be business people themselves and may not understand what you're

doing, your “why”, or what you’ve had to do to get where you are.

It’s easy to shout from the sidelines, but until they are standing where you are and have been what you’ve been through, just look at their judgement as a not fully uninformed opinion. Remember Consideration 11: There is something missing? Family especially likes to put in their two pence worth without having all the facts. Stay resolute, do the right thing, and keep moving forward!

### **BEWARE OF “EXPECTING” THINGS TO GO YOUR WAY**

When I practised specialised kinesiology, I got to the point I “knew” what the correction/technique was going to be when someone presented their problems. I would execute the technique, only to find they did not feel better. *I* was setting the expectations and forgot that every client’s cause of their discomfort was different, even if the symptoms were similar to something else I’d seen or encountered.

I was looking for an exact outcome, and when it didn’t happen at first, I got upset, then the client would see my disappointment and assume something didn’t work or was wrong.

When I started letting go of the expected outcome, releasing my expectations and doing what I knew how to do, my clients started getting better and better results. The process was the same, yet being open to the outcomes allowed me to adapt to each situation more effectively and get a better result.

I’ve been around people who get so caught up in their idea being “the idea that will get them a promotion” or stuck on an outcome they really want. Yet they get moody, irate, or emotional when it doesn’t happen.

A student came into class and said he was quitting his job because his boss did not want to implement his idea. It *was* a good idea, yet he was so hung up on the company implementing it that he was ready to quit when they didn't!

He set his expectations of the outcome, which hindered his growth when he didn't get what he wanted! The company kept doing what they were doing and getting good, not great, results because it was safe for them.

My grandfather, who was fortunate enough to interview Gandhi in the late 1940s, shared the following sentence with me when I lived with him in North Carolina:

"Don't ask a question to which you're not prepared to hear the answer you don't want to hear."

I *expect* you've already heard it before! Just kidding. Maybe you have, maybe you haven't. Maybe you've heard of the authors and books I've suggested in this book or heard of a speaker I mentioned. Maybe you haven't.

Don't ask a question, submit a proposal, or even ask someone on a date if you're not prepared to hear the answer you don't want to hear. That said, be prepared and open to a different solution if offered and be present enough to consider it!

I cover this more in the RAMP-IT book. Sorry, but I can't include it all here!

### **BEWARE OF EXPECTING PEOPLE TO BEHAVE A CERTAIN WAY**

I've already covered this to a degree however believe digging a little deeper on this from another angle may help.

I hear the word "should" a lot.

- He *should* have signalled before turning.
- He *should* have opened the door.
- She *should* have replied to me by now
- She *should* have said this instead of that
- They *should* have known...
- I would have done it this way or that way...
- I think it could have been clearer, simpler, more detailed, more images... you get the point.

Have you ever caught yourself saying one of these? These are also expectations of other people, based on what we think “should” be happening. Whether it’s something said, written, acted on, or displayed, we combine what we hear or see with what *we* know, and the gap is what we believe “should” have been included.

I wouldn’t be surprised if someone thinks that about this book. “Nolan should have included a quote from...” or “Nolan should have used a diagram here.”

When you feel this way, remember that people do things based on what THEY know, not what YOU know, so there will always be a gap. And if they did it based on what you know, there wouldn't be much point in you being there!

This also means that you could be holding people to *your* expectations based on what *you* know, *your* experiences and your values!

Sometimes you may run into a situation where you didn't learn anything new. That may also happen with people reading this book. Another way to look at this is that if I'm saying what you already know and you agree with it, it means we're on the same page, and it validates what we already know! Don't think of these situations as a waste of time. Think of it as giving you a power-up!

• • •

**REFLECTION and ACTION for Let It Go.**

To implement the Consideration "Let it go", be open to the outcome of a situation where it is not a defined tangible expectation. Conversations, ideas, and opinions can all lead you to new viewpoints. Being open to accepting others' views while still holding your own is a sign of growth.

Here are some insights to make this easier for you in relation to this book and personal interactions with others.

1. Be open to learning new ways to look at what you already know.
2. There are times you'll want to argue with what you're learning or being introduced to in your head. There will be things you disagree with. That's good. Stop to also ask yourself why you disagree. Remember, I am not writing this book from a perspective of only what worked for me; it's from a perspective of seeing the factors that affect most situations repeatedly. It is up to you to recognise which applies to you. (or ask in the community for more guidance. Help is at hand!)
3. You'll notice a change when you start taking what's in here on board or from your latest learning/insights and using it. People will treat you differently, usually because you'll have more confidence and clarity in more areas of work and home life. This is good! Some of these people will not like the change. Anticipate it, and know that you are on the right path.
4. You will not want to do some of the exercises. Being True to yourself is knowing when you are avoiding something. Do the exercises, even if it's just mentally to start, and really think about the ones you struggled to answer or think are a waste of time. These often hold clues to your blockages.

5. You may expect change to happen quickly. Be patient. You don't often see a difference after one visit to the gym or not eating sugar for one day. You are changing just by reading this book. Others may notice it before you do. Stay on the path.
6. You may want more examples of applying all this to other areas of life because most coaches and books go straight into those areas. Learn the fundamentals here. They are essential to become familiar with first. I can't fit every scenario in one book!
7. You may expect me to cover things *you've* read about in other books and be upset because I don't. If you know it, that's good. Think about how you can bring what you know already and learn here together. Chances are, we're all on the same path!
8. You may interpret something I write as making light of a situation or scenario or dismissing someone or their way of thinking and can't quite tell my tone or intent because it's just words on a page. Know that my intent is always to be respectful, get to the point, and give you what matters that will make a difference for you. While I do like to challenge the status quo because I believe it's not working as well as possible, there is never malicious intent here. Ever.
9. Have fun with this. Personal growth, self-actualisation and growth should be fun. Don't take it all too seriously!!
10. You may be expecting me to tell you there's a light inside you waiting to come out, or that you were born great, or that the universe has your back. I won't. *Fulfilment, achievements, finding calm in difficult situations and growth come from having a repeatable and adaptable system that makes sense and that you can implement and grow with at whatever stage you're at.* I don't want you to get over-excited and then lose that

excitement and think it doesn't work without effort and consistency. I want this to make sense so you don't have to get excited to implement it. You just will, like buying a regular item at the supermarket. Make it part of your life, and it will get easier.

11. I will repeat myself here sometimes. I write the way I talk, and when something is important, we all tend to say it repeatedly to make sure it's heard. If you're aware of hearing something more than once or twice, here or somewhere else, that's good. Write it down and ask yourself why it could be important to bring it up again!
12. Let It Go could mean something else to you, like letting go of the past or how someone treated you. Holding on to negative thoughts puts you in a state of contraction. Letting go, focusing on the present moment and your next steps opens you up to expansion. Expansion is always better than contraction when it comes to personal development!  
Read Consideration 20!

Everything in this book is already online in some way, shape or form. All I'm doing is putting it together in a way that I hope makes more sense for you.

# CONSIDERATION 16: CHANGE IS INEVITABLE!

*AKA: Do you still think like you did as a teenager?*

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*"I can teach you something, and you can learn, but until you see how it makes your life better for knowing it, insight doesn't happen. With insight and application comes transformation... and change. Find the right teacher and be open to applying what you learn, and both insight and transformation can happen as fast as you want."*

*THIS WAS ME TOO!*

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THAT ABOUT SUMS UP TRANSFORMATION!

OK, here's a little more, but only because you asked!

Transformation means change. Humans, as a rule, don't like change unless it suits them.

If you want the people you interact with to improve their behaviour and how they see you, it probably won't help to go in guns blazing trying to force them to see your way or

list off the Considerations in the hope something will sink in.

First, practice what you learn here. Be the change. I know you've heard that before, and now you know some of what it takes!

Second, ask questions. Ask if they are open to something new. Ask if they would like to know more about what you're doing and why? Ask them about themselves!! Keep the Considerations in mind as you listen too. Don't judge. Don't attach emotions to what they say unless it's helpful. Be like I was at my son's birth, looking over the curtain at the surgery, and look at what's happening subjectively and then decide if you need to add emotion.

Change and transformation can happen with the right mental state, at the right time, with the right people, resources, and action steps. Don't expect other people to change. Be ok with that.

If you can take this on board and use some of it and *not* think, "Uncle Joey will never change", you have changed. You have transformed and are now a weapon for good in the world. Sorry, I couldn't resist that.

When you practice what you learn here and just show up, others will ask you what happened. Tell them, and, if it's true, tell them how you feel calmer and don't feel the need to react, but choose to respond to life.

One of my main goals with this book, RAMP-IT and RAMP your FLOWS is to bring people together by helping you, me, and the people we meet to become more self-aware and make small changes that can have a big impact.

There's a great book called "The Slight Edge" by Jeff Olson. He talks about how small changes adopted incrementally will lead to significant changes over time.

The important thing is to remember that it can go both ways. Not taking action can lead you further and further away from your goals until the gap to achieving them seems almost insurmountable.

**One of those changes I'd like to see and will be writing about more is the prevalence of an "us vs them" mentality. Instead, we need to adopt an "us AND them" mentality.**

In life in general we have an us vs them mentality. Political parties, religions, who voted for who, teachers vs students, schools vs other schools, businesses vs competitors, parents vs children, inner thoughts vs outer consciousness, you vs toxic people, sales vs marketing, my kids vs your kids.

This mentality is divisive, polarising and pushes people apart.

When I lived near Chicago, I won a ticket to an Improv training workshop at one of the top Chicago Improv clubs. It was brilliant. As someone who has introverted tendencies in some social settings, I strangely love being on a stage! Of all the things we learned, one sketch and skill stood out for me, and I've tried to use it whenever I can.

It was the "Yes, and..." Sketch. Whatever someone says, you reply with "Yes, and...", then create your new continuation of the story. Anytime you said "No," you had to sit down. It was a conversation killer. You were also out if you said "But", another conversation killer.

When it comes to conversation in general, it's easy to snap back "No" or "But", essentially shutting down the other person, leaving them feeling less worthy, which can lead to them forming a negative emotion. We don't want that!

**Instead of** stopping the flow of the conversation, even if you think or know they may be wrong, and snapping back with a no, or but, or any harmful or defensive remark, try saying “Yes, and” then adding to the comment.

When you say “Yes”, you acknowledge their comment and perspective, which is what they are thinking based on their experience, level of knowledge, and brain coming up with a conclusion. You are acknowledging that their way of thinking is A way of thinking. When you continue with the “And” adding your own perspectives or insights, you add to the conversation.

Change is harder when people don't feel heard, seen or don't feel that you get them. Are you taking the time to know the people around you and their unique approach to life?

If you've got stubborn teenagers, try this. They often want their opinion heard and shut down when the first words out of your mouth are “No!”. I use this with my kids, and it has changed our dynamic. Sometimes I forget. I'm human, and I realise now when I've fallen back into “dominant dad” mode, and I apologise, and we talk again.

Apologising to your kids is a sign of strength and teaches them it's ok to be wrong sometimes.

You can see how I used the “instead of” statement in there too!

Us vs them can be internal too. Inner thoughts, outer consciousness. If your instinct is fear, ask yourself why! Find a way for your inner instinctive protective thoughts to work *with* your conscious thinking. A good book that goes into that more is “The Chimp Paradox” by Prof. Steve Peters, or “Rewire Your Anxious Brain” by C Pittman and E Karle.

## **REFLECTION and ACTION for Change Is Inevitable.**

To experience transformation, it helps to keep this in mind:

*Until you see how what you're learning makes your life better, insight doesn't happen. With insight and application comes transformation. Find the right teacher and be open to applying what you learn, and both insight and transformation can happen as fast as you want them to.*

Don't expect change to happen unless you implement what you learn and give it a fair chance. It's easy to say something won't work or try it once, and it doesn't change anything. If you only rode your bike once and fell off would you say it's impossible to ride a bike?

It's consistent effort and commitment to change that gets results. One idea at a time. One step at a time. One minute at a time. One day at a time.

Sometimes, we change out of necessity or life shift, and sometimes because it's brought to our doorstep. Through being open, learning, and adaptable, change makes everything a lot easier.

Adapting to change works better when you find the right resources to help. Be willing to have an "us and them" mentality to either help others who are struggling with change, or ask for help.

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

This ties in with several other Considerations, for example, not being Open, from the OCEAN model in Consideration 5. Control ≠ Controlling from Consideration 10. Not letting things go or holding people to your expectations, from the previous Consideration. Resistance to change comes from

uncertainty. If you can help people understand the *Why* of the change, explain the benefits, and even be honest about what may be challenging to start, it is a lot easier to get people to adapt to what could be an easier way of doing things.

Follow up with listening to what others have to say. What are their concerns, how do they think they can adapt, and what support do they need/can you offer?

### **What was your “aha” insight from this Consideration?**

As I put in the title of this Consideration, “Do you still think as you did as a teenager?” we all change. We don’t think or behave the same way we did a few years, a decade or more ago. We don’t think the same way as parents as we did before having children.

You won’t think the same way after you finish this book. Small lessons with repeated application lead to substantial change!.

