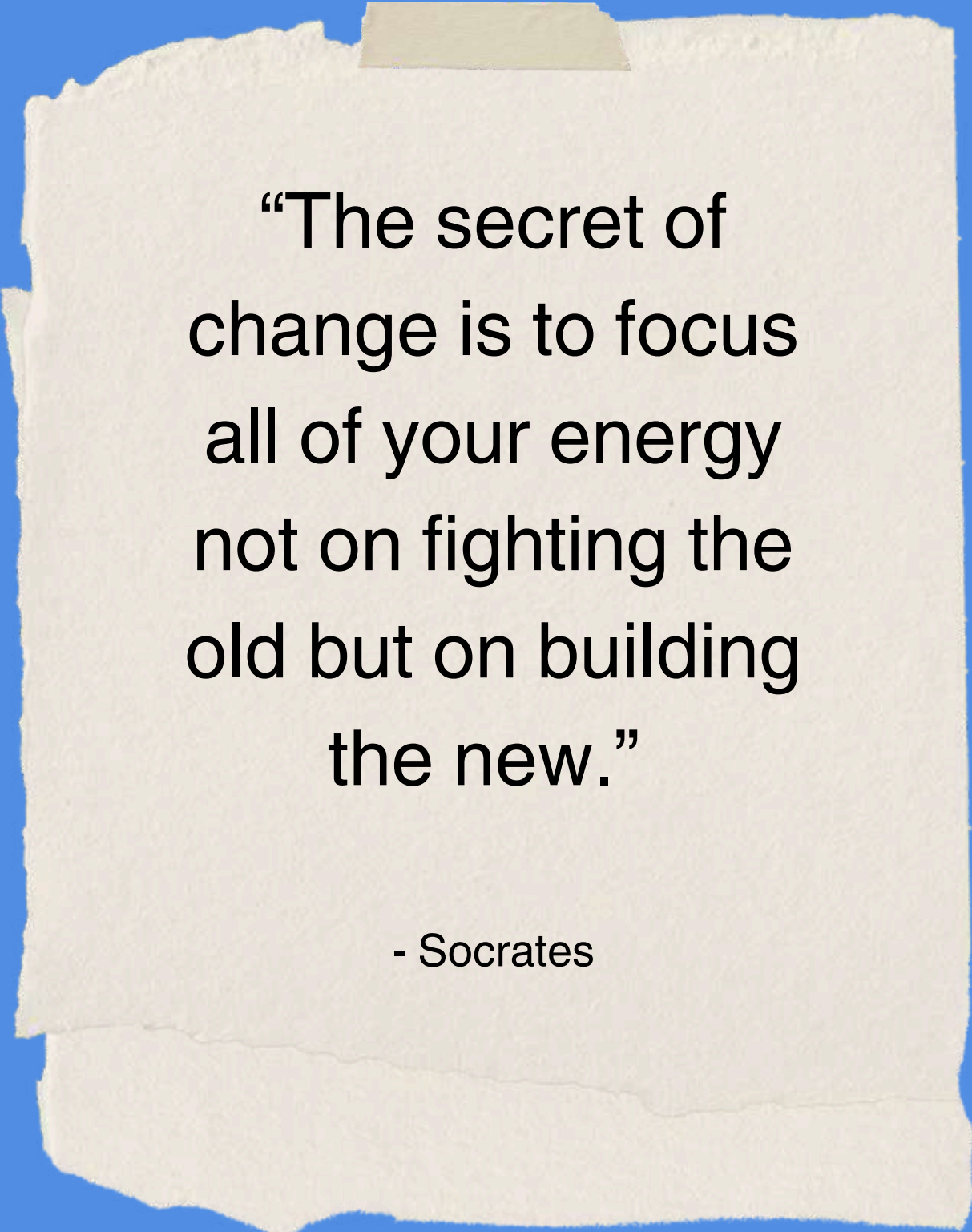




# Capitalizing on Change: Innovative Approaches to Success in an Evolving Workplace



“The secret of  
change is to focus  
all of your energy  
not on fighting the  
old but on building  
the new.”

