RESULTS - Things you can do to get stuff done together—faster

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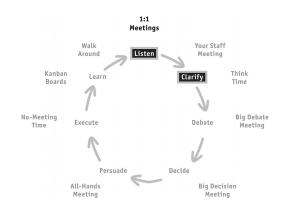
THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF RADICAL CANDOR is to achieve results collaboratively that you could never achieve individually. You've created a culture of guidance. You've created an exemplary team that embodies the Radical Candor ethos of caring personally and challenging directly. As a result, the team is firing on all cylinders; and perhaps most importantly, it has developed a self-correcting quality whereby most problems are solved before you are even aware of them. It's not time to buy the yacht and sail off to the Caribbean, though. Now you get to use the gift of Radical Candor—all that freed-up time and energy—to focus your team on achieving great results.

Neuroscientist and academic Stephen Kosslyn once gave a talk in which he described how people who work together on a team become like "mental prostheses" for each other. What one person doesn't enjoy and isn't good at is what another person loves and excels at. Together, they are "better, stronger, faster." Getting better, stronger, and faster in this case means observing the steps of the GSD wheel described in Chapter Four. Your role will to be to encourage that process of listening, clarifying, debating, deciding, persuading, and executing to the point that it's almost as if your team shares one mind when it comes to completing projects, and then learning from their results. This is not true just at high-tech Silicon Valley companies. I recently talked to a man who was responsible for training new managers at New Jersey Transit. I asked him what was the first thing they taught. "Don't start by bossing people. They'll just hate you. Start by listening to them."

One of your most important responsibilities to keep everything moving smoothly is to decide who needs to communicate with whom and how frequently. This means meetings. Obviously, every meeting comes with a significant cost—time—so it is important to minimize the duration, frequency and number of people required to attend. The most important of these meetings is the 1:1 with each of your direct reports.

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1:1 CONVERSATIONS
Employees set the agenda, you listen and help them clarify

1:1S ARE YOUR must-do meetings, your single best opportunity to listen, really listen, to the people on your team to make sure you understand their perspective on what's working and what's not working. These meetings also provide an opportunity to get to know your direct reports—to move up on the "care personally" dimension of the Radical Candor framework. Remember: this is not the place to dump all of the criticism you've been saving up. That should come in those two- to three-minute impromptu conversations that you've already been having!

The purpose of a 1:1 meeting is to listen and clarify—to understand what direction each person working for you wants to head in, and what is blocking them. Sheryl once quickly helped me in a 1:1 meeting solve a problem that was enormously important to me and had seemed insurmountable until we talked. I was managing teams in ten different cities around the world and wanted to travel to each of them. At the same time, I was forty and trying to start a family. It's pretty hard to get pregnant when you're five thousand miles away from your husband. What to do? I brought my dilemma to Sheryl. "Oh, that's easy!" she said. I was all ears. "You can't. And you don't have any time to waste. You need to make getting pregnant your top priority." I was immensely relieved. It had seemed impossible to travel and get pregnant at the same time, and I was glad to hear Sheryl say what I had felt. But I also felt crestfallen. Did this mean I couldn't do my job? Of course not! "Remember that global off-site meeting your team wanted but we had a hard time getting budget for?" Sheryl asked. "Let's take another crack at getting the budget. That way you can fly everybody here. They want to come, and you don't want to go. Seems like a win-win."

Here are a few things you can do to make sure you and each of your reports are getting the most out of these 1:1 meetings:

Mind-set
Your mind-set will go a long way in determining how well the 1:1s go. I found that when I quit thinking of them as meetings and began treating them as if I were having lunch or coffee with somebody I was eager to get to know better, they ended up yielding much better

conversations. If scheduling them over a meal helps, make them periodic lunches. If you and your direct report like to walk and there's a good place to take a walk near the office, make them walking meetings. If you are a morning person, schedule them in the morning. If you are a person who has an energy dip at 2 P.M., don't schedule them at 2 P.M. You have a lot of meetings, so you can optimize the 1:1 time and location for your energy. Just don't be a jerk about it. You may like to wake up at 5 A.M. and go to the gym. Don't expect the people who work for you to meet you there.

Frequency

Time doesn't scale, but it's also vital to relationships. 1:1s should be a natural bottleneck that determines how many direct reports a boss can have. I like to meet with each person who works directly for me for fifty minutes a week. But I can't bear more than about five hours of 1:1 time in my calendar. Listening is hard work, and I don't have an endless capacity for it every day. So I like to limit myself to five direct reports. When people are remote, I make sure that those conversations happen over video conference, and I try to supplement them with more frequent quick check-ins.