# CONSIDERATION 17: FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*AKA: What are you hopped up on?*

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*"Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are."*

BRILLAT-SAVARIN

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I USED to work for a training company in London and often taught across several training sites in the same month. They put out cookies, chocolate muffins, and coffee with syrups for the staff and students at many sites. At one particular site they had fresh fruit, no cookies, and frequently the coffee machine was broken.

Whatever was available, the students would eat. If there was no coffee, they drank more water.

Unsurprisingly the location with the healthier choices usually led to calmer, more interactive sessions with deeper conversations. There were, of course, students who would bring in an average person's monthly supply of Coke and sweets each

day, and they would often struggle to stay awake, stay focused, or even complete their tasks on time.

This is why the phrase “You are what you eat” is so important.

Don't worry, I'm not going off on a plant-based or vegan rant or telling you to cut out all the sweets and fun stuff. There is nothing wrong with a diet that your body can sustain; however, going to extremes is not usually necessary.

Putting it simply, poor nutrition affects hormones, psychology, and emotions.

And...a little water goes a long way.

Poor diet is a leading cause of ill health, disease, and mental turbulence. I'm going to be very direct with this Consideration because it's probably one of the leading causes of crabbiness, lack of consistent production and resistance to unity.

This is not a diet book, so I'll keep this short. If you find yourself, your partner, or your team tired, lacking energy, unable to focus, easily distracted, short-tempered, producing sub-par work, and even not getting along with others, look at the diet first.

If you own the company or you're the person in the house who makes the shopping list, what healthy alternatives do you suggest or provide?

Do you have a wellness program as part of your employee development? Do you think it's not your job to get people to eat healthily? Have you done any kind of challenge to help educate employees about healthier living or take action with a reward? Do you set the expectations that the workplace is free from sweets, sodas, colas, and processed foods from day one? Is this really any different from forbidding smoking or

drugs in the workplace, both of which are energy suckers and diminish productivity?

I know you can't force people to eat healthily, yet if you are paying a person for a result, it's in your best interests to educate them consistently on how to be more productive with better nutrition. At least during working hours!

Again, this is direct, but if you own a company and you're paying people to be productive, wouldn't you want to provide and encourage a workplace that goes beyond providing more software and programs, forced mental health videos and the occasional motivational speaker to get people to be more productive, and help them live a life that allows it to happen more naturally?

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Food For Thought**

What we put in our bodies affects how we think, emote and act. Take a look at your desk, lunch, eating habits and water consumption habits and see what you can improve on today.

Look at it this way; what you put in your body is either helping you or not. You wouldn't put diesel in a petrol car because you know there will be immediate consequences, including the cost of draining the tank. My daughter found this out the hard way on her motorbike! Look at food and drinks the same way.

Remember Consideration 12: Today is Day One? What can you do today to eat better or drink more water? What can you do tonight to prepare yourself for doing better tomorrow?

**How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

The often-glaring symptom of this Consideration is the physical evidence. A mountain of processed food, crisps, snack, and packaged food wrappers. Energy drinks, sodas, and fizzy drink cans. A “need” for coffee or tea multiple times throughout the day.

Physically you’ll see people overly tired, lacking energy, or they have big mood and energy swings. Yes, there are other things that can cause this, like a new baby, disease, problems at home etc, but you have to start somewhere!

Instead of reaching for a coffee, reach for water. Add fruit, lemon or get one of those bottles that makes you think you’re drinking a fruity drink when it’s just water.

Have an “instead of” for snacks. Fresh vegetables and fruit and nuts are all healthier alternatives for most people.

Challenge yourself to do this one day at a time and see how many days you can keep it up.

### **What was your “aha” insight from this Consideration?**

What could you share with someone at home or work who you know could benefit from eating more healthily, or drinking less sugared drinks?

Here are a couple of ways to address this, assuming you have a healthy eating policy or suggested environment at work:

Bring in some good quality snacks to the office and ask others if they’d like some, or what they’d like instead. Some people don’t eat healthily because they think it will taste bad.

Give everyone a water bottle and for one month send out a reminder every hour to drink some water. Yes, some people will ignore it. Some won’t. Your goal is to offer the solutions and be a good resource.

Do not, please, go and grab someone's food or drink and tell them they need to eat better. This is being controlling. Ask questions:

Have you considered trying...?

Can I get you a glass of water?

What are your favourite foods?

What are your thoughts on this week's health tips?

# CONSIDERATION 18: WHO ARE YOU, REALLY?

AKA: Who's showing up today?

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*"Know who you are in the situation you're in, and the purpose of that role, and you will always be the right person at the right time."*

ME AGAIN!

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I REMEMBER one of the first lessons at massage school vividly. We were all sitting cross-legged on the spacious wooden massage-school floor in a big circle-ish formation, facing the trainer, our mentor, Rick Rosen. He asked us a direct question:

"Who are you?"

One by one, each of the 20 or so students rattled off what we did for a living, whether we were parents, married, or finding themselves. I said I worked in restaurants and was recently separated.

With each answer, Rick had a straight face and as soon as we started saying what we'd been doing, or who we identified as, he would shake his head, until one person got it right.

"I'm a massage therapist!" they said.

"YES!" Rick exclaimed. "You get it! *Here* you are a massage therapist."

This has stuck with me for years and is something I've tried sharing when people were obviously not in alignment with their role.

I saw this identity/role confusion a lot when teaching digital marketing apprentices. Many had come straight from school so still saw themselves as high school students, and not as apprentices, marketing professionals, and higher education learners.

Some were experienced in the workplace but were taking on a new role and didn't see themselves as learners either.

We often take on multiple roles in our lives. For me, I'm a dad, son, brother, coach, trainer, author, friend and now, at the time of editing this chapter, single again!

It took me a while to really identify as a massage therapist when I spoke to people at networking meetings. Just as it did when I decided to become a transformational coach.

Can I really do this? How long do I have to do this before I can actually claim to be a coach? Am I good enough to call myself a coach? Really?

Here's another way to look at this:

In each situation, define who you are in that role and the situations you're in when in that role.

Know the purpose of who you are in that role.

Look for ways to grow that persona, obviously in a healthy way that does not detract from you as a person or your overall values.

Embrace your role until you decide you've outgrown it or are ready to jump into another role.

For example, if you work for a company and go into management, do not be an employee with a management title. Become a great manager and learn how to be a great manager. Better still, learn to become a great leader! A good book to help here is Simon Sinek's "Why Leaders Eat Last."

This Consideration may seem similar to C5 - You is Fluid; however, while C5 is more about your personality and behavioural traits, this is about identifying with a specific role in a particular situation, and determining who you are, or want to be, in that role.

At my daughter's football games, I was in full-on dad mode, which usually ended up with one of *those* looks your child shoots across the pitch when you're too loud!

If you are a husband and become a dad, don't forget to still be a husband when you're with your wife. I have another book coming out on this soon! I messed up on this and will never do it again! I was in dad mode more than husband mode. We also, referring to previous Considerations, did not take those small actions to keep us on track and progressing, and it got to the point it was insurmountable.

This goes for any partnership.

Yes, I believe that anyone should be able to love anyone else, regardless of sexual orientation. If you don't believe the same, *I'm sure there's a reason for that*, because I know you weren't born with that belief! And if you choose not to read the rest of this book or share it because you disagree with this view, I'd

say you've missed a large part of what I've been saying here and would benefit from rereading it!

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Who Are YOU Really?**

We often wear many hats, yet none are as detrimental to a working or home environment as the parent/child roles. It's easy to be a parent and go to work as the "parent", being more directive in our approach. It's also hard to be the "parent" in a meeting, then a more senior person walks in, and suddenly you have to be the "child". This parent-adult-child model was developed by psychologist Eric Berne in the 1950s.

The goal, especially in the workplace and partner relationships, is to adopt an adult/adult model where you speak to each other on the same level, despite roles, titles or seniority.

Once you define your roles, try to talk to everyone as equals. This encourages a coaching environment where it's safe to say "I don't know" and "How can I help" without it feeling like you've done something wrong or are overbearing or dominant by wanting to help.

Identify the roles you take on at home, work, friendships, groups, and social settings. While you may not need to change your character much, you may need to consider how you see yourself in each role and how others see you.

### **What to do when a negative behaviour has become the identity and role.**

On several occasions, I've had to work with someone who was grumpy, belligerent, rude, or just complained most of the time. Sometimes it's all in one!

Some people become like that because they didn't get enough support or were not appreciated in a way that relates to them, and they get to the point that they feel it doesn't matter what they do; they'll be poorly treated anyway. And so this becomes their identity.

They are often considered toxic, narcissistic, or difficult, except by people who can work with them, or find a softer side to them, often outside the workplace (it's all situational!). In these situations, the best thing to do first is not to stop being the best you can be.

The second thing is to go back to Consideration 5 and determine which of the OCEAN factors they could be struggling with and try to understand why.

The third, and I know this is out of order, but everything is relative, is to read Consideration 19 about languages of appreciation and see if you can chip away at their rough side with a display of understanding.

**Important note about "toxic" people, toxic bosses and toxic workplaces.**

I thought about leaving this out, but feel so strongly about it I'm putting it in. It may have been better in Consideration 5, but it's here now. This will challenge a lot of people's views, but someone needs to call it out and challenge this view. Maybe you'll disagree with me because the buzzword of the year is toxic and many "experts", influencers, podcasters and coaches are throwing it around to make those who think they don't need to or aren't improving, have a victim mental state, or who struggle with their own self-worth feel better about themselves. It's not me, it's them.

We as a society: workers, parents, influencers, coaches, and leaders need to stop putting negative labels on the people we

don't understand or aren't able or willing to help. I see it all the time in social media posts: "Do you have a toxic manager", "What to do in a toxic environment" etc. We are telling people to put a negative label on someone else and identify that person as a bad person, without having any idea of who they really are, what they're going through, and what they're doing themselves to break any negative patterns they know they have. Their role becomes the "toxic leader".

Would you want a label of being "ugly" put on you when you're working hard on your own self-image and feel you're making progress, or stupid when you're in a role you don't excel at, yet are taking a course in your spare time to get a better job? Or "lazy" because you have an underlying mental health issue or disability that most people don't know about?

Or toxic when you believe you're doing your best, yet go home stressed every day because you feel your employees don't have the same passion as you and you haven't learned *yet* that changing yourself, or clarifying and conveying your purpose could be the first steps to getting others to follow you loyally? Or you haven't learned yet how to read other people's body cues, or work on your charisma because you were never around people who were good role models? (Shout out to Vanessa Van Edward's books here "Captivate" and "Cues")

If someone told you that you're "toxic" because you're a tough boss who struggles with being Conscientious and is low on the Emotional Stability scale because of your past what would you think? How would you react? After reading this book, how could you act now if you relate to this?

We don't want to be labelled ourselves, yet are throwing around these labels, that people who haven't achieved a higher level of EQ, yet, attach to and perpetuate, leading to even more strained and difficult relationships. *Instead of*

pushing the toxic, narcissist, negative labels and agenda, offer solutions to speak up, be seen, be heard, engage with others to find common ground, and a helpful way forward. Offer solutions to find out what the cause of perceived toxicity is. Offer solutions to be interested in other people so *they* feel heard, and more understood, and can be more open to changing their behaviour.

This book is called *There's A Reason For That* for a reason. We don't know what is going on other people's minds or lives 90% of the time. In the situation *you're* in with someone they may be difficult, adversarial, immature or condescending. It doesn't mean they'll always be that way. Or are that way in all areas of their lives. We act how we act in different situations because of how we learned to behave in that environment. Some people weren't fortunate to work with compassionate bosses, or have compassionate parents who taught them how to be leaders with empathy, compassion and to care about the people around them. It does not mean they can't learn now.

If you have a "toxic" boss, manager or team leader, first do what you can internally, as in yourself, your thoughts, your personal growth. Then, give them a copy of this book.

If you work in a toxic environment, it usually begins with the leadership. Give them all a copy of this book. Bookmark this chapter. Leave a note in the pages that says, "this is how we feel, but we don't think you're doing it deliberately. How can you help change our perception? What can we do to help, or understand you better?" Of course some people may be offended. Anticipate it. What will you do if they aren't open to change? Will you choose to stay where you are, or find another job?

No one who is mean wants to be mean. How many movies have a mean old grumpy character whose temperament is

turned by the end by someone who showed them kindness and understanding? You'd be surprised how that can work in real life too.

And if what you do doesn't soften them up a little to see the soft, chewy centre almost everyone really has, then just keep doing you the best way you can and give them a copy of this book. With this Consideration bookmarked!

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

I usually noticed this factor when students were behaving like school children in a work environment. I believe a lack of understanding of the responsibility of the role, and what it entails, while not detracting from who you are as a person was what stood out. In other words, it was the need or desire to still have fun, be young and cool and a little rebellious, and not understanding that the work or teaching environment required some of that to be shelved in lieu of being more mature, accountable and focused, in that situation.

The students who stood out as being more mature really embraced their role identity in the right situations. That's why they stood out!!