- Socrates

# Continuously Transform and Improve as Leaders

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Leave it to employees to show us the way once again. Change is continuously reshaping the workplace, and if you're not prepared, you may find yourself left behind.

The professional world is always evolving. Organizations must constantly adjust and refocus their efforts to attract and retain top talent. Now and in the near future, three key trends will dominate the workplace, requiring leadership to act and adapt.

## 1. Workplace Flexibility

Flexibility in the workplace is more in demand than ever. Employees now have clear expectations about when and how they want to work. Whether it's non-linear workdays (working hours that differ from the traditional 9-to-5), personalized schedules with managerial approval, or condensed workweeks like four 10-hour days, people want a say in their professional lives.

According to McKinsey & Co., flexible work arrangements are a major factor in job satisfaction. Their research indicates that when workers are offered flexibility in a new role, 87% will take the offer. My own discussions with thousands of employees at conferences in 2023 align with this sentiment. One attendee, a woman in her 30s, told me, "The ability to have control over my hours, schedule, and where I work from means more to me than it did five years ago."

It is essential to engage with Gen Z and Millennials, who now make up the largest segments of the workforce. Meeting their needs can drive business success. However, it's not just about younger employees—Gen X and Boomers also value flexibility and deserve to be heard. Leaders who fail to acknowledge these shifts will struggle to retain top talent.

## 2. Well-Being and Personal Connection

Employee well-being and personal connections are increasingly central to leadership success. Yet, some leaders continue to miss the mark. The quest for well-being spans all age groups, but younger professionals particularly crave personal connections with their managers.

A Johns Hopkins University survey found that 51% of Gen Z and younger Millennials prefer face-to-face conversations with colleagues, friends, and family over digital communication.

### They also tend to favor:

- **Video calls over phone calls.**
- **Frequent in-person gatherings to foster stronger connections.**
- **Regular check-ins and meaningful feedback from managers.**
- **Social activities that build camaraderie and team spirit.**

As the workforce continues to evolve, Gen Z will play a major role in shaping workplace culture. This generation prioritizes diversity and inclusion, mental health awareness, and equal pay. Leaders who acknowledge and address these priorities will stand a better chance of attracting and retaining top talent.

# Continuously Transform and Improve as Leaders

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## 3. Training and Development

Since the pandemic, organizations have ramped up employee training and development programs—both online and in-person at conferences and workshops. As AI and technology continue to evolve, workplace communication skills and well-being initiatives must keep pace.

I strongly encourage organizations to implement mentorship programs, a recommendation I share with companies that bring me in for keynotes and training sessions. While some companies resist due to perceived time constraints or lack of measurable ROI, the truth is that mentorship works. Well-structured programs enhance employee retention, accelerate career advancement, and reduce onboarding costs.

Gen Z and younger Millennials actively seek mentorship. Providing it is not only a strategic move but also a cost-effective one, given that these two generations now dominate the workforce.

By focusing on flexibility, well-being, and training, businesses can create a workplace environment that attracts top talent, retains valuable employees, and enhances productivity. The workplace is evolving—are you ready to evolve with it?

Change is constant so those of us who learn to harness its power will be the most successful.

### Key Skills for Navigating Change:

- **Communication Skills:**  
Strong communication skills are essential for conveying information and addressing concerns including being open and transparent.
- **Leadership Skills:**  
Leaders need to inspire and motivate others through change.
- **Adaptability:**  
Be able to adapt to new situations and challenges, including perspectives from people in different stages of life.
- **Resilience:**  
Find solutions, navigate issues and stay on top of everything



# Speak with Clarity and Sincerity

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Speaking about change became a passion of mine about 14 years ago. Over the years, I have developed both the professional and personal acumen to successfully navigate it. One woman who profoundly inspired me once said, “We may encounter many defeats, but we must not be defeated.” These words from Maya Angelou have guided me through both professional and personal transformations.