This is not realistic for a lot of companies—including some of the ones where I've worked. If you have ten direct reports, I'd shift 1:1s to twenty-five minutes a week. Plenty of people I know have twenty direct reports, and there's nothing they can do about it. It's just the nature of the way their companies are managed. If you're in that situation, I recommend twenty-five minutes every other week with each direct report. Also, see if you can create some leadership opportunities for the people who work for you and reduce the number of direct reports you have.

Finally, to avoid meeting proliferation, I recommend that managers use the 1:1 time to have "career conversations" (see chapter seven) and, if relevant, to do formal performance reviews.

Show up!

Probably the most important advice for 1:1s is just to show up. In an ideal world, you have less than ten direct reports so that you can have a weekly 1:1 with each of them. Even in that ideal world, between your travel schedule, the fact that you will inevitably get sick sometimes, and the occasional vacation, you will have to cancel at least two or three out of thirteen scheduled 1:1s. If you reserve some of those slots for special 1:1s (i.e., performance reviews, soliciting feedback, "career conversations"), you will have only seven or eight "regular" 1:1s per quarter. And if your world is not ideal and you have more than ten direct reports, you probably have 1:1s every other week. That means you're having three or four 1:1s with each of your direct reports per quarter. So, no matter what fires erupt in your day, do not cancel your 1:1s.

Your direct report's agenda, not yours

When your direct reports own and set the agenda for their 1:1s, they're more productive, because they allow you to listen to what matters to them. However, I recommend setting basic expectations for the agenda and how it's delivered. Do you even want a structured agenda? If you do, and you want to see it in advance, say so. If you don't, and you won't even look at it in

advance, set expectations accordingly. Are you OK if they come in with a set of bulleted items jotted on a napkin, or do you prefer they keep it in a shared document so you can refer back to it? Whether you want a structured agenda or you prefer a more free-flowing meeting, the agenda itself should be directed by your direct report, not you. Your job is to hold people accountable when they come unprepared—or to decide that it's fine to have an agenda-less 1:1 from time to time.

Some good follow-up questions

Here are some follow-up questions you can ask to show not only that you are listening but that you care and want to help, and to identify the gaps between what people are doing, what they think they ought to be doing, and what they want to be doing:

- "Why?"
- "How can I help?"
- "What can I do or stop doing that would make this easier?"
- "What wakes you up at night?"
- "What are you working on that you don't want to work on?"
    - "Do you not want to work on it because you aren't interested or because you think it's not important?"
    - "What can you do to stop working on it?"
- "What are you not working on that you do want to work on?"
    - "Why are you not working on it?"
    - "What can you do to start working on it?"
- "How do you feel about the priorities of the teams you're dependent on?"
    - "What are they working on that seems unimportant or even counterproductive?"
    - "What are they not doing that you wish they would do?"
    - "Have you talked to these other teams directly about your concerns? If not, why not?" (Important note: the goal here is to encourage the people to raise the issue directly with each other, not to solve the problem for them. See "Prevent Backstabbing" in chapter six.)

Encourage new ideas in the 1:1.

It's worth keeping Jony Ive's quote, "new ideas are fragile," top of mind before a 1:1. This meeting should be a safe place for people to nurture new ideas before they are submitted to the rough-and-tumble of debate. Help them clarify both their thinking about these ideas and their understanding of the people to whom they need to communicate these ideas.

The ideas may need to be described in one way for an engineer and another for a salesperson. Here are some questions that you can use to nurture new ideas by pushing people to be clearer:

- "What do you need to develop that idea further so that it's ready to discuss with the broader team? How can I help?"

- "I think you're on to something, but it's still not clear to me. Can you try explaining it again?"
- "Let's wrestle some more with it, OK?" "I understand what you mean, but I don't think others will. How can you explain it so it will be easier for them to understand?"
- "I don't think 'so-and-so' will understand this. Can you explain it again to make it clearer specifically for them?"
- "Is the problem really that they are too stupid to understand, or is it that you are not explaining it clearly enough?"

Signs you'll get from 1:1s that you're failing as a boss

1:1s are valuable meetings for your direct reports to share their thinking with you and to decide what direction to proceed with their work. They are also valuable meetings for you, because these meetings are where you'll get your first early warning signs that you are failing as a boss. Here are some sure signals:

Cancellations. If people who report to you cancel 1:1s too often, it's a sign your partnership is not fruitful for them, or that you're using it inappropriately to dispose of criticism you've been stockpiling.

Updates. If people just give you updates that could simply be emailed to you, encourage them to use the time more constructively.

Good news only. If you hear only good news, it's a sign people don't feel comfortable coming to you with their problems, or they think you won't or can't help. In these cases, you need to ask explicitly for the bad news. Don't let the issue drop till you hear some.

No criticism. If they never criticize you, you're not good enough at getting guidance from your team. Remember that phrase: "What could I do or stop doing that would make it easier to work with me?"