Another example of this is Imposter Syndrome. It can be starting a new business, becoming a consultant after working for others for a long time, or being promoted within a company.

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome can often be as simple as identifying what the new role is and taking on that identity while owning it at the same time. You are in that role for a reason and people will validate it more for you when you believe it, own it and live it like you mean it.

### **What was your “aha” insight from this Consideration?**

I could easily write a book on each of these Considerations. That's why I kept it this one short.

When you're dealing with someone who is struggling to transition to a new role at home or at work, the best thing to do is find them a mentor who has already made that transition and can help.

Always remember that you may not be the best person to do this, no matter how good you think you might be at helping!

Questions you can ask: these are easier in a work environment than personal, unless you plan on playing duck the flying frying pan!

- Can you tell me what your current role entails?
- How do you think you can take on this role more effectively?
- What actions and responsibilities do you think are involved?
- Could you write down what you think I/we/the company believe that role entails?

What could you add to this? Please share in the community!!

On second thought, here are the same questions as above adapted for a personal relationship:

- What are our individual strengths and how can we use them?
- What can we each do to use our strengths more?
- What are some steps we can take each day to help each other?
- Let's write down what we think each other could be doing and compare our notes openly.

# CONSIDERATION 19: PARDONNEZ MOI, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА

AKA: Do you understand the words coming out of my mouth?

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*"We all know the languages of love, appreciation, learning styles, body language, and behaviour on a basic level. They are part of human nature. It's like learning how to ask for coffee, or where the toilet is, in a foreign language. Yet we invariably don't understand the dialect of others because we only pay attention to what matters to us and didn't learn the languages through others' eyes, perspectives, experiences, or with more depth".*

I BELIEVE THIS

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I WAS FLIPPING through the channels on a lazy night recently and stopped on a show called Marriage Bootcamp - Bridezillas. Being the type of person interested in personal development and overcoming difficulties, I grabbed a drink

and settled in to watch with my daughter. Let's just say it was her idea!!

It was quite amazing watching married couples argue, fight, blame and be so selfish, yet by the end, most had found a way to reconcile some of the most pressing issues, albeit temporarily.

Knowing what I know now and what you'll have learned in this book, it was obvious to me the few glaring things that were going on:

Most couples completely lacked self-awareness – they didn't know themselves, let alone their partner.

Most didn't understand their partner's languages of appreciation (coming in a minute!)

Most didn't understand their partner's personality traits (Consideration 5)

Most were holding each other to past transgressions even when they tried changing.

Most were waiting for the other one to change first.

On many levels, they were not speaking the same language.

Whether it was

- Love Language – more personal
- Languages of Appreciation – more work based
- Learning styles (Visual, Auditory, Written and Kinaesthetic)
- Personality traits/tendencies – OCEAN (Consideration 5)
- Body language

These are the main “human languages” we all speak on some level, yet often poorly. We also don't practise being aware of

them consciously enough to adapt our actions, words, emotions, and thoughts in the moment to help deal with conflict, change or challenges quickly.

While this example was for couples, I've seen this a lot in the workplace, too; people who have worked with each other for years don't really know the people they work with or themselves as well as they think they do.

People often work side by side for years and not only don't get each other, but they also don't know how to express themselves to let the other person in and build a relationship! A lot of it comes down to understanding the "languages" in this Consideration.

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**Side note:** If you are or know a teacher, please get them this book, or at least the book mentioned below, as it will help them treat their kids as individuals a lot better and will help their kids thrive and create a less stressful environment. RAMP your Teaching, a RAMPIT Rundown book will be available later in 2022.

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I'm going to cover each of the topics above briefly here as they are all relevant when it comes to dealing with others and not only working collaboratively but also building relationships and friendships.

### **The 5 Love Languages**

While originally geared towards the workplace, the book you're reading in your hands, or listening to if you got the audiobook version, can also be used at home with partners,

family, and friends. For that reason, I'm going to start with the Love Languages first because a happier home frequently leads to being more satisfied at work.

So what are the Love languages?

The 5 Love Languages, created by marriage and family counsellor Gary Chapman PhD in 1992, are five attributes that relate to how we feel appreciated the best, specifically in a personal or close relationship. You can get the book, take a test, and find out more at <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/>. I'll attempt to give a short overview that gets the point across without taking away from Mr Chapman's work!

In hindsight, it would have been good to have known these for my second marriage. We split after 26 years as we'd basically just grown apart. While there were some good aspects of our relationship, including the kids, we just didn't understand each other. After reading this book during lockdown, I realised so many things about myself, so when we decided to get divorced, I knew any future relationships would never end the same way.

Believe it or not, and this goes for the workplace too, gifts and rewards are frequently not the only, or best, way to show appreciation for your partner!

The 5 Love Languages (remember these are for personal relationships!!) are:

**Words of Affirmation** – Telling someone you appreciate them, something they've done or their physical attributes with verbal comments

**Acts of Service** – Acts that help relieve the burden of daily and other activities. Also doing things for your partner without being asked!

**Quality Time** – Being present, focused on the other person and engaged!

**Giving Gifts** – Tangible offers that show you care. It doesn't have to be luxury items. Sometimes a thoughtful gift that has meaning is worth more.

**Physical Touch** – Usually non-sexual touch that can be reassuring and comforting. It can, however, include intimate contact with adults.

The chart below has been taken from a few that I found online, all accredited to different people,

**THERE'S A REASON FOR THAT - USING THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES**

WORD OR LANGUAGE	WHAT IS IT?	HOW TO EXPRESS IT	THINGS TO AVOID	AFTER CONFLICT	TIPS FOR WORK
<b>WORDS OF AFFIRMATION</b>	verbal compliments that express your love and appreciation.	Bring to others what you give your partner. Write love letters/notes. Text notes.	unhelpful criticism, talking in a receptor or negative tone.	Be honest with yourself and use words to rebuild trust and intimacy.	Choose words of encouragement in a specific action. Be consistent.
<b>ACTS OF SERVICE</b>	any act that saves time or reduces the burden of responsibility.	wash the dishes, clean the car, do the laundry, etc. Do it for your partner with a cheerful attitude.	Refuse to do what you know you should do. Don't let your partner's requests or favors go unheeded.	offer assistance to what you can do. Be helpful. Ask what is a priority for them.	offer to help and assist. Do how they want you to help.
<b>QUALITY TIME</b>	being present, undivided and focused attention with your partner.	have all devices, be present in conversations, make eye contact, listen with full attention.	Distractions when together, going for long periods without eye contact.	avoid eye contact, be honestly present, look away, avoid eye contact, listen with sympathy.	continue social time, be honest, listen, be present, offer quality time.
<b>GIVING GIFTS</b>	tangible symbols that reflect thoughtfulness and affection.	random gifts, hand made and thoughtful gifts, thoughtful and meaningful gifts.	forgetting special occasions, giving random gifts with no thought or meaning.	give a small token of your affection and an apology when you are not present.	be consistent, be thoughtful, be intentional.
<b>PHYSICAL TOUCH</b>	we connect through touch. Can also be a physical touch.	hugs, kisses, holding hands, back massages, hand holding.	touching without consent, touching in a way that is not wanted, neglect, lack of attention.	ask for what you need, be honest, be consistent, be intentional.	be consistent, be thoughtful, be intentional.

Based on "The 5 Love Languages" written by Dr Gary Chapman - Remember this applies for both sides of the relationship!

*Using the 5 love languages chart with an extra tip for the workplace.*

### The 5 Languages of Appreciation – for the workplace

When I worked for my first apprenticeship company, I had the dual role of trainer and assessor. I'll be the first to admit I was not very good at the assessor role! I tried learning from other assessors who were amazingly good, to improve my skills. A special thanks to Iain Pickles for your help there!

Teaching was my strength. I loved being in front of the class, imparting snippets of wisdom and seeing those little light bulbs glow as the students took in the lesson information and turned them into actionable insights.

That company struggled to keep staff and my caseload, in addition to teaching at six locations every month, grew to 120

students I was supposed to be assessing. The recommended number is 45!

I kept a stiff upper lip and pushed through, trying to keep the students happy and my managers. I was not succeeding. From my managers, yes plural, I had five at one point, I was fielding questions like: "When will exams be marked?", "When will visits take place?", "When will assessments be written up?", and "When will onboarding visits be scheduled?"

I'm not one for words of appreciation but I knew I was working ridiculous hours, spending time away from my family, and I felt a distinct lack of appreciation. I got to the point that I just didn't want to try anymore.

One day my manager came in, and I told her that if something didn't change, and at that time, it was bringing on new staff to take over the caseload, I was probably going to quit.

I was so upset, angry, tired and feeling used that I broke down in front of my manager and openly cried. I couldn't contain it. I was physically exhausted, mentally overwhelmed and emotionally on the edge of collapse. Pushing me harder without actually saying thank you (words of affirmation) and promising to get help but not doing it (acts of service), and not compensating me for the time and effort I was putting in (Gifts / Rewards) was too much.

Appreciating employees is too often overlooked by employers who think a paycheck and an infrequent pat on the back with a team-directed "You guys are doing great" is enough.

It's not.

In the workplace, many people stop working and slow down, and disengage because they don't feel appreciated.

While the five languages of appreciation in the workplace mirror the 5 Love Languages, they have slightly different applications. As you read these, think about which one relates to you the most, and communicate it to the people around you. In the company training I deliver, I offer exercises to discuss each of these, so everyone is more aware of how to appreciate others and be appreciated in return.

**Words of Affirmation** – Telling someone you appreciate them with verbal comments to their face and being specific about what you genuinely appreciate about them, their behaviour, actions, or character. If you offer a compliment and see their face light up, it's a good sign that this is their preferred language of appreciation.

**Acts of Service** – Acts that help relieve the burden of daily and other activities, initiated by asking what they would like help with, not just doing something and saying you're helping. It's also recognising when they have too much to do and taking some of the burdens off them.

**Quality Time** – Being present and focused on the other person, whether with a manager to check in a team in a social setting or a mentor. It doesn't have to be with you.

**Giving Gifts** – Tangible offers that show you care. It could be a new stapler or tickets to a sports game. It is the thought that counts.

**Physical Touch** – Obviously this is about non-sexual touch in the workplace!! Other ways of displaying physical touch are a hand on someone's shoulder, a good handshake, and even a hug in some cultures and workspaces. I'm a hugger, by invitation only. That means you can ask me for a hug, and you'll rarely be denied!!

Here's a simple (and a bit silly) example of how each of these can be applied to a simple task.

Words of Affirmation: Hey Jan, I saw that stapling job you did yesterday, and it was immaculate. Thank you.

Acts of Service: Good morning, Labeeb. I see you've got a big pile of stapling to do here. Would you like help, and if yes, what would you want me to do?

Quality Time: Hey Eleanor, I just got back from a conference on advanced stapling. Would you like me to book some time with you to go over what I learned?

Giving Gifts: Hi Dane, I overheard you the other day saying how your stapler is a bit old, so I have a new one for you.

Physical Touch: (allowing for social distancing restrictions, of course!) Hey Nasir, can I shake your hand and say thanks for all the stapling you do? (Gives firm handshake with optional touch on elbow). Remember, people who don't like physical contact will pull away, while those who are typically ok with it will typically lean in or close the distance between you by a couple of inches. Pay attention to body language on this one!!

If you see someone openly hugging others, yet they don't lean in when you approach, this simply means something is going on WITH THEM! Unless you know you have a reason to be, do not take offence!

As with many of these Considerations, the appreciation language may differ between co-workers, subordinates and managers. Typically a manager would not expect a gift from a subordinate, yet they might appreciate an Act of Service, like asking if there is something they can do to help the team. That same person may prefer a gift from their boss over a thank-you.

An overworked person may appreciate help, Acts of Service more than a reward, which may be their usual preferred language.

To discover more about the Languages of Appreciation, go to <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/> And take their test or order the books.

## Learning Styles

I've been fortunate to have been a trainer in different capacities and industries, spanning massage and wellness, restaurants, ballroom and swing dancing, sales and digital marketing. One thing that's kept me on my toes, no pun intended, and often helped me see great results is being adaptable to people's learning styles.

There are times when I've just ploughed ahead, teaching "at" my students, only to find some persistent person asking me the same question several times! This is usually enough to wake up my self-awareness and remember to stop and adapt.

I've been in situations where I've been trained via PowerPoint to do something physical, and it's taken me a while to get to grips with the product. See what I did there? I slipped in a clue. "Get to grips". Yes, I'm more of a kinaesthetic learner.

When I interviewed for my first job as a digital marketing trainer for apprentices, I walked in, set up my PowerPoint, and handed everyone a handout with blank spaces and diagrams. In a 20-minute presentation, I spoke, showed, and got interaction by having someone complete a diagram on the whiteboard and had them all write down some answers. It's not hard to incorporate all learning styles in meetings, presentations and teaching when you plan ahead.

Understanding people's learning styles, especially when training new employees, can be adapted based on what they say as they take in the information.

Also, remember this applies to relationships at home with partners, parents and kids too! If you're trying to get your point across and get a blank stare back, think about how else you could explain yourself.