At a recent conference, a sales manager made a bold statement during the Q&A session. He stood up, walked to one of the microphones positioned in the audience of 350 people, and confidently proclaimed, “There is no need to change every time something goes down. You adapt; you pivot.”

Standing on stage with a mic of my own, I let his words settle in the room. I heard a few murmurs from the audience, signaling that his words had struck a chord. I wanted this moment to linger in their minds.

"Pivot, adapt. No need to change."

I knew where this was going. He wanted to make a point. Perhaps, he wanted to challenge the keynote speaker.

"Sir, I'm Scott. May I have your name?"

"It's Dale."

"Hi, Dale. I'm talking about significant changes in the workplace—the kind of change that requires an all-hands-on-deck approach."

"Did you know that pivot means to turn or rotate? That is change, is it not?"

"I suppose, but it's not real change."

Confused by his statement, I pressed on, knowing the audience could draw their own conclusions.

"Okay, so let's consider adapt. That means to modify. That's change, too, and we certainly hear both words used often."

Seeing that the audience was engaged, I continued.

**"Dale, my presentation is about shifting leadership mindsets at work to improve employee retention, attract new talent, and enhance communication and collaboration—especially during times of major change. My research has shown that pivoting or adapting can be helpful, but it requires purposeful and meaningful change from the top to make it work and gain buy-in from the entire company."**

I thanked Dale for his input and moved on to other questions. It turned out to be a fantastic conference, and the meeting planner loved my presentation.



# Speak with Clarity and Sincerity

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When faced with constant change, former top hedge fund manager Ray Dalio of Bridgewater Associates championed a concept called “Radical Transparency.” He believed that if all 1,400 employees could freely share information, ideas, and knowledge without fear of reprimand or termination, productivity would soar. He regularly trained and educated his staff, understanding that collective intelligence was more powerful than the insights of any one person—especially in times of change. His hedge fund remained the largest in the world for many years.

Dalio understood that open communication was essential. It created a faster flow of information from top to bottom within an organization. From my own experience, I have seen that leaders who grant their employees the freedom to succeed often achieve outstanding results. If an idea fails, they move on. During times of change, this approach keeps communication open, reduces fear, and minimizes rumors.

These are calculated risks, but they work. The biggest challenge? Getting approval from top leadership.

Dale was partially right. Pivoting and agility play a role in navigating change, but true transformation requires courage, tenacity, and regular check-ins with employees to ensure they have what they need. Too often, leaders overlook this as they are preoccupied with their own challenges.

As Charles Darwin famously stated, “It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” Perhaps this holds true for business as well.

Throughout our careers, we will be challenged, pushed, and even underappreciated. Ultimately, it is up to each of us to decide how we navigate change. As leaders, we have an opportunity to listen, support, and guide others through it.



## Ray Dalio Principles

- 1. Find mutual agreement individually** – start the process by a mutual private conversation
- 2. Design the boundaries of radical transparency** – determine the boundaries that work for your culture
- 3. No more closed-door conversations** – make a conscious effort to reduce secrets

Source: <https://www.inc.com/gene-hammett/3-steps-ray-dalio-uses-radical-transparency-to-build-a-billion-dollar-company.html>

# Building Great Teams is Worth the Investment

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Winning or losing in business comes down to many factors, but leadership and team building are at the top. Without strong leadership and a solid team, a business will struggle to survive.

Fortunately, leaders who take a proactive approach to building and supporting their teams can gain a significant edge. Based on my experience and insights from successful leaders, here are three key strategies that work.

## 1. Build Relationships Based on Trust and Loyalty, Not Fear or Authority

A leader's ability to inspire trust and loyalty is far more effective than ruling through fear or power. I recently witnessed a highly paid VP of Sales resign—not because they weren't successful, but because they were dictatorial, demeaning, and insensitive. They treated their team poorly, caring only about the numbers, and in today's workplace, that behavior is unsustainable. Eventually, the team had enough, and their leadership crumbled.