No agenda. If they consistently come with no topics to discuss, it might mean that they are overwhelmed, that they don't understand the purpose of the meeting, or that they don't consider it useful. Be direct but polite: "This is your time, but you don't seem to come with much to talk about. Can you tell me why?"

STAFF MEETINGS
Review metrics, study hall updates, and identify (but do not make) key decisions

LITERALLY EVERY CEO, middle manager, and first-time manager I have ever worked with has struggled to figure out how to run a productive staff meeting with their direct reports. All too often, the person leading the meeting comes to dread it; attendees view it as a waste of time; and those excluded feel sad and bad and left out. Although bloated staff meetings can be a drain on people's time and energy, the opposite is also true; a well-run meeting can save you time by alerting you to problems, sharing updates efficiently, and getting you all on the same page about what the week's shared priorities are.

An effective staff meeting has three goals: it reviews how things have gone the previous week, allows people to share important updates, and forces the team to clarify the most important

decisions and debates for the coming week. That's it. It shouldn't be the place to have debates or make decisions. Your job is to establish a consistent agenda, insist that people stick to it, and corral people who go on for too long or who go off on tangents.

Here's the agenda that I've found to be most effective:

- **Learn:** review key metrics (twenty minutes)
- **Listen:** put updates in a shared document (fifteen minutes)
- **Clarify**: identify key decisions & debates (thirty minutes)

Learn: review key metrics (twenty minutes). What went well that week, and why? What went badly, and why? This will go best if you come up with a dashboard of key metrics to review. By "dashboard" I don't mean some super sophisticated system set up by an IT department. I mean a spreadsheet with a few numbers on it. What are the most important activities and results you see each week that let you know if you are on track to achieving your goals? You can design the dashboard yourself; you don't need a corporate infrastructure to do it for you. Ideally it's updated automatically; if that's not possible, make sure everyone working for you updates their part the night before the staff meeting. If necessary, check it yourself and hound them till they get the updates in. If you can, put the dashboard in a place where the whole team can see it. Notes from this conversation should almost always be made public.

Listen: put updates in a shared document during a "study hall" (15 minutes). One of the most challenging aspects of managing a team is how to keep everyone abreast of what everyone else is doing so that they can flag areas of concern or overlap without wasting a great deal of time. Updates are different from key metrics. Updates include things that would never make it into the dashboard, like, "We need to change our goals for this project," "I am thinking of doing a re-org," "I'm starting to think I need to fire so-and-so," or "I have to have surgery next month and will be out for three weeks."

Some leaders have staff meetings that run for multiple hours to share this sort of information. Almost everybody hates long meetings, so some go the other direction and set up a public document where everyone jots down the key things they did last week and what they plan to do next week. Google did this and called these updates "snippets."

In theory, a snippets system for updates is easy to use and avoids interminable staff meetings; after all, it just takes a few minutes to write your own snippets and a few minutes more to read everyone else's. In practice, however, many people have enormous resistance to writing their snippets, and when some people don't do them, the whole system falls apart. I found that although I was all for avoiding an endless staff meeting, I was also one of those people who find it disproportionately burdensome to take the five minutes to input my snippets. For a while, I forced myself to do it anyway, but when I realized I wasn't alone, I decided to find a different solution. I made time for us all to do it in my staff meeting. This worked much better.

Here's the way study hall snippets work. Have everybody take five to seven minutes to write down the three to five things that they or their team did that week that others need to know about, and five to seven minutes to read everybody else's updates. Don't allow side conversations—require that follow-up questions be handled after the meeting. This simple rule will save enormous amounts of wasted time in your staff meeting. If you don't do this,

most of the meeting will consist of two or three people talking while the rest watch on, uninterested.

Snippets works best with a shared document editable by multiple people simultaneously. You can use Google Docs, Office 365, Evernote. If your staff doesn't have laptops or smartphones, you can use paper and pen—everyone jots their notes down on a piece of paper, and then you do a round robin with the pieces of paper.

If you are a boss of bosses, these snippets should be made public to the broader team. That means people can't include things that need to be kept confidential: an individual's performance problems, contemplated salary adjustments, etc. You may want to keep a "confidential snippets" doc for your team, but make sure there are not too many items here. Most things you discuss should be shared with the broader team.

Clarify: identify key decisions/debates (30 minutes). What are the one or two most important decisions and the single most important debate your team needs to take on that week? If your team is fewer than twenty or so people, you can probably just list them and decide/debate in an ad hoc way.

If your team is bigger than twenty or so people, you will want to be more formal. Put these topics on the agendas of separate "big decision" and "big debate" meetings and identify owners for each. This may feel like meeting proliferation, but it's actually a way to get you out of meetings and get the people who want to be included in debates and decisions present for them. The debate and decision owners will generally not be you or the people reporting to you. These separate meetings are a way for you to delegate debates and decisions. Delegating debates and decisions pushes them into the facts, and avoids thinking that is hierarchical (and therefore disconnected from the details/reality).