If you're trying to teach someone a new process, keep the learning styles in mind and adapt to them if they aren't absorbing what you're teaching.

**Visual** – These learners like diagrams, videos, illustrations and handouts. Watch as they take in the nuances of the illustrations and then look up to visualise it in their head. They will often ask to *see* information, even after it's just been verbally explained, as it makes more sense once they've seen the words.

Visual learners are good at looking at people as they talk as it helps them focus. They are also frequently good at organising as they "see" where everything goes.

They will say things like:

- I see.
- Can I see it?
- I can picture that.
- Show me.
- Let me paint you a picture about... (telling stories).
- Let me give you the highlights (they like using highlighters too and mindmaps!).

Allow visual learners to absorb the material and be creative. If you're speaking in a monotone and there is nothing for the learner/worker to visualise, they may not get what you're trying to convey no matter how many times you repeat yourself!

**Auditory** – These learners do well simply by hearing information. Often good at getting more out of speeches or lectures, they may also make up songs to remember things or read aloud.

Auditory learners do well with recordings, podcasts, group discussions, and verbal role-playing.

You'll hear them say things like:

- I hear you.
- Tell me...
- It's not going in (pointing to ear!).
- Can you explain that another way?
- Let me tell you about...

On a downside, Auditory learners will often hum, talk out loud and ask you to repeat yourself to make sure it all went in. Anticipating auditory learners will ask more questions, and want you to acknowledge them as a way of working, and not getting upset when it happens will help both of you!

**Reading/Writing** – These learners prefer taking in information as written text, storing it as lists and summaries, and creating their own presentations.

I had a student who would ask for the presentation for each day's lesson at the beginning of each day. I wouldn't normally do that as it can be a distraction. She would copy all the words from every slide down in her notebook and write additional comments next to them. The first time I saw her do this, I was confused and concerned that she wasn't taking in all the information. She did pretty well in the class though, and I realised this was her way of taking it all in. She was also great at creating flashcards with bullet points that she'd use for revision.

Reading / Writing learners will say things like:

- Where can I read more about that?
- Let me jot that down.
- Can I create a checklist for that?

If you see someone writing down every word you say, don't stop them. Allow for a bit of extra time and show you understand them by asking if they are ready for you to move on to the next slide / topic / section etc.

**Kinaesthetic** – These learners like to be hands-on. If you're showing them coding, for example, they'll want to actually do it themselves. If you're showing them how to dance, they'll want to try the steps as they learn and figure part of it through trial and error.

Gamification works well with kinaesthetic learners, as does role-playing as long it involves movement.

Things you'll hear kinaesthetic learners say:

- I've got this.
- I can't grasp the concept.
- I'll get a handle on this.
- Let me put something together for you.
- Let's work this out.

Often kinaesthetic learners may appear slower to take on ideas than other learners because most presentations and teaching involve speaking and presenting ideas first, then doing. When you come to the doing, the kinaesthetic learner will suddenly look like a genius, when in reality, they have just hit their stride in a familiar and comfortable environment.

While doing more research on this topic, I found this PDF and found it extremely useful. <https://theresareasonforthat.com/learningstyles>

Something to bear in mind:

If you try different approaches to teaching or training, you'll find some people take on the ideas faster than others, depending on which learning style you use. Try to avoid praising those who get it quicker too much as it can make learners who process internally over time feel less than adequate or not as good. Many conceptual learners who launch themselves into tasks because they "get" it quickly find themselves struggling when it gets a bit harder.

In the background are the other learners who may have spent more time digging deeper into research and poring over their text and who will transition from basics to intermediate to advanced levels with more fluidity.

There are literally thousands of resources on learning styles available online. If you want to be a better mentor, teacher, trainer, manager, or leader, develop the skill of understanding learning styles and how to adapt your training, explanations and mentoring to help others.

### **Personality Traits – OCEAN – See Consideration 5!**

Recap: These are the five personality traits that we exhibit in different situations;

OPENNESS – Willingness to try new things and be open to change

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS – How self-disciplined and "eye on the prize" you are.

EXTROVERSION – How energised and connected you are around other people

AGREEABLENESS – How friendly and optimistic you are toward other people

NEUROTICISM / EMOTIONAL STABILITY - How well stress is handled and other negative emotions

Every situation is different. Every situation is dealt with based on our history, experience, comfort level, knowledge and whether we think we can gain from it or not. As Dr Ben Hardy states in *Personality isn't Permanent*, this affects the "continuum of behaviours and attitudes that is flexible, malleable and based on context."

### **Body Language**

On a few occasions, I'd show up at my classroom in London overlooking Tower Bridge and the old City of London after having been on trains, cars and the tube for almost 2 hours to get there. My energy was not up, and typically that would be the morning an eager student had planted themselves in my classroom before I'd had a chance to collect myself, have a coffee, my porridge and make sure I had everything in place.

Looking back, I know a couple of times I walked in, looking tired still, a bit slumpy, and my body was telling them to get out, or "I'm not ready".

It didn't happen often because I always tried to make a point of being upbeat, positive and excited to see my students, especially on the first day of a new cohort.

Body language is one of the loudest languages because we instinctively know what someone is telling us without uttering a word. What we don't know often is *why* they are displaying those gestures. Sometimes a person looking

away while you're talking is not a sign of disrespect. It's that they're turning their head to hear you better because they are an auditory learner. It could also be because they feel you are the more dominant person in the situation. It could also be because they disagree with what you're saying and don't know or feel safe articulating that. It could also be that they suffer from social anxiety or have introversion tendencies in workplace settings.

In an earlier Consideration, I talk about physical feelings, and people tend to show their physical reactions more subconsciously than their emotions.

When you are happy, how does your body feel?

How about when you're angry? Disgusted? Excited? Intimidated?

We feel tight or relaxed.

We feel short of breath or easy to breathe.

We feel warm or cold.

We feel like we want to engage or run away, or freeze (flight or fight)

My point in bringing these up is that there are hundreds of possible combinations, and it's almost impossible to understand all the nuances of people without also knowing their background, extroversion level, or even what happened to them that morning.

In a short time, you can read about the above indicators and get an inkling of how someone is reacting to a situation, or you. You can also get a feel for how you are responding to a situation and other people if you check in with yourself.

Here are a couple of quick, simple exercises, so you have a baseline to work from. There are more detailed ones online, but I want to keep this simple for now:

Sit in a chair and think about a happy memory. Not an excitable memory, just a happy one. One where being present just feels good.

How is your breathing?

How is your posture?

How is your temperature (probably warm)

How are you holding your arms and legs? Are they relaxed?

Are you smiling?

Take a mental snapshot of how you feel in this moment. This is your natural, neutral posture, breathing, and level of relaxed muscles.

Now think of a time you were really excited. Get into the mood! Feel your body change.

How is your mouth, eyes, stance, heart rate, and lean (are you leaning towards the memory or away from it?)

Now think of a time you were upset or angry.

How is your body posture now? Are you clenching a fist? Are you pushing out your chest? Are you leaning away from the memory in defence? How is your breathing?

Now go back to your comfortable neutral position. Relax your shoulders and arms and legs. Find that smile. Notice your breathing and take a few deep square breaths (Follow the sides of a square: Five seconds to breathe in. Five seconds hold. Five seconds to breathe out. Five seconds hold.)

You may be wondering why I did this when this book is about understanding other people.

When you understand what it feels and looks like to be happy, excited, apprehensive, angry, or defensive, it's easier to recognise those traits and the associated body language in others.

And when you understand it's happening because of their thoughts, emotions and re-actions, it's easier to stop and take stock of the situation and not get drawn into it as easily. Especially the negative situations. The positive ones you can get drawn in all you want.

I'll refer again to Vanessa Van Edwards' books "Captivate" and her newest offering ", Cues" which came out in 2022. If you want to learn about current views on charisma and understanding people's physical cues, read these books!

### **REFLECTION and ACTION for Excuse me, please!**

There are a lot of "languages" to understand, and if I hadn't brought them all up together, you might find yourself forgetting there is more than body language.

Keep the learning styles in mind.

Keep the languages of appreciation in mind even closer, especially in close relationships.

Remember that we don't always speak the same language the same way at the same time. And it's all situational. Don't judge someone because of how they acted in a difficult situation. They probably aren't like that all the time. We all act out of character from time to time. There's a reason for that, and it can be any of the other 19 Considerations in this book.

Mis-communication is a leading cause of conflict. Whether it's reading someone's body language the wrong way, not understanding how they take in information or not picking up how open or conscientious they are, it's easy to assume that

because we said or showed something, the other person will get it in one take.

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

You've repeatedly explained how to do something, and the other person isn't getting it. You've asked someone to do a task, and they miss a piece. You're talking to someone, and there is a look of confusion on their face, yet you think it makes perfect sense to you. These are all symptoms of speaking the same language but not the same dialect!

### **What can you do in these situations?**

Let's go back to the beginning of the book and have a refresher on what to do and think:

1: Think: **There's a reason for that.** Let this stop you from reacting

2: **How can I take in what's happening.** Put aside your negative thoughts of "This person's an idiot" or "They should have got this by now", etc.

3: **What can I do in this situation right now, to help it.** It's being able to say to yourself, "I have a choice and control in how I respond", otherwise known as helpful or unhelpful actions.

4: **What can I take from this experience to help me anticipate how to handle events in the future?** These become helpful or unhelpful beliefs and habits.

**What was your lightbulb moment here?**

Which of the languages mentioned in this Consideration stood out for you? Which one are you unfamiliar with? Which one do you think you could work on understanding or applying a bit more? What could you share with someone you know when you see them next time? Write it down, or make a small drawing, or record a voice note of what it is.

# CONSIDERATION 20: PUT DOWN THE DIRTY NAPPY!

AKA: Ewww! What are you holding onto?

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*"It's not always possible to avoid negative situations or thoughts, however knowing that you can control how you handle them gives you mastery over them."*

I THINK THIS

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I'M GOING to keep this Consideration short and to the point.

Stop picking up negative shit and holding onto it!

While I've covered this a little in Consideration 15: Let It Go, I wanted to look at this differently. That angle is when we choose to pick up negative stuff, thoughts, ideas or beliefs, or actually look for it, and then hold onto it for way too long.

I've got a friend on Facebook, and even today he was complaining about something. He found a negative in something that just "is" and not only wrote a post in a victim

mentality state but also named the person who had “wronged” him!

He picked up the dirty nappy and decided to hold onto it, then show everyone else that he was holding a dirty nappy.

This is how you or others come across to those of us who don’t hold onto negativity. The trick is not only to let go of negative “stuff” but not pick it up in the first place!

I thought I’d mention here that my daughter hates the idea of the dirty nappies. “It’s disgusting,” she said. “I know,” I replied. “I want the thought of negative, unhelpful thoughts to be so repulsive no one wants to hold on to them!”. She gets it.

I was going to put this in Consideration 7: Life Is A Lazy River. Imagine being on your floaty inflatable and seeing something go by next to you. You have a choice to look at it first, then pick it up, then, if it’s nasty put it down if you want to, and hopefully, wash your hands! It’s often easy to look at a negative external influence and blurt out how bad they are, and what they are doing wrong and go on and on, and into your next meeting, and your next coffee break, and into dinner. Get the point?

Just remember, there is a reason for the way they are behaving or acting, and by now you should have enough understanding of the Considerations to not take it on board, but keep being the best you while dealing with the situation.

It’s easy to fall into a mob mentality when someone else points out someone’s flaws and mistakes. Try to say out loud “I’m sure there’s a reason for that!” Of course, someone may yell out “Yeah, it’s because they’re an ass! (or other expletives!)” So be steadfast and state again, “Maybe, but I wonder if there’s a reason for *that?!’*”

## REFLECTION AND ACTION for PUT DOWN THE DIRTY NAPPY

Let go of the pains of the past and not pick them up every morning, using them as a reason for not pushing forward.

Think of it like this: We only go back to, and blame negative past experiences and our past, because we haven't found a more helpful set of thoughts and actions to adopt...yet.

Yes, this is a blunt and simple statement, yet it is true.

I see this time and time again, where people "suddenly" turn their lives around or realise they are not holding onto a negative event, emotion, or time in their lives anymore. They spent every day looking for their dirty nappies, picking them up, holding onto them and displaying them to everyone who they can find.

Until they started leaving those thoughts alone and focusing on something else.

Their reason for the turnaround, most of the time, is that they started doing things that didn't allow them time or energy to reflect on the past. They were too busy being and doing what was helping them today.

They have their "instead of's" lined up to overcome the triggers that set off the trauma reaction. And they have actions ready to take. And when they do feel themselves being triggered, by current events, or people, they are of how their body is feeling and remind themselves that they have a choice on how to think and act, and move forward.

The event still happened, and there will be times the thoughts and emotions crop back up, yet once you know how to handle yourself when they do, those demons never quite get the same hold on you that they used to.