**Michael Jordan put it best:**  
“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.”

Great leaders put their teams first. The company will now have to pick up the pieces, repair the damage, and hopefully find a leader who understands the value of a supportive and trust-based team culture.

## 2. Listen, Listen, and Listen More

Building trust and respect starts with listening. This is one of the most common themes I hear during Q&A sessions at my keynotes. Listening is an art, a skill that requires practice, and a tool that builds successful relationships. When leaders truly listen to their employees, they show that every opinion matters. This fosters innovation, resolves conflicts, and strengthens team dynamics.

People are far more likely to engage and contribute when they feel heard.

**Agatha Christie wisely said:**  
“An appreciative listener is always stimulating.”



# Building Great Teams is Worth the Investment

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## 3. Encourage Risk-Taking

Taking risks is part of both personal and professional growth. Some of the biggest career moves I made were considered extreme, even crazy, but they paid off because I evaluated the risks and made calculated decisions.

As a leader, I encouraged my teams to do the same. When someone asked if they should take a chance on a potential opportunity, my response was simple: Evaluate it, weigh the upside, and then go for it. Most importantly, I let them know: “I’ve got your back.”

When leaders foster a culture that supports calculated risks, the results are often worth it. People push boundaries, step outside their comfort zones, and innovate in ways that benefit the entire organization.

**Arianna Huffington put it perfectly:**

**“We need to accept that we won’t always make the right decisions, that we’ll screw up royally sometimes understanding that failure is not the opposite of success; it’s part of success.”**

No successful individual I know has avoided challenges, failures.





# 15 tried and tested principles for any leader's checklist:



**Articulate a Vision.** Formulate a clear and persuasive vision and communicate it to all members of the enterprise.

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**Think and Act Strategically.** Set forth a pragmatic strategy for achieving that vision both short- and long-term and ensure that it is widely understood; consider all the players and anticipate reactions and resistance before they are manifest.

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**Honor the Room.** Frequently express your confidence in and support for those who work with and for you.

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**Take Charge.** Embrace a bias for action, of taking responsibility even if it is not formally delegated, particularly if you are well positioned to make a difference.  
**Act Decisively.** Make good and timely decisions and ensure that they are executed.

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**Communicate Persuasively.** Communicate in ways that people will not forget, simplicity and clarity of expression help.

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**Motivate the Troops.** Appreciate the distinctive intentions that people bring, and then build on those diverse motives to draw the best from each.

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**Embrace the Front Lines.** Delegate authority except for strategic decisions and stay close to those most directly engaged with the work of the enterprise.

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**Build Leadership in Others.** Develop leadership throughout the organization.

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**Manage Relations.** Build enduring personal ties with those who look to you, and work to harness the feelings and passions of the workplace.

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**Identify Personal Implications.** Help everybody appreciate the impact that the vision and strategy are likely to have on their own work and future with the firm.

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**Convey Your Character.** Through gesture, commentary, and accounts, ensure that others appreciate that you are a person of integrity.

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**Dampen Over-Optimism.** Counter the hubris of success, focus attention on latent threats and unresolved problems, and protect against the tendency for managers to engage in unwarranted risk.

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**Build a Diverse Top Team.** Leaders need to take final responsibility, but leadership is also a team sport best played with an able roster of those collectively capable of resolving all the key challenges.

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**Place Common Interest First.** In setting strategy, communicating vision, and reaching decisions, common purpose comes first, personal self-interest last., or setbacks. Risk, reward, and the unknown are part of the journey. When leadership provides the right environment for people to take risks and grow, incredible things happen

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# Navigating Change and Understanding a New Mix of Generations

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Recently, a conference planner approached me with a challenge: to merge two of my most popular keynotes into one. The topic? Navigating Change and A New Mix of Generations. While this might seem daunting, it was an easy "yes" for me. After all, I had been thinking about this very combination for years. Attendees had been telling me the same thing—change is happening fast, and the workplace generational mix is evolving just as quickly.

