

# **BLUE-COLLAR LEADERSHIP® & TEAMWORK**

**30 Traits of High Impact Players**



**MACK STORY**  
**Blue-Collar Leadership® Series**

# Blue-Collar Leadership® & Teamwork: 30 Traits of High Impact Players

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Mack Story

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ISBN-10: 1722296534

ISBN-13: 978-1722296537

## DEDICATION

To the high impact player who made the most positive impact on my life and taught me the most about teamwork, my amazing wife Ria Story. You have always been and will always be the wind beneath my wings. You helped turn my Blue-Collar Leadership® idea into an amazing Blue-Collar Leadership® brand.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the high impact players I've been privileged to serve alongside. Many of the lessons I'm about to share were learned from you. Although you may not have literally taught the lessons, I still caught the lessons.

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# TRAIT 1

## BE GROWTH-ORIENTED

WHEN YOU GROW YOURSELF,  
YOU GROW YOUR INFLUENCE

*“Intellectual growth should commence at birth  
and cease only at death.” ~ Albert Einstein*

Why should you focus on growth? Because growth creates freedom and options, and your life will always be better with more freedom and more options. When the team creates more options for the organization, everyone will benefit. When the leaders create more options for the team, the team will benefit.

When you, your team, or your organization are out of options, life isn't getting better. It's getting worse.

When you grow, the team automatically grows. You can't grow yourself without growing your team because you are a part of the team. If you want the team to be better, the quickest way you can make that happen is to take the lead and get better yourself.

Too many people are goal-oriented. The problem with being goal-oriented is that when you reach your goal you're done. Mission accomplished. You no longer have a need to grow. Unfortunately, when this happens, most begin coasting and stop growing. The key is to be growth-oriented first and goal-oriented second. In this manner, you're always setting new goals to facilitate your overall mission: continued growth.

The foundation of growth is discipline. The foundation of discipline is sacrifice. Sacrifice creates the opportunity for growth, but it does not create the growth. When you sacrifice, you're giving up something such as time or money normally spent on other things and valued activities. Giving these things up doesn't cause you to grow. The sacrifice must be leveraged with discipline. You must have the discipline to use your recovered time and money to invest in your personal growth and development. This takes discipline. Only discipline will allow you to convert the sacrifice into growth.

SACRIFICE + DISCIPLINE = GROWTH

Charles Schulz remarked, "Life is like a ten-speed bike. Most of us have gears we never use." I agree. I meet a lot of people who aren't using all of their gears. Low impact players tend to settle on getting by instead of getting ahead. High impact players are always focused on climbing to the next level and beyond.

When it comes to growth, high impact players are focused not only on personal growth, but also on leadership development. They understand leadership in its simplest form is authentic influence which is based on a person's character, not their position, title, rank, or authority. High impact players see themselves and all of their teammates as leaders who should be developed.

All team members are required to develop their competency in order to do their job. But, seldom are team members required to develop their character. High impact players always do more than required. Reading leadership books, listening to leadership audios, and watching leadership videos are ways they grow themselves in an effort to position themselves to grow their team.

To help with my storytelling throughout this book, I want to introduce you to Blue-Collar Bob. He's not a real

person, but rather a character I've created. At times, you may see yourself in Bob. Other times, you may see those you know in Bob.

Like the rest of us, Bob gets it right sometimes. Other times, he gets it wrong. But either way, we can learn from Bob. If we will simply look for the lessons, we'll discover everyone is capable of teaching us something.

One morning, Bob noticed a quote posted on the bulletin board at work. He had never noticed quotes on the board before. "Wonder who put that there?" he thought as he began to read the words of Mark Twain, "I have never let my schooling interfere with my education."

Bob found Twain's words thought provoking. It took him a few minutes to figure out the meaning in Twain's message. Then, it finally hit him as he thought to himself, "Schooling and education are two completely different things. We get our formal schooling in traditional K-12 schools, technical colleges, and universities, but we get our 'education' throughout our lives."