People who hold onto mental and emotional negative experiences often relive the same situation over and over to figure out what went wrong, and why it happened, and are given exercises to deal with it like breathing, mantras, meditating and other suggestions. I'm not saying these don't work. What I'm saying is that believing that the attachments we have to past events can't be changed can trigger emotions. Having an option to think, emote and act in a different, pre-figured-out way, gives you control of the situation and your life more.

### ACTION IDEA 1

So the next time you find yourself saying or thinking "I can't do \_\_\_\_ because of \_\_\_\_" I want you to do two things:

1. Write down the limitation and your reason.
2. Write down what you want to be able to do, and one thing you can do to start. One thing.
3. Do the one thing without hesitation. Read Mel Robbins' 5 Second Rule if you need some inspiration and ideas to help.

### ACTION IDEA 2

The next time you're upset about:

Something that didn't happen

Someone behaved in a way you didn't like

You find yourself holding on to the past

You tell yourself you can't do something because of whatever reason you're coming up with.

Say to yourself, "This stinks! Put down the dirty nappy!"

Then think, "What can I do right now towards any of my goals or helping someone else?"

Then do it!

**How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

You find yourself or the people you work with dwelling on negative events, aspects of a person, situation, or the past, and keep bringing it up.

**What was your “aha” insight from this Consideration?**

What have you been holding on to? What has someone else been holding on to? Can you let it go and find something else to grab on to or hold your attention that keeps you moving toward your goals?

Can you share this Consideration with someone you know and ask them: “What would you like to do or achieve instead?” “What’s the first thing you could do to make that happen?”

What thoughts come to mind related to past experiences, and how would you like to feel, both physically and emotionally, instead?

# AMAZING!

CONGRATULATIONS! You made it to the end of the listed Considerations. I hope you've enjoyed reading this book and will go away with new ideas on how to be the change you want to see in yourself and others.

I look forward to hearing your stories from home and work if you join the Facebook group <http://facebook.com/groups/justrampit> and the Collaborative Coaching Community. <http://justrampit.com>

Don't go yet, though! This is the moment, like at the end of movies, where the credits roll, and you know there's something more that will lead you to want to watch the sequel!

This is that moment, and here are two more Considerations that tie in closely with all the others. Enjoy!

# BONUS CONSIDERATION

## 21 – RAMP-IT

*AKA: Go back to basics.*

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*“We are so focused on getting the next shiny self-help tip, exercise, or method that most of us have forgotten the basics. The hard stuff is never quite as hard when you have the basics down, and I mean really got them down.”*

I SAID THAT

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MY NEXT BOOK is called “RAMP-IT – and get on with it”. It’s about going back to basics. I’ve talked about it in the context of this book, and there’s a link to how to use RAMP-IT for reading your next non-fiction book near the beginning of the book.

RAMP-IT is like learning the basics of how to drive. You have the accelerator, brake, gear stick, steering wheel and *you!* Each part has a purpose and must be used with the others to get you where you want to go. And each is used slightly

differently based on the conditions, situation, and Considerations of your environment.

You can't go uphill if your foot is on the accelerator and you're still in neutral gear!

Getting from A to B requires a constant symphony of movements and adjustments. A little more acceleration here, a little less brake there, change gear and don't forget to steer around those obstacles. And then there is you, knowing where you want to go and knowing every trip could lead to an accident, hitting a kerb, getting pulled over, yet you do it anyway, taking your life in your hands and making those small adjustments as you go until you get there.

RAMP-IT is the foundational framework you'll find in every successful book, course, system, company, person, and event.

Like a wheel with spokes, each letter corresponds to an essential factor in keeping things rolling. If one spoke is bent, missing, or broken, it can throw off the whole wheel, leading to disaster if it's not checked.

RAMP can be used in practically any situation. It is not limited to work or home. You can use it to plan a trip to get milk or plan a mission to Mars. In the upcoming RAMPIT Rundown books, you'll discover many different ways of applying RAMP-IT in short, easy to digest, understand and apply books.

RAMP can be used whether you're starting, stuck or scaling and will scale with you the deeper and more focused you get.

Here I'm going to give you the basics. Realise that each of these has its own factors that provide them with depth, deeper meaning and increased effectiveness. You'll have to wait for the book to see what those are!

Each of these RAMP-IT foundational factors could be Considerations themselves. It is the combination of them and how they relate to each other that makes it a standalone Consideration. Like a wheel, there is no start point or endpoint, and while RAMP-IT is written that way because it makes more sense than ARMPIT, you don't have to start with R to be successful. For that reason, I'm going, to begin with P!

So, another reason people get frustrated is that:

**They are not PURPOSEFUL.**

They don't know their "why" in *that* situation. It's not about finding your life's purpose. That can and does change as we get older, discover new interests, develop new skills, have children, reach retirement or a hundred other factors, most of which we won't know will affect us until it happens.

Being purposeful and knowing your why at *this* moment, *this* situation, *this* life stage, with *this* person in front of you, matters more than our life's purpose because it keeps you focused on why you're there and helps you stay present.

That's not to say your life purpose isn't important, however, if you're not being purposeful in everything you do, could it be hindering you from achieving your life goals sooner?

Too many companies hire people and forget to remind them of their why, and it's not just about making money. If people get your why and live by it, they are more likely to stay loyal to your company, your relationship, and the event's outcome.

I've worked for companies that put their mission statement and philosophy in the company handbook yet is never or rarely discussed. What is your company "why"? What is your role "why"? What is your team's "why"? Are they clear, discussed and reviewed/revised if things change?

**They are not MINDFUL.**

This is who I am. Earlier in the book, I mentioned that people forget they can change their views, emotions, and thoughts and give themselves a label (Considerations 5 and 18). When we are not in touch with our own instinctive reactionary thoughts and feelings and emotions and how they affect us, and how we affect others and how they affect us, we lose a spoke.

Here's the kicker, it's being mindful in relation to the purpose of the situation, event, or relationship you're in. What thoughts are going through your head? Are you conscious of them? Are you thinking about your thinking or just taking your initial thoughts and behaviours as "the way things must be", even if it's not getting you the full results you're looking/hoping for?

### **They are not ACCOUNTABLE.**

Lots and lots of people struggle with accountability. It was one of the most common comments I got from employers when teaching apprentices. "They aren't accountable for their actions." Or "They don't take responsibility". In some areas of my life, it's an area I struggled with the most too.

I could write a book on this and why it's so hard for some people to be accountable when they come from an environment that micromanages them and barely allows for any autonomy. Hang on! I have written a book including that! RAMP-IT, in case you were wondering!

Accountability comes from three positions. Two of them are accountability to self and accountability to others. These are the typical approaches people take to get things done.

Do it for yourself or do it for the team.

A third position is often overlooked and sometimes considered to be controlling if not handled the right way and is necessary when the first two positions aren't working. It's

Accountability of others to self. In short, it's when others, eg a manager, or parent, are responsible for holding you accountable and checking in from time to time, especially with new people, new situations or new projects. I discuss this in more detail in the RAMP-IT book.

Accountability in the context of RAMP-IT is more than taking ownership. It's having a plan and process to be accountable to. Without a clear plan and procedures both for taking action and reviewing where you are, it doesn't matter how responsible or accountable you are naturally.

And as with Mindful, your plan and processes, and the associated accountability, needs to be in line with the purpose and its underlying attributes.

### **They are not RESOURCEFUL.**

I firmly believe this is one of the main attributes people struggle with, and it can limit individuals, relationships, teams and companies beyond measure.

Many people don't want to ask for help due to ego or fear. They won't ask peers, partners or places online for fear of looking stupid or weak.

I've seen this as a trainer, where companies will hold onto people for the wrong reasons. People who bring the team down, sales down, morale down.

It's one thing to have resources. It's another to have the right resources and use them the way they were intended. You can have a purpose, be mindful, and have a plan that everyone is clear on, but if you've got the wrong people, products (tools) or places (services), you can only get so far.

Hopefully, you can see the importance of all four aspects of RAMP to keep things going in the right direction.

It's critical to identify where you are with each of these as you start a project and revisit them regularly to ensure you're staying on track and keeping to the purpose. You also must review when obstacles crop up and openly discuss any new thoughts and feelings that are coming up that could hamper growth. You also must adjust the plan and processes to ensure you're keeping everything moving on the track and there are check-ins for accountability. And you must keep reviewing to make sure the resources you had at the beginning are still the right resources halfway through, especially towards the completion of a project.

There are more bonus Considerations online, including one on attribution that helps understand the choices when you don't have the right people, at their current skill level/aptitude, in the current situation.

The first four factors, the RAMP factors, are present in every task. You don't need them all to be perfect initially but reviewing and analysing to stay on track means being adaptable, changing and gaining greater clarity the more effective you want to be.

Once you have the RAMP factors down, we now turn to the "IT" factors. These are the two additional factors I identified as making the difference between things working and working exponentially better.

### **They are not INFLUENTIAL.**

You don't have to be an influencer to be influential! I often had digital marketing students working for large international companies who would come in and share what they were learning at work. And they did it purely to help the other students.

A company can share helpful information to help smaller companies in the same industry grow.

A manager can mentor their team because they know it will help them, even if it means they may eventually outgrow the company. Of course, if they are resourceful, they'll find training and other ways to help them stay!

Partners in a relationship can determine each other's strengths and show the other how they do things, knowing they may never do it, but because it can help them learn something new.

Being influential is giving without expectation of return. I see a lot of people who give and give and give of themselves, their time, their wisdom and their energy. Of course, they will get something in return from some of the people who see it, but typically 80% of the people who consume their content will never buy from them.

They do it because they know it will help some people get to a level that is one, two or five steps higher than where they are, and give them opportunities they would not have had. And the people who do buy from them do it because they see the intent of these people as being genuine.

I've given a few recommendations for books in this book and I am going to recommend a person. Actually two people: Grant and Elena Cardone, who worked their way up through tough times to achieve something incredible. I see so many people criticise them and put them down for flaunting their wealth, yet they are showing what you can do when you commit yourself to achieve more.

The amount of content, advice, webinars and even books priced at a fraction of a personal session they churn out is incredible, and they know most of the people who see it either won't buy from them or worse, won't implement anything they share.

Give because you can. Give because you want to see others succeed. Give because you know what it was like, looking for that nugget of information, that missing link that helped something make sense and got you to the next level.

### **They are not TRUE**

The last factor, which often is the last one people realise can impact them the most, is being true and authentic. Twenty years ago, I was at a marketing event where I was one of the speakers, and someone asked another speaker how to be authentic. At first I laughed a bit. It's just being yourself. Over the years I realised so many people don't know how to be themselves. Including me! I lost my way until about four years ago and only got back to being the true, best me, since late 2021!

We do things to feel accepted by others or do things because it's what others think is the right thing to do, and inside we are building up pressure like a shaken champagne bottle, waiting for the cork to pop out so *we* can explode out.

Being true is being honest with yourself. It's admitting when you're struggling. It's knowing when you aren't clear on your purpose and stopping to do something about it. It's understanding when your thoughts aren't helping you and seeking help or sitting down and figuring out what you could be thinking instead. It's knowing when to step aside or step away. It's also knowing when you're doing well, and allowing yourself to be praised, vocal, or appreciated, and being aware of what you're doing that's working.

Each of these individual factors has thousands of books written about them, however, it's bringing them together and showing the context of how they build on each other and rely on each other for success that makes RAMP-IT so effective.

You may be in a situation where you are clear on your why, so reading a book or getting a mentor who only talks about knowing your purpose won't help you realise it's your lack of effective resources holding you back.

You may be fantastic at planning and leading teams and being accountable, so reading a book about taking 100% accountability won't address the negative thoughts and habits of your team who are reluctantly following your plan while thinking about leaving.

If you're ready to learn how to use this simple framework to assess any situation in minutes, sign up to get the book or join the community!!

# BONUS CONSIDERATION 22 – FLOWS ARE NOT FLOWING!

AKA:Where do I start?

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“Perfect balance does not exist in real life. Finding harmony, however, means knowing where our energy and time is going, and whether it’s time to put the energy somewhere else for a bit.”

I WROTE THIS.

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CONTINUING on from the last Consideration, and taking it to the next level, is RAMP your FLOWS. The FLOWS are the different areas of life, and keeping it in context to the Considerations, each of these could be a factor why things aren’t working out at home or work.

Like RAMP-IT, FLOWS is its own wheel, with each area a spoke keeping the wheel aligned and rolling. If one area of life is off, or you’re spending too much time in it, neglecting the others, it can throw off the whole wheel, or your life.

In the upcoming book you'll learn how to apply RAMP to each of the FLOWS areas of life:

**Friendships** – If you're struggling in a relationship at home or work or with friends it can affect the other areas of your life. It can also be, as I saw with my kids at times, that they spent most of their time in this area, and it lead to struggling with personal growth, health and jobs!

**Life Health** – Whether it's physical, emotional, mental or spiritual health, these attributes can atrophy like unused muscle if they are not addressed and worked on frequently. Any of these being off can affect the others, which can then affect your FLOWS.

**Own Growth** – This is separated from life health as it relates more to habits, behaviours, and skills. These are attributes that can be shared with and influence others. If you're not improving your skills, it's hard to grow as a person, or at work, which makes it hard to make more money, which means it's hard to do the things for the relationships you want, which can impact your Life Health in so many ways.