The agenda for these two meetings should be communicated to the broader team. Anyone who wants to attend them is free to. At first they will probably be too big, but pretty soon people will go only if they really want or need to be there. Most people hate to be excluded from decisions relevant to them, but they hate attending meetings that are irrelevant to them even more. With a little transparency, it all sorts itself out.

THINK TIME
Block time to think, and hold that time sacred

YOU'VE JUST READ about adding 1:1 meetings and a staff meeting to your calendar. You'll probably have to attend some "big debate" and "big decision" meetings. In addition to all these regularly planned meetings, people are going to want to talk to you about this or that; urgent matters will arise that you must deal with. When are you supposed to find time to clarify your own thinking, or to help the people who work for you clarify theirs? If you don't take some action, you will hardly have time to go to the bathroom or grab water, let alone food. You will be tyrannized by your calendar. The only quiet moment to think you'll ever get is at home, late at night, when you really should be sleeping.

An extremely successful—and busy—CEO I know fought this by blocking two hours of think time on his calendar every day. He wouldn't move it for anyone. Once the president (I won't say which country) wanted to meet with him. The president didn't have any particular

agenda, but most people would have taken the meeting for curiosity's sake. But not this CEO. Why? It would have interfered with think time. An enormously successful newspaper executive recounted walking into his CEO's office and seeing him leaning back in his chair just staring out at the sky. When he asked the CEO what he was daydreaming about, it turned out to be the idea that pivoted the company for the next decade.

It's not just CEOs who can pull this off. I did it when I worked as a middle manager at Google. My advice is that you schedule in some think time, and hold that think time sacred. Let people know that they cannot ever schedule over it. Get really, seriously angry if they try. Encourage everyone on your team to do the same.

"BIG DEBATE" MEETINGS
Lower the tension by making it clear that you are debating, not deciding.

"BIG DEBATE" MEETINGS are reserved for debate, but not decisions, on major issues facing the team. They serve three purposes:

They lower tension. At least part of the friction and frustration in a lot of meetings results from the fact that half the room thinks they are there to make a decision, the other half to debate. The would-be deciders are furious that the debaters don't seem to be driving toward an answer. The would-be debaters are furious that the deciders are refusing to think things through carefully enough, to consider every angle of the argument. When everybody knows that the meeting will end with no decision, this source of tension is eliminated.

They allow you to slow down key decisions when appropriate. When a topic is really important and there's a lot of disagreement about how to proceed, friction and frustration ensue. To avoid this, teams sometimes rush into a decision before they have really thought it through or gotten sufficient input. Putting a topic like that on the debate agenda forces a team to keep wrestling with it, digging up needed information, getting expert input, or just thinking more deeply.

They foster a larger culture of debate. Debate should occur constantly on a well-functioning team. Having these meetings regularly and seeking topics for them can help build the muscle and tolerance for discussion and dissension. When having a "bet the company" debate— "Should we enter a new, risky market that requires an enormous investment?"—it's important for stakeholders to participate in a number of open-ended debates. Having regular debates—arguments, even—also lowers tension because it prevents explosive fights. The principle of "self-organizing criticality"—a lot of little corrections create stability but one huge correction creates catastrophe—applies to human relationships as much as it does to markets.

THE LOGISTICS OF the "big debate" meeting should be pretty simple. After your staff meeting, the topic, owner, and participants for big debate should be sent out to the broader team (assuming you're managing managers) as well as to people on other teams who are working with your team. The only people required to participate in the debate should be those you identified in your staff meeting. But anyone should be able to attend/observe a "big debate"

meeting. The debate "owner" appoints somebody to take notes and send them out to all relevant parties.

The norms of these meetings are also pretty straightforward. Make it clear that everyone must check egos at the door of this meeting. The goal of debate is to work together to come up with the best answer. There should be no "winners" or "losers." A good norm is to ask participants to switch roles halfway through each debate. This makes sure that people are listening to each other, and helps them keep focused on coming up with the best answer and letting go of egos/positions.

The sole product of the debate should be a careful summary of the facts and issues that emerged, a clearer definition of the choices going forward, and a recommendation to keep debating or to move on to a decision.

"BIG DECISION" MEETINGS

Push decisions into the facts, pull facts into the decisions, and keep egos at bay

"BIG DECISION" MEETINGS typically but not always follow a big debate meeting. They serve two important roles. The first is obvious: to make important decisions. The second, though, is subtler. It can be hard to figure out when to stop debating and start deciding. I have never discovered any absolute principles to answer that question. The simple act of being explicit and conscious about when I'm deciding versus when I'm debating is the single most helpful way to figure out when a decision really needs to be made. That's the main reason why I recommend two separate meetings.