Bob reflected on his life and realized he had been relying too much on his "schooling" and hadn't been focused enough on his "education." He thought to himself, "I haven't even read a book from cover to cover since I finished school and that was years ago." When Bob was no longer required to read books, he did what most people do. He stopped reading books.

Bob made his way to his work area and kept busy the rest of the day. However, Twain's words stayed with him. He was thinking about his "education" and wondered, "If I get serious about my 'education,' what will change? Can I improve? Should I improve? How can I improve?"

*"You don't have to be sick to get better."*

*~ Michael Josephson*

# Trait 2

## BE TRUSTWORTHY

YOUR CHARACTER WILL EITHER  
LAUNCH YOU OR LIMIT YOU

*“What you really are will speak so loudly that what you ‘claim’ you are will not be heard.”*

*~ Napoleon Hill*

With trust, we have much influence; without trust, we have little influence. With trust, team morale is high; without trust, team morale is low. With trust, we work together; without trust, we work separately. With trust, the mission is likely to be accomplished; without trust, the mission is likely to be compromised.

When it comes to high performing blue-collar teams, there’s one thing I know for certain: Trust is the one thing that impacts everything.

You can’t make someone trust you. I can’t make someone trust me. It simply isn’t possible. What is possible? Consistently making choices that make us trustworthy people. Ultimately, you must choose to be trustworthy; I must choose to be trustworthy.

Trust is the foundation upon which high impact teams thrive. Each player, regardless of their position, title, or rank is responsible for intentionally helping the team build a strong foundation of trust. The principles you’ll discover on these pages, if applied, will help anyone at any level become a high impact team player.

My blue-collar career started on the front lines of a manufacturing plant in 1988 operating a large, hot, dirty, and extremely oily vertical broach. I learned to operate many types of machines over the next 10 years. Then, I began to be promoted into various support roles where I continued to work with those on the front lines.

For the first 10 years, I had basically been an individual contributor on a big team. To succeed, all I had to do was meet or exceed my production goals while working by myself on my machine. I wasn't part of an official team or committee. Building trust for me was about getting individual results. I simply had to perform and produce.

When I began to be promoted, everything changed.

In the support roles, I had to work with and through others. I also started to be assigned to various types of teams. No longer was my success based primarily on my knowledge, skills, and abilities. To be effective, I had to establish trust while working with others which meant I had to be seen as trustworthy. And, others had to establish trust with me. Trust is a two-way street.

At that point in my career, my success began to be based on my ability to build relationships. My success started with me, but it was no longer about me. As the years progressed, I began accepting opportunities to lead teams. Not only did I have to continue building trust, but I had to start helping others learn to build trust.

Between 2005 and 2012, I logged over 11,000 hours in blue-collar industries leading leaders and their cross-functional teams through process improvement, organizational change, and cultural transformation. As a result, I learned many lessons from many people. I've written this book to help you become more valuable and successful as you think deeply about the choices that will make you a trustworthy high impact team player.

In 2008, I started reading leadership development and personal growth books daily to accelerate my own journey to the next level and beyond. In 2014, I started writing my own books to help people like you make a bigger impact. In 2016, I started writing books specifically for those in the blue-collar workforce who have traditionally been overlooked, underappreciated, and underdeveloped. All 12 of my books are filled with principles that will help you “Be Trustworthy.”

I’ve discovered the majority of those in the blue-collar workforce are hungry for development. Most have never been exposed to this type of content. This book is another attempt to feed those who are hungry. Those who want to intentionally turn it up a notch by focusing on developing the traits that lead to high trust relationships.

Trust is based on two things: 1) a person’s character; who they are; and 2) a person’s competency; what they know. Numerous studies have revealed our character is responsible for 87-90% of our ability to build trust, and our competency is responsible for only 10-13%. All of my books focus on character development. When it comes to trust, character counts.

“Be Trustworthy” is the most important trait. However, this one trait is based upon many other traits. In each of the following chapters, I’ll share a trait that will help you “Be Trustworthy.” There are seemingly endless character traits that will make you a trustworthy person. While leading thousands of blue-collar team members, I’ve validated these 30 key traits many times. Learn and embrace them, and you will “Be Trustworthy.”