Remember Consideration 6 - The Flat Tyre Syndrome? Not learning new skills or having the discipline to adopt new habits is the nail, yet we see the effects, the flat tyre part that's obvious, in other areas of our lives.

**Wealth /Work** – This is the area that needs to be developed from planting seeds of success to harvesting our efforts, and, of course sharing with others. Which stage is not being tended to? You may not want to be a millionaire, but nobody wants to live out their end of life on the streets. What are you doing to ensure you have a quality life, and end-of-life?

**Self** – In the FLOWS book, I start with Self. This is all about you and how you feel about yourself. Sometimes we feel that our "self" is small, especially in new scenarios, and forget that

we are where we are and all we can do is work on it today. This section of the wheel is the hub, the core, the centre that everything else attaches to. When the Self is low on worth, confidence or acceptance, the hub is weakened and limits the capacity of what can be attached to it.

When the core is strong, you can attach spokes the size of Dwayne Johnson's thighs to it and know you've got a foundation you can build on!

The self is also where we look at the body/mind connection and realise it is all connected.

I could go on, however, I have a whole book, RAMP your FLOWS, that not only explains each of the FLOWS areas, but also the sub-attributes for each one, and how to apply RAMP to them all to get them working optimally. It's a life coaching / transformational coaching guide all in one book.

Remember, you are not broken, or an imposter, or damaged, or toxic. You just need to figure out which part of your wheel is off, RAMP it, and get things rolling in the right direction again.

I hope you join me for the journey!

### **How to recognise when this Consideration is a factor:**

It's hard to know when these areas of life are off with other people...unless you ask.

So ask!

Part of my corporate training programme is to bring RAMP-IT and FLOWS to companies and make it ok to talk about what's going on outside the workplace. Why? Because work is one spoke. Family is one spoke. Your health is one spoke. If your work is suffering, its easy to say you're not working out. It's harder to ask what's going on and be genuinely interested

and realise that helping Janet understand her kids and Jamal get his health back on track help them and the company.

Anywho, if you're interested in learning how all this can help your team and company, please contact me at <https://justrampit.com>

# REFLECTIONS FOR THERE'S A REASON FOR THAT

AS PROMISED LET'S go back through a few of the Considerations for a minute and see how they could affect someone and our perception of them in specific settings. These settings are relationships and the workplace.

And don't forget to be self-aware enough to recognise which of these *you* do, and we're here so you can find that inner calm, clarity, and sanity you long for!!

**It's all situational** - Who others portray, and how they act in the setting you know them in could be completely different to a situation you've met them in before, or a situation you haven't met them in yet. Assume they are not being deliberately malicious or disruptive and keep your wits about you.

**It's all relative** – What you put in is what you get out! If you say you're doing everything you can to get along with someone yet haven't tried to overcome the Considerations you now know about, you haven't tried everything. And even then, there is still stuff you don't know, yet! You'll also find the calmer and more confident you are, the harder it is for others to get squiffy, huffy, or upset with you! Or you with them!

**“You” is fluid** - If their behaviour is uncharacteristic, remember we all adapt our personalities based on what is going on in our head at any moment. 5 minutes from now they could “be” a different person. Anticipate that version of them appearing soon and understand there is something going on that they may not even be self-aware of. I know, this doesn’t make it any easier!

**Flat Tyre Syndrome** - Even if someone unleashes their ire on you and blames you, the chances are their behaviour and actions are not because of *you*. You are seeing a symptom of something else, usually internal turmoil stemming from them not knowing how to deal with the situation better. (or not having anticipated the situation sooner and stopping it from happening.)

**Life is a lazy river** - There could be any number of external or internal factors that you just can’t see, all affecting how someone is behaving. Like the others, there are too many scenarios you could make up in your head. Stay focused. Stay in control and stick to your purpose, presenting the best version of you in the moment. Again, it takes practice! I never said this would be easy or fast!

**Instead of** - When people do things out of habit, their actions become a go-to action. Sometimes it’s better to approach someone with an “instead of” than outright saying “This is wrong”. For example: At work, if someone is struggling with completing a task and gets upset when reminded, instead of getting upset with them and demanding they work faster or “Figure it out” you could say “Instead of struggling, please ask for help and we can find a way to help you.”. Of course, I’m assuming you’ve read the whole book and are leading from a point of compassion and mindfulness of others!!

“Instead of” statements, or more specifically, giving choices, is especially helpful for people who are not being Open, Agree-

able or Conscientious (from the OCEAN framework). Offering a choice puts the decision in their hands!

**Let it go** - We may have expectations of someone being able to do a task because we know how it can be done. However, they may not have had the full training, or learned the same way, or have dyslexia we don't know about, or they've got something else on their mind. We don't know, so judging someone on what we think they *should* know, or *should* know how to do, can lead to conflict.

Instead, ask questions if you can. E.g., Is this clear? Do you have questions? Do you know what the next step should be? Can I help you?

If you'd like more suggestions, please join us in the community and membership area. I try to help members as much as possible, even if you're in the middle of a situation!

# PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

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*"You have already done, to get where you are, what you need to do to get where you want to go; take small steps and keep going."*

I SAID THAT

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MY DAUGHTER recently got the grades for her mock GCSE exams here in the UK. She got one of the highest scores in her class for English Literature, specifically for her work on Macbeth.

I remember when she first got the book and was so upset there was so much to read and learn. She hasn't been a big reader like her mother or brother, so this seemed like an insurmountable task to her.

Each day she would read a few pages, and then do an activity. The teacher would set questions and essays and, the more she read, and each time she got positive feedback, her interest and

skill level improved. Now she can practically quote the whole thing, and it all started by doing a little at a time.

Apply what you learn here, (and hopefully build on with my next books), to your next conversations one step at a time, an event at a time, a conversation at a time.

Take note of the moments you don't get upset, or diffuse a situation quickly, or come back to someone after having thought about what happened and are able to talk it through with more clarity, calm and confidence.

You don't have a teacher telling you what a great job you've done, so imagine I'm there telling you that you're doing great. You're doing great because you're trying. Because you're being more self-aware. Because you are now making a difference to the people around you as well.

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**You are being the change by committing to think "there's a reason for that" when you don't get someone else and you choose not to label them, but instead try to understand them. And even when you can't you still commit to being the change within yourself.**

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Using the pothole analogy: when you hit a sudden pothole or bump in the road for the first time you didn't have a chance to anticipate how to handle it. However, next time you're on that road you'll anticipate it coming and be prepared. You'll also know what to do if you hit that obstacle elsewhere.

In the film "Blended" (did I mention I have teenagers!) Drew Barrymore's character wishes she could come up with "Zingers" as fast as Adam Sandler. She wanted that ability to know what to say in the moment.

It's ok if you can't think of the right thing to say or adjust your thinking after the fact. I still do it! However, don't get upset for not being prepared. Stop for a minute and think about how you could think or be prepared the next time it happens. The more you do this, the more you'll be prepared. And the more prepared you are the more you'll validate that this is working, and the more you'll do it, the happier, calmer, and confident you'll be.

Remember "The Slight Edge" book by Jeff Olson I mentioned earlier, talking about how small changes lead to big results, both toward and away from your goal?

If you do little things that support negativity, hostility, unhelpful emotions, and thoughts, you'll end up far from where you want to be, and may fall into a negativity safety hole, where even if you have a good day, you fall back into that hole because it's a comfort zone. You may already be there!

And if you do little things each day, like remember to think "There's a reason for that" before reacting, or setting up your "Instead of" comments, actions, and thoughts ahead of activities, you'll start compounding those helpful changes. Suddenly you'll not only realise you've become the person you wanted to be, but it's also a lot easier to maintain now. Now, when things don't go to plan, your natural habit will be to lift yourself up, bounce back to normal faster, dust off any dirt, and keep being positive.

There is another book I recommend by James Clear, called "Atomic Habits". A good read if you want to embed these behaviours daily.

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It's always easy to confuse what is with what ought to be, especially when what is has worked in your favour.

TYRION LANNISTER - GAME OF  
THRONES.

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So, taking the above in mind, here are a few things you can do:

1: **Plan ahead.** Know who you're going to see and think about how you're going to behave around them. Are you going to let yourself fall back into a hole, or remind yourself of all the progress you've made, and know you can maintain it?

2: **Have your "instead of" comments ready.** Instead of coming back with a snarky or defensive reply, prepare a few sentences ahead of time. E.g., "I'm happy for you". "That's great. How did you achieve that?" "What's next for you?" Keep the conversation on the other person and they'll walk away thinking how great you are because you listened to them.

3: **Think about the OCEAN!** Check in with yourself and see if you're being more Open, less Conscientious, high on the Extroversion scale, Agreeable and less Neurotic! How are these affecting your current situation and ability to achieve your goals. Think about the people around you too. Where are they on the OCEAN scale?

4: **Think "What can I do."** - Always look in before looking out. Be aware of your own thoughts and actions and be honest with yourself if you are doing what is most helpful for the situation, even if others are not.

5: **Think "What can I learn?"** - Things happen. How we look at events and interactions and use them to prepare ourselves for future events and interactions, determines how much easier it gets. If you're always starting from square one, you're only making life harder for yourself.

**6: Don't think you need to do this alone!** I have full confidence that when you start implementing what you've learned here and remind yourself that you do have control of your own thoughts and actions, it will get easier and easier.

When this is all new you may not have the immediate confidence or ability to articulate what you want to say at just the right time, and that can be stressful, frustrating, and emotional.

It's ok. This is how you learn and grow, by trying and trying and practicing and learning.

If it does get to be a bit much, and you're part of the community, please come in and leave a comment, ask questions, or ask for suggestions to get help. You can also go to someone you trust and let them know what you're trying to do. Be cautious of reactionary "friends" who are trying to help and offer advice without knowing all the facts (there could be something missing!). Instead go to people who can let you think and talk through the situation so you understand what happened and what you can do next time.

### **WHAT IF AN ARGUMENT DOES HAPPEN?**

There will be times an argument does happen despite trying to be calm, more aware and assessing the situation. As I've said many times, you can't change the other person, so anticipating it can happen is the first step to not getting as emotionally involved when it does.

That said, remember to go SLOW if things get heated.

Stop talking – Trying to talk over someone else to prove you're right rarely works! Just stop talking.

Listen – Take in what is being said without thinking about what you're going to say next.

Open up and understand - Be open to looking at the situation from their point.

Wait – Take time to think about your response. Try starting your reply with “Yes, and”, instead of “Yes, but”!

You’ve got this!

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE 1 – REKINDLING BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

I'M WRITING this bonus chapter as I sit on a train to London. Next to me are a couple of people talking about getting together with family over the holidays. A lot of what they are talking about dealing with is covered in this book!

One thing they said, that wasn't already in here specifically, is about dealing with getting in touch with family members you haven't spoken to for a long time.

Bear in mind this can work for work colleagues with whom you may have a fractured or broken relationship.

It's a tough subject, but one I'm familiar with. I didn't have a good relationship with either of my parents for extended periods of time. With my dad, it was *my* thoughts and expectations that caused me to believe something that wasn't there and pull away. It was my loss.

With my mother, it was her saying things to me based on her expectations, and me feeling like I would never live up to her expectations that caused me to stop calling. Maybe she was right at the time, but the way it came across, and where I was in my personal development, her comments seemed like a

slap in the face. I was, at the time, a fully trained clinical massage therapist and had my own practice.

In both cases, it was *my* realisation that I was the one putting thoughts and beliefs and ideas in my own head that made me stop and think about rekindling the relationships.

I now have a much closer relationship with my dad and wish I lived closer to him to be able to see him and his family more.

I'm going to bring in a little bit of RAMP-IT here, without giving it all away! I also suggest re-reading Consideration 7: Life is a Lazy River, before reading this section.

When it comes to work and projects, and volunteering, it's often easy to define our purpose and see how we serve others. It comes with the role. Yet with family, we are thrust into relationships with no choice, no rules, no barriers, and little in the way of clear expectations. We often forget that we have an opportunity to serve there too. It does not mean you have to be a doormat or keep giving until you think you'll either lose the plot or flip your lid!

Serving is about being self-aware enough to know you can approach a situation and be ok no matter the outcome, and know that you can walk away if needed. It's reaching out to people you think may have wronged you, or who you know you hurt in the past with your words or actions and accepting that you can't change the past, you can only change *you* and act today.

Starting conversations after months or even years is hard. When you haven't spoken for that long, it's easy to imagine or believe they are still the same person you spoke to at the time of the falling out. Remember Consideration 5? "You" is fluid. You have likely changed. So have they!

If you haven't spoken, you won't know if they are thinking the same as you and want to reconnect. Also, think of Consid-

eration 11: You're missing something. There are lots of gaps between then and now, and unless you ask, you won't know what they are thinking, or how they felt after the last encounter, or how much personal growth they have done.

The fact that you are thinking of reconnecting means there is something there you remember that was good. Hold on to that for a minute.