In today's ever-changing world, organizations face unprecedented challenges that demand adaptability and resilience. Employees are navigating new pressures, increased burnout, and the uncharted territories of rapid technological advancement. From AI and digital transformation to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), employee wellness, and achieving corporate goals—change is impacting every level of the workforce. We are in this together.

**To retain top talent and drive success, leaders must recognize how change affects their employees and provide them with the necessary training and support. This means addressing shifting priorities, fostering resilience, and promoting collaboration to enhance recruitment and retention efforts.**

It's essential to equip both staff and leadership with the tools and strategies needed to navigate change successfully. Encouraging open communication, investing in employee wellness, and cultivating an inclusive workplace culture are no longer optional—they are critical. Fortunately, many forward-thinking companies are already taking action. From Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) to offering mental health days, organizations are prioritizing employee well-being as a strategic advantage.

One of the most significant shifts happening today is in workforce demographics. Understanding people capital in the workplace is now a competitive advantage. Successfully managing five generations at once requires leaders to embrace and navigate this shift with intentionality. In 2024, the workforce stands at a major crossroads. Traditionalists are exiting, and Generation Alpha—the largest generation yet—is beginning to reshape organizational dynamics once again.

As the generational mix evolves, leaders must integrate five distinct generations seamlessly. This requires moving beyond surface-level discussions on generational differences and recognizing the larger transformation at play. To remain competitive, companies must foster deep mutual understanding among employees and leadership. Doing so will drive productivity, amplify DEI efforts, and help overcome talent attraction and retention hurdles in this new era.

# Navigating Change and Understanding a New Mix of Generations

Blending five generations in today's workplace is no small feat. Leaders must prepare for the inevitable large-scale shifts ahead. The departure of Traditionalists and the entry of Generation Alpha will redefine workplace expectations and culture. This kind of transformation requires proactive leadership, adaptability, and a commitment to both innovation and inclusion.

Change is constant. And the ability to navigate it is the key to retaining employees, increasing productivity, and attracting top talent. Isn't that the competitive edge we're all striving for?

By embracing the challenges of change, leaders can position their organizations for long-term success. Understanding and preparing for the future of the workplace will unlock opportunities for business growth, enhance employee engagement, and improve communication across teams and departments.

At the intersection of two massive shifts—prioritizing employee well-being and embracing technological advancements—leaders have a unique opportunity to shape the future. The organizations that proactively adapt to these changes will be the ones that thrive for years to come.

## TIMELINE



**1922 - 1945**  
Veterans  
Silent  
Traditionalist



**1946 - 1964**  
Baby  
Boomers



**1965 - 1980**  
Generation X  
Gen X



**1981 - 1995**  
Generation Y



**1996 - 2010**  
Generation Z

# Foster Personal Growth: Take Time for You

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This year has been a rollercoaster—exciting, challenging, and full of unexpected turns. The uncertainty we face, both personally and professionally, has forced us to reconsider what resilience truly means. From political shifts to global crises, our daily choices shape how we navigate stress and adversity.

At times, the pressure from work and personal life can feel overwhelming. I've learned that when I reach that breaking point, I must step back. It's not about disengaging from the world—it's about preserving my energy so that I can show up as my best self. Taking care of me isn't selfish; it's essential.

Fortunately, resilience isn't just something you're born with—it's something you can build. Here are three powerful ways to strengthen your resilience and reclaim control over your mental and emotional well-being.

## 1. Stop Reading and Watching So Much News

It may sound extreme, but reducing your news consumption can be a game-changer. I'm not suggesting you live under a rock—staying informed is important. But the 24-hour news cycle is designed to be addictive, overwhelming, and often disheartening.

As a global keynote speaker, I'm expected to stay up to date on current events, especially when preparing for presentations. But when I'm not actively researching, I intentionally cut my news intake by 90%. The result? Lower stress, more mental clarity, and greater resilience in handling my work and personal life.