*“I judge myself by my best intentions, but others judge me by my worst acts.” ~ Michael Josephson*

# TRAIT 3

## BE HUMBLE

YOUR LEVEL OF HUMILITY  
REVEALS YOUR LEVEL OF SECURITY

*“Humility is the mother of all virtues because humility acknowledges that there are natural laws and principles that govern the universe.*

*They are in charge. We are not.*

*Pride teaches us that we are in charge.*

*Humility teaches us to understand and live by principles, because they ultimately govern the consequences of our actions. If humility is the mother, courage is the father of wisdom. Because to truly live by these principles when they are contrary to social mores, norms, and values takes enormous courage.”*

*~ Stephen R. Covey*

My wife, Ria, had the privilege of speaking to a large group of prison wardens to kick off a nine month Transformational Leadership development program near San Francisco, California in January 2017. I was privileged and excited to also receive an invitation to attend the two day kick-off.

The focus of the entire program was to help the wardens learn how to grow and develop their support teams. Ultimately, the goal was for them to develop high impact players. The key to growing and developing high impact team players is to be a high impact team player

yourself which is exactly what the wardens would be focused on during the nine month program.

While we were there, we got to meet and invest some time with retired Prison Warden Burl Cain. Cain had been the warden at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola from 1995-2016. Angola was home to over 5,000 inmates at times and was once referred to as the bloodiest prison in America. However, Cain led an unprecedented transformation at Angola. As Dennis Shere, author of *Cain's Redemption*, wrote, "Angola is now known as a place of hope."

What I remember most about Warden Cain is his humility. Yes, he was the Warden. But more importantly, he was a high impact player on a high impact team. I'll never forget his simple message to the other wardens gathered there that day.

Cain said, "Be humble, so you don't stumble." That was Cain's personal motto. I saw him model it effortlessly for two days straight. When we're not humble, there's no doubt we're more likely to stumble.

When Cain took over Angola, he had too much pride. His pride not only had a negative impact on him, but it also negatively impacted his team. As Ezra Taft Benson stated so well, "Pride is concerned with who is right. Humility is concerned with what is right."

Fortunately for Warden Cain and his team, he quickly turned the corner by learning to set his pride aside and focus on doing what was right, not on being right.

Players who want to be seen as right are focused on themselves and have a "me" focus. Those focused on doing what's right are focused on others and have a "we" focus.

A team suffers when their efforts must revolve around a low impact player's pride and ego. The prideful player



also suffers. However, they often suffer in the dark. They're unaware of how much their character flaws are holding them back.

The low impact player doesn't realize how their influence is diminished as a result. Because those who are prideful and driven by ego tend to always be that way, they don't know what they don't know. They see humility as a weakness, not as a strength.

Too much pride and ego are indicators of insecurity. The most insecure among us are also the least humble among us. Insecure people try to prove something on the outside to make up for what's missing on the inside.

High impact players are always humble. They don't want credit. But, they do want to give credit to others. They don't want the spotlight on themselves and prefer to shine the spotlight on others.

Ria and I had the privilege of investing a full day training and developing a Blue-Collar CEO and his entire staff and manufacturing team recently. The moment I met the CEO, I knew he was a humble, high impact player. He was wearing the same uniform the front line team members were wearing. He spoke highly of those on the front lines and avoided speaking about himself. He sat through every development session, even those that were repeated, and took more notes than anyone else.

Humility has nothing to do with position, title, and rank. Humility has everything to do with character.