You can't change the past, so what can you do? Accept it.

At this point, does it matter whose fault it was? Is it affecting your life now? Are you letting it? Does it have to? Be honest about your answers and not feel like you need to hold on to the emotions you felt the last time you had a disagreement or falling-out with the other person.

If you can answer no to the above questions, it's time to think about what you can do now.

This is where you stop and really think. I'm going to put my coach hat on here for a second and be blunt.

If you're thinking something like "*Their* actions are *making* me not see them, or making me not let them see the grandkids", or whatever it is you think *they* are *making* you do, realise that they are not. You have a choice. You also have a way to know how to handle the situation better so you can make better, more helpful choices.

First, you can contact them and say any number of things that brings awareness to the present.

- How are you?
- I was thinking about you and wondered how you are?
- I was thinking about what happened and I can't change who I was, but I'd like you to know who I am now.

- I don't know if you've changed as much as I have, but I'd like to find out.
- Do you remember when we (insert good memory here)? I can't remember how we let whatever happened be more important than the good times we had.

Remember there is a reason why you both acted the way you did in the past, and you may not have fully understood then, and you may not even remember why now. What matters is focusing on what you want to achieve now and taking the steps forward to achieving it.

What is also important here is that there is no blame, no judgment, no accusations. You can't change the past. Don't try to.

If it was you who did something to affect the relationship, have you thought about it? Have you changed? How can you convey that and take ownership and show that you are not the same person reacting under the same conditions?

If this is the case, your current actions will speak volumes about who you are now, assuming you are taking on board what I've written here!!

I'll add here that I know there are many situations that you may consider unforgivable. But can you accept that it happened and be the person who is self-aware enough to let it go, and remember that you both behaved that way in that situation at the time because of who you were as a person in *that* moment?

Have you considered there were other factors, for either of you, that you were unaware of that caused emotions to flare or beliefs to be created?

If you'd known what you know now, could there have been an "instead of" moment you wish you could go back and put in play? Can you do it now?

Do you see how all these Considerations come together now? There are many reasons why the falling out happened (there's a reason for that), but they could have been conversation starters, not the end of a relationship.

If you know you can anticipate, *and handle*, the fact they are still holding a grudge, and not get upset when you take the first step, and there is a chance they don't reciprocate, then take the first step now.

It's never too early to reconcile, yet if you wait, it could be too late.

I don't have an amazing relationship with my mother, but we have a relationship and I'm happy we have something. I'm happy she gets to see the kids when they are ready to see her and it's something I would never hold from her.

I hope this helps if you need it, and if you find yourself not wanting to talk to someone *after* the next holiday, or lockdown, or work disagreement, keep this bonus chapter in mind.

I really hope this helps at least one person rekindle a relationship. Sometimes the relationship never goes back to how it was, and it doesn't have to, but at least you'll know that you tried. And if the other person is not at the place to let go or accept, maybe send them a copy of this book or the next books to help!

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE 2: STEP MONSTERS

ONE OF MY favourite Jennifer Lopez films is *Monster In Law*, where J Lo deals with her possessive mother-in-law, played by the iconic Jane Fonda. Despite getting flustered at first, J Lo gets her revenge with a bowl of tripe and some sleeping pills! Brilliant, but Ugh!

While this is a mother-in-law situation, I hear and see on social media comments from people who are dealing with step-relatives who don't accept them, judge them, or make life downright difficult.

Now I'm not suggesting doing anything to your stepmum, stepdad, or stepchildren. And no nuts in the gravy either!

By the way, read this whole chapter, and the part at the end where I relate this to the workplace.

I have a coach friend who brought one of their client's dilemmas to me recently. She explained how the husband's grown children gave her client a hard time in the past, and she gets anxious at the thought of them coming over for the holidays.

This anxiety is real and can add to the stress of the holidays.

First, remember that you are in control of yourself. You cannot control what they did or said or how they behaved in the past. The past is gone and cannot affect the present unless you let it. And you *can* control how you receive them in this situation, today.

Second, remember the Consideration “*You is fluid*”? Before they arrive, I want you to imagine that they have read this book and are going to arrive with open arms. How would you treat them?

Think about this. What would the best situation look like? What would you say? *This* is how you’ll treat them, no matter what.

At the same time, accept the fact they may not have read this book and they will show up just as they always have. How will you behave now?

Remember, you are in control of you, and they are not controlling you!

Take a moment and think about how you can act, behave or what you’ll say for either situation. If they are helpful and open in their actions, mirror them, not in a mocking way or condescending way. Mirror them by being open and kind. If they are not helpful, first accept that you cannot change them, and that you are in control of you, and your emotions. While you may think you know what the reason is, it is probably something else, possibly one of the OCEAN factors from Consideration 5 comes into play here.

Remember there is a reason for the way they are behaving, and they are not self-aware enough to realise they are being an unhelpful external factor for you. They are also unaware of how to explain politely and calmly what they feel and the thoughts that go with it. If they did, they would be nicer!

Third. Plan your “instead of” comments ahead of time. Write a list of neutral and positive responses and questions. If they say something negative, reply with something neutral like; “That was interesting”. Or “Hmm, I’ll have to think about that.”

Whatever happens, don’t lose your cool, don’t engage and don’t forget that you have your “instead of” scenarios and comments at hand.

If they say something nice, reply with something positive . For example: “Thank you” or “That was nice” and add to that with your own positive comment.

Anticipating situations, both the way you’d like it to go, and the way you hope it doesn’t, prepares you for either outcome and gives you the confidence to handle it either way. Writing your thoughts and “instead of” alternative comments down and reading them several times will help you remember some of them in the moment.

When someone else wants to be mean, hurtful, judgemental, or difficult, remember they are like that because of the experiences *they’ve* had, the thoughts *they* have, the lessons *they* have not yet learned, and who they think they need to be in this moment.

When you remember these things, you’ll realise that their hurtful actions are just their thoughts they don’t know how to control. Also, realise that you don’t have all the facts. You really don’t, and they are unlikely to share. Of course, if you do ask, be prepared for them to either say I don’t know or lash out. Either way it is *their* perception and thoughts that create these beliefs.

I have been treated badly by in-laws, and have treated someone badly, years ago, who didn’t deserve it. The latter was all because of *my* own thoughts. And at the time my

dad's happiness did not even cross my mind. Thankfully I have a good relationship with them now.

If you really want to find inner calm, *wanting* others to be happy really helps, especially when you mean it, and especially if they've done something you believe has hurt you mentally or emotionally. You can't change others. You *can* change how you respond to them.

Stepmonsters are people too. People who are still finding their way. Some more consciously than others! Living and acting in a way that shows them what compassion and acceptance look like, will make it harder for them to keep up their antics.

Oh, and if you're reading this and know *you* are the stepmonster, child, or adult, in the story. Stop it. You're better than that now.

#### STEPMONSTERS IN THE WORKPLACE.

It hit me as I was proofreading this section how this stepmonster scenario plays out in the workplace too.

When I worked in apprenticeships we had a management change and some of us got a new manager. At about the same time we also had a new person join the company in a new supervisory role, and that role was to evaluate the way we were teaching and offer help. Between the two of them, it was like having a new "parent" (the new manager) with a new stepsibling along for the ride.

To say the change wasn't received well was an understatement. Thankfully I was working on this book and RAMP-IT, so while I also wasn't that thrilled, at first, I did try to understand the reasons for him being there and be a little more Open, Conscientious, and Agreeable!!

Whether it's a new manager, department head, or new employee who seems to take favour with the team leader/owner/manager, having someone new insert themselves into an established and comfortable dynamic can be hard.

Use the same suggestions as above and be as open to new people as you'd want people to be to you, and you'll find your common ground, ideologies and appreciation of each other will happen faster.

# READY FOR MORE?

IF YOU ENJOYED this book and want to know more, please go to <http://justrampit.com> and do one of the following:

- Get the other books as they become available. If they're not available yet, sign up to be notified for the launches.
- Join the RAMP-IT Community. For a low monthly investment, you get access to everything I publish in digital format, including weekly RAMP-IT reviews cheat sheets, videos, and a daily RAMP-IT message to keep you on track. You can also ask questions about how to apply all of this to your own situations and get input from me and others. **Launching officially in Summer 2022.**

I can't stress the importance of continuity. Don't make this another "shelf-help" book where you read it once and forget about it, sticking it on the shelf with all the other books you started and didn't finish! Community, continuity, and consistent exposure to a framework help develop it faster. My goal

with the membership is to be helpful, not intrusive. Practical, not philosophical.

There is also the higher-level community membership where you get access to the RAMP your FLOWS course and get invited to a quarterly R.Y.F. Bootcamp to keep you focused.

Lastly, I offer coaching packages for both companies and individuals looking to implement all the Considerations and RAMP-IT in both personal and work situations. You'll be amazed at the almost immediate clarity and subsequent change when the whole team is approaching their personal development with the same open thinking and from the same perspectives.

**PLEASE SHARE!**

Finally, thank you for reading this far. If you think others can benefit from even one of the Considerations, please;

- **Leave a review on Amazon.** This helps Amazon know there is good stuff in here and they'll show it to more people! Reviews with pictures are especially helpful!!
- Share the link to the website or Amazon page on your social feed.

You'll find I'm not on social media that much and prefer to spend time in the community helping our members.

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*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*

ANNE FRANK

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**What are YOU waiting for?**

# RESOURCES

BELOW ARE the books recommended in this book, as well as links to my resources

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## **Links:**

**Bonuses** and resources in one place. Go here and sign up to get a PDF with clickable links.

<http://theresareasonforthat.com/bookbuyer>

## **The Facebook Group**

Please join a growing community of amazing people like you who want to improve their lives.

<http://facebook.com/groups/justrampit>

## **Nolan's main website**

Get details about the community, other books, courses, upcoming podcast, coaching for teams and more.

<http://justrampit.com>

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## **Books**

These are the books I've mentioned in this book, all in one place!

**How to Work from Home** - Alice Dartnell.

**The Power of an Hour** – Dave Lakhani

**10X Rule** - Grant Cardone

**Mindset** - Carol Dweck

**Personality Isn't Permanent** - Dr. Ben Hardy

**Atomic Habits** - James Clear

**Captivate and Cues** - Vanessa Van Edwards

**The 5 Second Rule** - Mel Robbins

**Why Leaders Eat Last** - Simon Sinek

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## **Cheat sheets.**

See the bookbuyer link above.



## ABOUT NOLAN

First, thank you for buying my book. It really means a lot to me that you're interested in improving your own life and listening to my ideas.

You may be wondering who I am, considering you've probably never heard of me!

I am a typically quiet person who loves public speaking and teaching. How does that work? I like my "me" time, but when I am passionate about something, I love to share it and am ready for any stage, no matter how many people are in the audience!

I am a dad to two teenagers, and we have a dog, Saxon, a lovely German Shepherd who loves to cuddle.

I've been fortunate in my life, experiencing many things. As a teenager, I managed fine dining restaurants because of my experience working in my dad's small restaurant in France from an early age. I have some great stories from France as a teenager, but you'll have to wait for those in the other books!

I moved to the US from England, working on cruise ships for a while, then moved to North Carolina to be a dance instructor for Fred Astaire Dance Studios. This was possible because I learned how to dance at seven or eight years old and up and even competed, and placed, at several venues in the UK until my early UK retirement from competition at age 12! I even competed in Disco!!

I have worked in many industries over the years and found four industries I enjoyed the most:

- Hospitality, where I developed training systems for a few restaurants and even worked at astronaut Jim Lovell's restaurant in Illinois.
- Dancing, where I met so many people and enjoyed teaching it and even choreographed a winning mini routine for a real estate company's 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade entry and a friend's wedding dance.
- Teaching, in all forms across many industries. This is my "home", and what I enjoy the most with the coaching I do now.
- Wellness, starting as a licensed clinical massage therapist, my curiosity led me to study many modalities, including Specialised Kinesiology and Touch for Health. This led to my desire to help people as a coach, studying life, transformational and mindfulness coaching, CBT, and other associated methods.

I define myself as a thinking trainer, mentor and coach. I believe you cannot coach someone unless they have the foundations of what you're coaching first. Just as a Formula 1 driver knows how to drive or a football player knows the rules and basic skills before getting a coach, I've found that many people are not fully aware of the foundations of living a productive life. This is where RAMP-IT comes in.

As Vince Lombardi, the acclaimed American Football coach, said on the first day of training: "This is a football". He assumed nothing. I assume nothing.

Making sure my clients know the basics first allows them to dig deeper faster, have a higher level of accountability from the start, and get results beyond their initial dreams.

My passion stems from a series of events over the years where I was treated in a way I couldn't understand. And I don't think the people who behaved in a way that hurt me understood why they behaved that way either. I am dedicated to helping people understand themselves better and how their actions affect others more than they realise. As a result, I'd like to believe fewer people will go through unnecessary emotional, mental and physical pain.

I've also found myself being that difficult/hurtful person in the past, and I know that it's up to me to change myself, and I'll work on it every day to not be that person again.