We weren't built to absorb non-stop information from every corner of the world. It's exhausting. If you feel constantly on edge, consider taking a break. Start small—try one news-free day per week. You might be surprised by how much lighter you feel.

If you find yourself craving updates, go ahead and check in. But if your goal is more freedom to think, relax, and recharge, cutting back on the news is a simple but effective strategy. Plus, you'll have more time to connect with people in real life—whether that's grabbing coffee with a friend, enjoying a peaceful walk, or having an uninterrupted meal with loved ones.

## 2. Take Time for Yourself—Without Guilt

If you're like most people, you can probably come up with a dozen reasons why you can't take time for yourself. But here's the truth: you need it, and you deserve it.

Life moves fast, and if you don't build in moments to pause, your stress levels will climb, and your resilience will weaken. Self-care isn't indulgent—it's necessary.

# Foster Personal Growth: Take Time for You

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I recommend scheduling at least four 15-minute "timeouts" per day. These short breaks allow you to reset, recharge, and regain a sense of balance. The key is to do something you enjoy—or even do nothing at all. Whether it's sitting in silence, listening to music, taking a short walk, or savoring a cup of coffee without distractions, these moments are invaluable.

If taking time for yourself every day feels impossible, start by making small adjustments. Even a few minutes can make a big difference. And if you never have time for yourself, it may be a sign that your schedule needs a serious reset.

Prioritizing yourself doesn't mean neglecting responsibilities—it means ensuring that you have the energy, focus, and resilience to handle them well.

## 3. Consider a Job or Career Change

Few things are as exhilarating—or as terrifying—as changing jobs or shifting career paths. But if you've been feeling stagnant, overwhelmed, or disconnected from your work, a change could be exactly what you need to strengthen your resilience.

Right now, we're in a pivotal moment. Across the U.S., people are reevaluating what they want from their careers. The pandemic forced many of us to adapt, rethink priorities, and embrace new ways of working. This period of transformation has opened unprecedented opportunities for those who are ready to make a move.

Here's the reality: there are more job openings than available talent. That means you have leverage. If you've been considering a shift—whether it's a new role, a different industry, or even starting your own business—now is the time to explore your options.

A career change isn't just about money or status—it's about finding fulfillment, reducing stress, and aligning your work with your values. If you're feeling stuck, take a step back and ask yourself:

- Am I happy in my current role?
- Do I feel valued and supported?
- Does my job align with my strengths and passions?
- Is my work-life balance sustainable?

If the answer to any of these is no, it might be time to start exploring new opportunities. Change is scary, but growth rarely happens without it.

## Final Thoughts: Build Resilience, Build a Better Life

Resilience isn't about avoiding challenges—it's about facing them with strength, clarity, and confidence. By watching less news, prioritizing yourself, and embracing career shifts when needed, you can create a life that feels more balanced, fulfilling, and in alignment with your values.

**Remember:** You deserve a life that energizes you, not one that drains you. Take time for yourself. Reconnect with what matters. And most importantly, trust that you have the power to navigate whatever comes next.



# Can Navigating Change Successfully REALLY Provide an Advantage?

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Embracing change versus preferring the status quo, or worse, hiding from it is a distinct advantage in today's high-paced world. It's the one constant in our professional and personal life. If you do your best to learn from it and make it part of the culture, you're far ahead of others.

Think about it, for the labor management industry, what differences have you and your team adjusted to over the years? New technology, customer expectations, external forces outside of your control, a feast or famine market – I could go on!

If you do your best to look ahead and to meet challenges head on with all your team working with each other rather than against the trends, your chances of winning business rather than treading water or losing market share are better.

Optimizing innovation efforts to satisfy and delight your customer is one way to identify emerging trends and hit (& exceed!) your sales goals.

## HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION SUPPORT AND EXPAND INNOVATION?

One area that needs to be nurtured every day is a positive work environment. This doesn't mean pizza Fridays and having a ping pong table in the break room. It is more about clear communications, understanding organizational and personal goals and a sense of trust that permeates the organization.