The logistics and norms of these meetings are the same as those of the "big debate" meetings. The leader of the meeting is the "decider," whom you will have appointed in your staff meeting. The only people required to attend are those identified in your staff meeting, but anyone can attend. Notes should be taken and made available to all relevant parties. Check egos at the door. No winners or losers. The product of "big decision" meetings is a careful summary of the meeting distributed to all relevant parties. It's important that the decisions are final, otherwise they'll always be appealed and will really be debates, not decisions.

You'll need to abide by the decisions made in these meetings just like everyone else. If you know it's a topic you have strong opinions on, feel free to either attend the meeting or to let the decider know you have veto power. If you have veto power, the decider should send the decision to you to approve or disapprove before the notes go out more broadly. Use this power sparingly, though, or the meetings will become meaningless.

ALL-HANDS MEETINGS
Bring others along

IF YOU HAVE a team of ten or fewer people, you probably don't need to schedule a separate meeting to make sure everyone is persuaded that the right decisions have been made. However, as your team gets bigger, you need to start thinking about how to bring everyone along. It's shocking how fast the decisions that some people make start to seem mysterious or even nefarious to people who weren't close to the process. If your team is one hundred or

more people, a regular all-hands meeting can really help to get broad buy-in on the decisions being made—and also to learn about dissent.

Silicon Valley is big on company-wide all-hands meetings. Apple's is called Town Hall, Dropbox's is Whiskey Friday, Google's is TGIF, Twitter's is Tea Time. There's something to be learned from how all-hands meetings are done in Silicon Valley, and why.

These meetings usually include two parts: *presentations* to persuade people that the company is making good decisions and headed in the right direction, and *Q&As* conducted so leaders can hear dissent and address it head-on. When handled well, the answers the leaders give to the questions, which are often quite challenging, are usually more persuasive than the presentations.

One of the best all-hands meetings I ever observed was the Friday after Google acquired Keyhole, the company whose technology powered Google Earth. It was fun partly because Larry and Sergey were so exuberant about the acquisition, like kids with a cool new toy. But it was also the best explanation of what they meant by "organize all the world's information." This wasn't just about Web sites and books—they meant, literally, all the world's information! The excitement in the meeting was palpable.

The presentations typically focus on one or two initiatives that are especially exciting and important. They are meant to inform everyone of broader priorities, and to get their buy-in. The presentations are generally done by the team working on the initiative. This practice at Google was important; it built the "persuade" muscle throughout the company. Also, people usually loved presenting at these meetings. "Your team wants the stage? Show them the stage!"

Q&A is usually handled by the CEO/founders and allows them to learn what people really think, and so it generally falls to them to answer these often unpleasant, challenging, or awkward questions. The way that these questions get answered is enormously important to persuading a lot of people at once that the right decisions are being made the right way.

I always admired the way Larry Page and Sergey Brin handled Q&As at Google's TGIF meetings. Larry and Sergey took on all sorts of questions, week after week, and they never used that over-prepped, over-messaged tone that CEOs sometimes fall into. Their answers were invariably spontaneous, human, and totally authentic—if occasionally sarcastic. Sometimes the answers were so surprisingly honest that Eric Schmidt would step up to the microphone and say, "Actually, I think what Sergey (or Larry) really is trying to say is…" Sergey (or Larry) would just grin and shrug. Then at the next TGIF, there they would be again to take tough, awkward questions. They weren't yet thirty at the time, but they had instinctively grasped the power of explaining important decisions and encouraging dissent.

EXECUTION TIME
Fight meeting proliferation

BY NOW, THE Get Stuff Done wheel may be starting to feel like the Meetings from Hell wheel:) If you're not careful, meeting proliferation can indeed bring to a grinding halt your ability to execute both as an individual and as a team. Being ruthless about making sure your team has time to execute is one of the most important things you can do as a boss.

One approach that many have tried is to remove chairs from conference rooms. This has the theoretical impact of shortening meetings because most people won't stand around a table for more than about an hour. There is research indicating that people are more creative when standing than when sitting. Some say sitting is the new smoking, so there may be health benefits as well. Plus, you save money on furniture. This is all appealing, but it never really works. I don't know any company that has stuck to the no-chairs-in-conference-rooms thing.

At Google, different teams tried declaring "No-Meeting Wednesday" or "No-Meeting Thursday." None was ever able to stick to it. Greg Badros, an engineering leader at Google and Facebook, set a goal of ending 25 percent of his meetings early. I loved that, but I don't think he ever hit the goal.

I have found that the most effective solution is simply to fight fire with fire. For the same reason, I blocked off think-time in calendar; I also found it necessary to block off time in my calendar to be alone and execute. I encouraged others to do the same. This helped them say "no" to more unnecessary meetings.