Many people are working towards this goal, and I hope my contributions will help tip the scale further towards a healthier and happier future for more people.

Please visit my website for more and let me know how you used any of this in your life. Use the hashtag #tarftbook, #justrampit or #rampyourflows #nolancollins with your comments. Thank you.

Enjoy your family, enjoy your life. You have a right to be calm, confident, in control and happy!

Nolan

# APPENDIX 1 - OCEAN

## THE OCEAN MODEL

While this is far from an in-depth review or explanation of the OCEAN Model mentioned in the book, it's a good starting point.

### **1: *OPENNESS to new experiences***

How open we are to new ideas and learning. In other words, are we open to change, variety, and originality? How creative, curious, imaginative, vulnerable or daring are we?

**Those with HIGH Openness:** Loves learning new things, socialising, or networking with new people and likely have a creative tendency. Being High Open could also be associated with an open mindset, as described by Dr Carol Dweck in her book, *Mindset*.

**When being more Open can help:** Learning new skills, which can lead to new opportunities and leadership positions, starts with being more open. Working with a coach, therapist, or mentor will also be more productive if you are more open to sharing, learning, and becoming more self-aware and vulnerable.

**Those with LOW Openness:** Tend to dislike change, variety or creativity. This could also be associated with having a closed mindset, as described by Dr Carol Dweck.

**When being less Open can help:** If you're in a situation that requires more compliance or routine, like in the military or life and death situations.

**When coaching growth, what we're looking for is:** A lean towards being more open. This helps you adapt easier, learn new skills and processes and be more willing to suggest new solutions without fear of looking silly. This doesn't mean you have to be a 10, wide open, ultra-creative and open about everything you do!

#### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

- Openness is different from Extroversion or Introversion. It's also an attribute that's very situational, usually associated with a comfort level or experience level. For example, you may be very skilled at work, great at coming up with new ideas and love doing presentations. You've probably been trained well and been encouraged often, giving you the confidence to do it more. In other words, you'd be a high Open. On the other hand, you may struggle with your health, exercise, and eat the same things over and over because it's easy to stick to a simple routine. Coming up with new menu items or exercise plans may seem challenging because it's not something you're used to, trained, or exposed to.

Think about this in terms of helping others too. If you're supporting the people around you, giving them opportunities to gain experience, encouraging them to believe it's ok to express themselves and be creative, they are more likely to become more Open as their confidence grows.

*You can foster a growth mindset and increased openness by believing in others, supporting them, and influencing them.*

This can only help all of you! It's also a good leadership style to implement!

## **2: CONSCIENTIOUSNESS**

How organised, motivated and goal-directed you are – which is sometimes equated to your level of accountability, resourcefulness, self-discipline, persistence, self-control, and connection to the purpose.

**Those with HIGH Conscientiousness:** Tend to like lists, organised systems, structure and tend towards perfectionism. They can also come across as controlling vs being in control (see Consideration 10!) and somewhat rigid.

**When being more Conscientious can help:** This attribute is often present in people who have roles that require a high level of leadership, organisational skills and ongoing self-led development.

**Those with LOW Conscientiousness:** Tend to procrastinate more, and struggle with the self-discipline to get and stay organised. Without focus, it can lead to succumbing to shiny object syndrome, flighty-ness and impulsivity, flitting from one thing to another.

**When being less Conscientious can help:** Honestly, I don't think it can. See below if you feel stuck in this area. And it's not who you are, it's how you've learned to behave, and you can change it if you want to.

**When coaching growth, we're looking for a higher level of Conscientiousness on the scale, leading towards the ability to be accountable for your own development. At a minimum, you'll want to know when you are not being conscientious so**

you can also be self-disciplined to ask for help and not let it stop you from achieving your goals.

**How to be more conscientious if you struggle with it:** Many people struggle with procrastination, lacking organisational skills, and time (energy) management. It usually boils down to not being shown ways to be organised and not being in a goal or purpose-led environment. This leads to not feeling as if a purpose is needed as you'll "do things in your own time". This book aims to help you and the people you work with accomplish more, with less stress, willingly!

This is not a book on time management either, so I'll give you the best tips I can to get you started:

Read the following books:

**How To Work From Home** – By Alice Dartnell – also follow her blog and take her mini-training. Yes, she's a friend, and she's brilliant at what she does and has an incredible energy about her. This book goes beyond working from home! <https://alicedartnell.com/blog/>

**The Power of an Hour** – By Dave Lakhani – there are many newer books, yet I find this one has so many gold nuggets that you could practically bling yourself out a bit!

**Atomic Habits** – By James Clear – As his name implies, James has made understanding and adopting helpful habits very clear! I've listened to this audiobook three times and still come away with aha's every time.

Find an organised and disciplined mentor and ask them to help you set up systems, reminders, etc., to help you get in the habit, and check-in with you to help you make improvements (not get upset when you don't take to new habits quickly).

Get a coach who will help you lay out what you need to accomplish based on your goals and keep you accountable.

3: *Extroversion* - How energised and connected you are around other people - Often equated to our views of self (worth, esteem etc.) and self-confidence - being funny is a sign of self-confidence and extroversion, although I've met some extraordinarily funny introverts too!

I struggled with this concept for a long time because I'm outgoing and happy to stand on a stage and teach, yet I also like my personal space and tend to spend time alone when I'm thinking. In some situations labelled me an introvert, while others labelled me an extrovert. I could also be called an ambivert! Confused much? So was I. I started telling people I was an introvert just because I enjoy my alone time from time to time!

Yet, at the same time, I longed for a stage to share what I know because I know it helps! Maybe it's the Gemini in me!?! Or maybe, as mentioned in the Openness section, I've always had fun doing presentations and been supported, and prepared myself (usually) for a good presentation. I also don't let it get to me if something goes wrong.

Here's the reality: As much as I am not a Red, or ENTJ, or a 7, I am neither an extrovert nor an introvert, and *neither are you*. Sorry to all the businesses thriving on building up introverts. Keeping people in that fixed mindset of that label as if it's a negative label often only perpetuates the myth that they can't find a level of extroversion in more situations.

We may show tendencies commonly associated with extroversion when we feel confident or comfortable and have the energy to expend associated with social confidence and comfort, despite it actually being mentally and physically

draining. We may show tendencies commonly associated with introversion often when we are less confident or more comfortable away from a social environment or have less energy to give., even if we normally thrive on others' energy. Wanting to spend time alone to think and not be disturbed by people should not be labelled introverted.

I've told people I like "me time", and they reply with "aww, you're an introvert, it's ok", like I'm a puppy needing my ears stroked.

I am confident that I work better when not disturbed, yet I'll also do it in a busy coffee shop! I also know people who show extroverted tendencies yet frequently need time to recharge or crash in a big way when their body tells them they need some downtime.

I have seen self-proclaimed introverts teach with incredible passion, mingle with the crowd, and get energy from their interactions, then sit in a corner office and work silently for days on end. I've seen introverts say things like, "I got up on stage and talked, but I'm an introvert." Instead, say this: "I got up on stage and talked, and I have introversion tendencies, and it's ok!"

It really is situational, so instead of calling yourself an introvert or extrovert, acknowledge when you have the tendencies of each in different situations, accept it, and change it *if you want to, and if it will help you achieve your personal and/or team purpose*. More importantly, change it by putting yourself in new situations, in a supported environment, if it will help you achieve your own goals and become the person you've decided you want to be.

And if you're typically extroverted, recognise when your body is screaming for some alone time!

If you're sitting there seething at my comments, I did say I would challenge your thinking. This is one of those times! You're welcome!

Those with HIGH Extroversion: Tend to be outgoing, the life of the party, easy to get along with and make new friends as they tend to be less inhibited.

**When being more Extroverted can help:** When social interaction is needed, when you need to give a presentation (it's ok, breathe, see the last paragraph on this section if you need help with this!). Being extroverted has also been shown (I read and heard this several times over the past 30 years, so wouldn't even know where to find data on this!) to aid in getting new opportunities and promotions. This can be hard for people with Autism, Aspergers or other conditions that change how you see the world. Another thing to consider.

**Those with LOW Extroversion:** Tend to be more pensive in quiet time and solitude. They also tend to be less assertive in new or unfamiliar situations. On the extreme of the scale, this can lead to being or feeling excluded.

**When being more Introverted can help:** Personally, I find it helpful not to feel that I have to socialise sometimes and can just get on with my work.

**When coaching growth, what we're looking for is:** A healthy balance of confidence and comfort in some areas and the ability to sit back and be introspective when it matters. It's not actually helpful to be running at 100 mph all the time. Even F1 cars need to change tyres and refuel from time to time, even if it is only for 2.5 seconds!

**When you feel more introverted but need to be extroverted:** In short, practice in a safe and supportive environment. And read my next book RAMP-IT! Sorry, shameless plug!

Many people are more introverted because of past experiences that were negative, not supportive, and led to not feeling safe or comfortable. Putting yourself in a position where you are supported healthily, encouraged to push past comfort levels, and shown how to anticipate what could happen and be prepared for it, helps develop your extroversion muscles!

#### **4: AGREEABLENESS**

How friendly and optimistic you are toward other people. More than Extroversion, which is more about your ability and tendency to interact and the associated energy, Agreeableness is more about the how of interaction. For example, you can be low on Extroversion yet high on Agreeableness. Of course, you can also be high on both!

Words like humble, patient, unselfish, polite, kind, trustworthy, sensitive, amiable, considerate and helpful are associated with being Agreeable.

**Those with HIGH Agreeableness:** On the high end of Agreeableness, people tend to get along with others and show greater empathy. These people are great in social and community settings. A negative of high agreeableness can also be a tendency to put others before yourself.

**When being more Agreeable can help:** High agreeableness is great for people who interact with others in a service capacity as you can build trust, relationships and come across as being more altruistic (being unselfish!)

**Those with LOW Agreeableness:** People on the extreme scale of low agreeableness can be rude, untrusting, insensitive, lack

empathy and at times even antagonistic. They may also tend to put themselves before others.

**When being less Agreeable can help:** Being less agreeable is not always a negative! When you're in a situation where being everyone's friend is not helpful. Life or death situations or times when a hard decision has to be made can benefit from not being too agreeable in the moment. Also, scientists, people in the military, and other roles where interaction and being "friendly" are not high priorities benefit from low Agreeableness. Those with low agreeableness find it easier to avoid or limit emotions when decision making.

**When coaching growth, what we're looking for is:** A moderate to a high level of Agreeableness. This can lead to better relationships at home and work. At work, this can lead to more opportunities and more relationships. Bear in mind that it's situational, so do what is right for you if you're in a role where high agreeableness is a detriment.

5: *Neuroticism* - How well stress is handled and other negative emotions. In short, it's about Emotional Stability. Being able to manage stress and negativity better is an end benefit of understanding and applying what is in this book and the RAMP-IT book; understanding how to use RAMP to the main areas of your life with less worry and be less emotionally reactive in difficult and new situations.

I should mention that there is a difference between being neurotic, or having neuroses, and the personality trait "neuroticism". Neurosis was a term coined in the 1700s to describe various mental conditions that at the time could not be linked or associated with physical ailments.

Today most professionals don't use the term neuroses and instead diagnose specific conditions relating to depression or anxiety.

So keep in mind that Neuroticism in the context of personality traits is another way of saying Emotional Stability and the ability to handle stress.

**Those with HIGH Neuroticism (Low Emotional Stability):** Unlike the other traits where we often strive towards the higher end of the scale, high neuroticism can be the most detrimental attribute. Micromanaging, addiction, fear of what others think about you, self-criticism, paranoia, anxiety, panic attacks, and getting lost in the details, making it hard to change negative habits are all symptoms of high Neuroticism. This can lead to distraction at work from other areas of life that are being worried about.

I can't go into this in detail here as this is where the books RAMP-IT and RAMP your FLOWS will benefit.

**When being Less Emotionally Stable can help:** Being at the top end of the Neuroticism scale can be debilitating for some people, so in reality, there are not many situations where being high Neuroticism is beneficial. Maybe an aspect of this, the attention to detail, could help if supervising lots of new people in a setting that requires close supervision. However, being lower in neuroticism and higher in Conscientiousness would be more helpful.

**Those with LOW Neuroticism (high Emotional Stability):** If you look at some of the most successful people, you'll notice they rarely get flustered, hardly ever get angry, are not self-conscious, are not usually depressed and don't feel or act vulnerable to the extent they feel taken advantage of. They are exhibiting the trait of low Neuroticism. They don't let emotions get in the way of what they are trying to achieve.

**When having High Emotional Stability can help:** This can help all the time! There are so many benefits to having better control of your emotions at work and home. Greater productivity, less drama, less conflict, less averse to change, and better relationships all come from greater emotional stability.

**When coaching growth, what we're looking for is:** Definitely low Neuroticism / High Emotional Stability. You may have guessed that! While it's sometimes hard to get control of emotions due to the past, it can be done with awareness and practice.

When, not "if", you master your emotional stability, you'll be on the right track to achieve self-actualisation according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

There are hundreds of quality resources on the OCEAN Model online, you just have to Google them!