## DO YOU MEASURE STAFF SATISFACTION AND IF SO, ARE THE RESULTS SHARED AND TAKEN SERIOUSLY, MEANING ACTION OCCURS?

Looking at how we get things done is important too. If an organization is efficient and staff are productive, we can get more done with less effort. Taking a close look at processes and identifying areas of improvement collaboratively is one way to streamline operations. We need to be open to re-allocation of resources and even letting items go that aren't serving the team any longer.

## IS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT A PRIORITY FOR YOU AND YOUR TEAMS? DO TEAM MEMBERS HAVE THE ABILITY TO MODIFY WORKFLOWS AND UPDATE PROCESSES OR PROCEDURES WHEN NECESSARY?

Are you looking for a competitive advantage as a leader in the labor management industry? Personally, you can be flexible, proactive and confident. Your organization also needs to stay agile meaning their people, processes and technology needs to provide a balanced framework for meeting goals and being successful in our ever-changing environment.

Is it easy? (spoiler alert – no!) But it **IS** necessary.

# Can Navigating Change Successfully REALLY Provide an Advantage?

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Here's the final word on my 5 steps for success:

- ☐ **Supportive Workplace** - Sharing information, ideas and knowledge
- ☐ **In order to service others, you must take care of yourself.** Eat a little better, get some exercise, limit social media and phone usage.
- ☐ **Listen well to staff's concerns.** It takes practice
- ☐ **Engage your team.** Remember 38% of highly engaged employees are more productive!
- ☐ **Give individuals an "extra paid day" off**



# Parting Thoughts: Embracing Change, Leading with Purpose

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This keynote was designed to challenge the way you think about change, leadership, and resilience—both in your professional and personal life. My goal was to provide you with fresh insights and practical takeaways that shift perspectives, spark new ideas, and inspire action.

How you lead others and how you invest in yourself matters. Finding your grit to keep moving forward—no matter how small the steps—drives real progress. It's not always easy. Change is messy. It requires ongoing adjustments, but when embraced with intention, it leads to remarkable growth and success.

Today's leaders must bridge generations, leverage diverse skill sets, and cultivate environments where trust, collaboration, and open communication thrive. The way we do business has evolved, and continuous adaptation is the key to long-term success.

In an era where belonging, engagement, and collaboration are top priorities, you can set yourself—and your organization—apart. By creating cultures that empower, inspire, and retain top talent, you're not just building teams—you're shaping lasting careers and driving meaningful impact.

The future belongs to those who lead with vision, resilience, and the courage to evolve. Let's embrace the journey ahead—one step, one conversation, and one breakthrough at a time.

**If you ever need assistance implementing these concepts, remember you're not alone in this journey. I'm just a phone call away at 414.507.8008 or [scott@scottlesnick.com](mailto:scott@scottlesnick.com).**





## SCOTT LESNICK

Scott Lesnick is a globally recognized leadership keynote speaker who delivers powerful, engaging, and transformational presentations. Speaking at 30+ events annually, he captivates audiences with his dynamic storytelling, actionable insights, and ability to inspire meaningful change.

A sought-after author, Scott has penned the gripping memoir *Kidjacked – A Father's Story* and the critically acclaimed *Lifejacked: Life Lessons on Leadership*. His compelling messages on leadership, resilience, and navigating change have earned him the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation, an honor held by only 900 speakers worldwide.

Scott's personal and professional achievements further set him apart. He has delivered a TEDx Talk, inspiring audiences with his insights on overcoming obstacles with resourcefulness. A dedicated runner, he has covered an astounding 50,000 miles—the equivalent of circling the globe twice!

With 24 award-winning years leading sales teams at Shaw Industries, a Fortune 500 company under the Berkshire Hathaway umbrella, Scott brings real-world leadership expertise to his keynotes. His background in sales, business growth, and team development allows him to connect deeply with professionals across industries.