KANBAN BOARDS
Make activity and workflows visible

TAIICHI OHNO, AN industrial engineer at Toyota, developed Kanban, a scheduling system to make supply-chain management in manufacturing more efficient. Others have adapted the system to visualize workflows. At its simplest, you put up a board with three columns: To Do, In Progress, and Done. Then you buy a bunch of Post-its in different colors. The different colors represent different people or teams. They write their tasks on their color of Post-it and move them around from To Do, In Progress, and Done. You can quickly see who's the bottleneck. It's a great way to drive personal accountability but also for everyone on a team to see who needs help and to give it to them. A Kanban board is different from a dashboard because it focuses activities and work in progress. It gives your team time to identify and resolve issues before they hurt the results.

Making progress visible to everyone gives more, not less, autonomy to the team. When it's clear to everyone where the bottlenecks are, resources flow to the places where they are most needed, without intervention from management. If I'm on the engineering team above and I'm ahead of where I need to be, and I see that somebody else's task has fallen behind, I'm motivated to go help because I know that if that task doesn't get done all my work is for naught, or will be delayed.

Another reason why measuring activities and visualizing workflows is important is that when a business is doing really well, it's hard to tell from the results who's along for the ride and who's actually making things happen. Similarly, when the economy is tanking due to factors beyond anyone's control, if you just measure results it's hard to know who's doing a great job bailing out your boat and who's simply panicking or making the situation worse. Friends of mine who worked at Yahoo! and AOL have told me that when things were going well, whole teams would get richly rewarded; but when they started going badly, nobody had any idea what to do. They'd just been measuring the results, and they didn't understand what had been driving them or what to do when the results turned bad.

Measuring activities and visualizing workflows will push you and your team to make sure you really understand how what you all do drives success—or doesn't. Early in my tenure, the AdSense Inside Sales Team was supposed to cold-call large Web sites. But they received an overwhelming number of inquiries from smaller Web sites every day, and of course answering the phone was so much easier than cold-calling. In other words, they were supposed to be out catching big fish, but since so many small fish were just jumping into the boat, they didn't bother going after the big ones. When we just kept track of the huge sums of money rolling in, it looked as though the team was doing great. It was only when we looked at an activity metric—the number of cold calls the team was generating—that we realized we had a problem; we didn't need to pay an expensive sales force just to take orders. After we started measuring activity, revenue spiked significantly. Measuring activities also allowed us to figure out who the good salespeople were. Taking orders is a skill very different from selling.

Measuring activities will also create more respect between teams. It's always surprising how quick one team is to assume that another team sits around doing nothing, and how much resentment builds up over this. When you can see from a Kanban board what people are doing, respect tends to flow pretty naturally.

Measuring activities and displaying them publicly also tends to lead to ratings and promotions that more consistently reward the top performers and are less prone to the biases that bedevil us all. Jack Rivkin, who led equity research at Shearson Lehman Hutton, started measuring his analysts' activities as well as results. When he measured activities, it became clearer to everyone what actually drove results. As a result, Rivkin's team went from being ranked by Institutional Investor as number fifteen in 1987 when he took over, to number four in 1989, and number one in 1990. The objective measurement had another impact as well: fairness. Because it was so clear to everybody what drove success, bias was less likely to creep into hiring, rating, and promotion decisions when activities got measured. Rivkin's team had more women than any other in the industry.

WALK AROUND
Learn about small problems to prevent big ones

LISTENING TO THE people who report directly to you is relatively straightforward, even if it requires time and discipline. But if you are a manager of managers, listening "deep" in your organization is much harder. You can't listen to everybody. You can't have 1:1s with hundreds or thousands of people. If you have office hours, you'll hear from the same three cranks week after week. What do you do?

I never met anyone who was better at connecting with the whole company than Dick Costolo. There were a lot of things he did to achieve this, but one of them was quite simple. He just walked around. Try taking a page out of Dick's book. Schedule an hour a week of walking-around time. Management by walking around is a tried-and-true technique. According to historian Stephen B. Oates, Abraham Lincoln invented it by informally inspecting his troops during the American Civil War. It was part of Hewlett Packard's culture in the 1970s. It's not complicated to do.

Notice the things you don't notice when you're buried in work at your desk or racing, head down, from one meeting to the next. Ask people who catch your attention—ideally, people you haven't talked to in a while—what they're working on. Find some small problems and treat them like "the universe through a grain of sand." Awareness of these small problems can be useful in several ways.

First they'll help you find the devil in the details. Too often a boss is the last to know when something is going wrong. The reason is generally not because people are intentionally hiding problems, but because they only want to bring the important things to your attention. But a problem may be more important than they realize.

Second, being aware of small problems and maybe even rolling up your sleeves and fixing them yourself is the best way to kill the "it's not my job" or, worse, the "that's beneath me" mentality on your team. If nothing is beneath your attention, then others will pay attention to details as well.

Third, when you show that you care about the small things that contribute to customer happiness or the quality of life on your team, suddenly everybody cares more about them, and some of the big things start working better, too.

At one point, Dick was trying consciously to create a culture at Twitter in which people would fix small processes and annoyances rather than just complaining about them. One day during his walk-around, he passed two people complaining about the dirty dishes piled up in a micro-kitchen. Usually he would have filed that away and been annoyed by it. But this was his walk-around time, so he just took a moment to fix the problem himself. He stopped and looked around. "Do you think that would be a better place for the dishes?" he asked the two complainers, pointing to an equally convenient but less-visible spot. They nodded yes, and to their amazement, he started moving the dirty dishes there himself. Needless to say, they stopped complaining and started helping. This story got told and retold.

BE CONSCIOUS OF CULTURE
Everyone is watching you, but that doesn't mean it's all about you

"CULTURE EATS STRATEGY for lunch."1 A team's culture has an enormous impact on its results, and a leader's personality has a huge impact on a team's culture. Who you are as a human being impacts your team's culture enormously.

Ben Silbermann, founder and CEO of Pinterest, once told me that he was worried the company's culture reflected his own personality too much. He was introverted; the company was introverted. He didn't like to argue; there wasn't as much debate at the company as he would've liked. This observation struck me, because I'd often felt the same way with my own teams but had never had the courage to articulate it. There were days when the teams I led were like a fun-house mirror, exaggerating my flaws. The culture of the team often reflected me, but not always in the way I would have chosen.

That's a scary thing. Since it's pretty much impossible to change who you are as a human being, does that mean that you can't really change your team's culture? You have a big impact; is there no way to control that impact?

Fortunately, as with all things, it's not just about you. As with your evaluations of others, *focus on behavior rather than on character, on actions rather than "essentials."* If you are regularly and genuinely soliciting feedback, the most egregious of these qualities will inevitably come to light. And, as I described in earlier chapters, your ability to have Radically Candid relationships with everyone on your team will move your culture toward—or away from— Radical Candor. You will influence other aspects of your culture as well, simply by moving consciously through the steps of the GSD wheel.

People are listening. Like it or not, you're under the microscope

When you become the boss, you are under the microscope. People do listen to you in an intense way you never experienced before you became a manager. They attribute meaning— sometimes accurately, sometimes not—to what you say, to the clothes you wear, to the car you drive. In some ways, becoming a boss is like getting arrested. Everything you say or do can and will be used against you.

When he led Goldman Sachs, Bob Rubin once walked the trading floor to get a feel for what was going on. He stopped and chatted with a trader who'd just completed a transaction buying gold. "I like gold," Bob said offhandedly. A few weeks later, Bob was startled to see how much gold the firm had bought recently. "Why are we so long on gold?" Bob asked. "Because you told us to. You said you liked gold!" was the response. Bob thought he was just making a friendly remark, not giving a "buy" order.

When I was at Apple, somebody told me that the bus program to shuttle employees back and forth between Cupertino and San Francisco had been delayed because Steve had to choose the leather for the interior of the busses. I happened to have lunch with the director of the bus program and asked him if the story were true. He laughed: "No." But when I then asked him how the color scheme of the busses had been chosen, he admitted that he'd gone to the parking lot and taken a look at Steve's car: silver exterior with black leather seats. So the busses? Silver exterior with black leather seats.

You don't have to be crazy successful like Bob Rubin or Steve Jobs to have a bigger impact than you intend to as the boss. Early in my career, I said to a salesman who tended to wear black shiny shirts, "I sure do like a man in a white oxford." I was chagrined to see that the very next day he showed up in a white oxford, and for every day for a week after that. Of course, I had been dropping a hint. But I was new to being a boss and totally unused to having people take my hints so seriously.

Often when you're the boss you might say or do something you expect to be blown off, whereas in fact you've moved way further out on the "challenge directly" axis than you had intended to.

Clarify. Be vigilant about clarifying what you are communicating

Given the level of scrutiny you're under as the boss, it's important to clarify what you're saying—even when you think you're not saying anything.

When I was at Google, I drove an orange Honda Element, pretty identifiable as mine since it was virtually alone among the herd of Priuses and other fuel-efficient cars that Google subsidized. Because my office was a couple of miles away from my boss's, I frequently drove

to meetings. Parking was a disaster and my schedule was packed, so I tended to park haphazardly and in places that only vaguely resembled parking spots. Since I was pushing at work for an "ask for forgiveness not permission" culture in which people felt free to challenge the rules, this worked. But if I had been trying to create a "measure twice cut once" kind of culture, I would at least have had to offer an explanation for my parking practices, and probably would have had to reform them. I didn't park like that when I worked at Apple....

Debate and decide explicitly. Don't let things that pervert your culture "just happen"

There are a number of debates and decisions that you are going to be tempted to "delegate to HR." These are often around things you'd rather not waste your brain cells on. Are you going to call it a "holiday party" or a "Christmas party"? Will there be a Christmas tree there, or not? A menorah? Will you serve alcohol at the party? How will you deal with it when you come in Monday morning to find bras and panties and a jock strap on the conference-room table? What to do about the fact that one person on your team just kicked another in the butt? True, it was just one of those friendly sideways kicks that you used to give your friends in middle school, but the recipient is outraged. Who's going to decide how to deal with it?

Believe me, it's tempting to punt on these decisions. But if you do, the decisions that do get made by HR/employment lawyers without your humanizing influence will push your culture in a "the law is an ass" direction. If nobody makes a decision, you wind up in Lord of the Flies territory. Neither is the culture you want.

Persuade. Pay attention to the small things

When I first got the job at Apple, I got a thoughtfully organized tri-fold folder with the words, "Ah, Paperwork!" written on the outside. Real thought and care had gone into making the annoyance of new-job paperwork as painless as possible. The folder was a thing of beauty—well-designed but not crazy-expensive. The choice of language made me smile. The care with which the paperwork had been assembled communicated to me even before I started what kind of work would be expected of me.

When you pay attention to seemingly small details, it can have a big impact on persuading people that your culture is worth understanding and adapting to. The office environment is part of setting a tone and culture. Silicon Valley is famous for its whimsical offices and high-end chefs. But even if you can't afford this kind of largesse, you can make sure the coffee in the kitchen is what people like to drink—and offer some green tea bags, too. One publishing company in New York responded to complaints about the coffee by having a kind of Pepsi Challenge. Coffee consumption went up dramatically and staff surveys noted real appreciation for the move.

The office environment affects culture. Do you want a Zen-like orderly, well-lit environment or a stuff-everywhere frenetic environment? The small choices you make will persuade people to act in accordance with the culture you want to build with your team.

Execute: Action should reflect your culture

It's surprising how a small action from you can impact your team's culture, even after you're no longer around.

One day I arrived at my office at Google to find that a couch had been moved to a place where it forced people to take several extra steps to walk around it. I wasn't trying to create a culture obsessed with feng shui, but that couch bugged me, and so I decided to move it. I was trying to encourage an obsession with efficiency, and those extra steps were anything but efficient. I started shoving the couch back where it belonged. A man on the team saw me and joked, "It looks like Kim's got a new job." I smiled but pushed back against his attitude: "If something's in your way, it's always your job to fix it!" Two years after I'd left Google, I went back to visit an old friend and saw a slogan written on the wall. "On the AdSense team, we move the couches!" Scott Sheffer, who took over my job when I left Google, said repeatedly that he felt the single most important thing I'd done to help set him up for success was to focus on the team's culture.

Learn

Shit happens. When you're the boss and shit happens, it's your responsibility to learn from it and make a change. If you don't, you create a culture that doesn't learn from its mistakes.

At Google, my team and I wanted to foster an informal culture. One of the small things we did was to turn a conference room into a "team cozy," with no tables or chairs in it, just a bunch of couches and beanbag chairs. I generally had my staff meetings there. Then one Monday morning we came in to find some men's underwear and a bra wedged in the couch cushions. Sex in the office was not the culture I was shooting for. Gone was the "team cozy." We were going to have to find another way to be informal.

Listen …

The most amazing thing about a culture is that once it's strong, it's self-replicating. Even though you've taken a number of conscious actions to impact it, you'll know you've succeeded when it truly is no longer about you.

When we built AdSense teams globally, I was nervous about what the team culture would be like in each office. I wanted to encourage all the teams to challenge authority—my authority in particular, but authority in general. I felt like I needed to go to each office in person to drive this home. However, I was trying to get pregnant and so was unable to travel. I was especially worried about the team in China. Given my understanding of Chinese culture, I thought that replicating our irreverent culture would be especially difficult there. As described in Chapter One, I talked to the leader of the team there, Roy Zhou, extensively about this. But would that really translate if I couldn't fly there myself? I was so anxious about it that if I hadn't been forty years old, I would have delayed starting a family and gone on a world tour instead.

Then somebody on the team in China had the idea that all AdSense offices around the world make a video to introduce the teams to one another. I'll confess that I wasn't expecting much. But the results blew me away; human warmth and humor were universal. The irreverence in Beijing was just as unmistakably "AdSensy" as it was in Mountain View or Dublin. And yet the nationalities were distinct. How had that happened? If I'd directed each of those videos myself as AdSense culture propaganda clips, I couldn't have been happier about how they came out. But I'd had absolutely nothing to do with any of them. How was this possible? It was because the culture was self-replicating. I'd helped to create something larger than myself. It was one of the most magical moments of my career.

Scott, Kim. Radical Candor: Fully Revised & Updated Edition (pp. 200-216). St. Martin's Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.