*“The best thing we can do is be who we are, whatever that is. We're all drawn to authenticity. We like people who are real. Sometimes real people are flawed, we're all flawed. I think we connect with people who are open, exposed, willing to admit things they're good at, things they're not good at, try to be humble, try to be collaborative.” ~ Bob Myers*

# TRAIT 4

## BE RESPONSIBLE

### MAKING THIS CHOICE GIVES YOU A VOICE

*“Total responsibility for failure is a difficult thing to accept, and taking ownership when things go wrong requires extraordinary humility and courage.”*

*~ Jocko Willink*

If we haven't done much or accomplished much, it's easier to remain humble. But, the higher we climb up the organizational chart or the higher we climb up the pay scale, the harder it is for many of us to remain humble. As high impact team players, it's our responsibility to choose to be humble regardless of our status or income. And if necessary, it's also our responsibility to learn what it truly means to be humble. Being humble is a choice high impact players make.

I believe as a whole the blue-collar workforce is naturally more humble simply because of who we are and where we come from. However, I also believe some who have climbed their way up from entry-level positions let success go to their heads.

Not letting my success go to my head is my responsibility. I want to remain a humble high impact player. That's on me. High impact team players always do more than is required, so I've also gone a step farther and made helping others do the same my responsibility.

Each of us is responsible for choosing our values and

those values will determine our circumstances and the impact we have, especially when it comes to teamwork.

Just as humility is sometimes a hard choice for those with a high position or status, taking responsibility is often a hard choice for those in a low position or status. But as I've learned over the years, taking responsibility seems to be a hard choice for many regardless of their title, position, rank, status, or income.

When it comes to teamwork, low impact players dodge responsibility like it's a deadly disease. They may disappear when a task is being addressed or begin to make excuses as to why they can't help and shouldn't be asked to help. Lack of responsibility creates distrust.

High impact players know a secret: When low impact players are whining, it's easy to start shining. They also know how to shine. It's actually pretty simple. They just listen for whining, and then step up and say, "I'll do it."

At that moment, the high impact player builds trust by simply taking responsibility. The next responsibility of the high impact player is to follow through and get results. If they do, they will build additional trust with the team and their leaders. If they don't, they will create distrust with the team and their leaders.

Leaders are ultimately responsible for making things happen. If they don't make things happen, it won't be long before they are replaced by someone else who will be given the same mission. High impact players know the quickest way to build trust with a leader is to help them get results, so that's what they focus on doing.

As they develop a reputation for helping their leaders get results, their influence also increases with other leaders. Because of their choice (taking responsibility and following through), they earn a voice. As time passes, high impact players are asked their opinion much more

often than low impact players.

As a result, high impact players begin to influence the leader's choices and the team's direction. Those who are willing to make things happen are also given more chances to make things happen. They're still on the team, but they're playing at a much higher level.

High impact players are never just along for the ride. They want to drive. They see the big picture. They don't shy away from responsibility. They wake up every day looking for an opportunity to shine.

Imagine a team full of low impact players where everyone is dodging responsibility on every front. The leader will be frustrated, and the team will be frustrated. And little, if anything, will be accomplished. Unfortunately, these types of teams are common. Depending on your circumstances, it may be too easy to imagine this team. If so, don't miss what's right in front of you: endless opportunities to shine.

Now imagine a very different team, one filled with high impact players. They could be given the exact same mission as the frustrated low impact team. However, no one would be frustrated. The mission would be accomplished. Instead of being focused on finding excuses, the entire team would be focused on finding a way to make it happen. In that case, everyone shines.

What's the major difference between the two teams above? Attitude. Low impact players tend to have a negative attitude. High impact players tend to have a positive attitude. Attitude is a choice. If we can choose to be positive or negative, why not choose to be positive?

*“Responsibility includes two important ideas – choosing right over wrong and accepting ownership for one’s conduct and obligations.” ~ Charles G. Koch*

# TRAIT 5

## BE POSITIVE

### THOSE WHO WHINE GET LEFT BEHIND

*“People have just two choices when it comes to their emotions: they can master their emotions or be mastered by them.” ~ John C. Maxwell*

Your emotions matter. They can make you or break you. Consider again where your authentic influence comes from: 87% character (who you are) and 13% competency (what you know). You can easily validate this by reflecting on what you’ve likely witnessed in the work place because people tend to be hired for what they know: their skills, knowledge, and abilities. However, they tend to be fired for who they are: their attitude, behavior, temper, etc.

When it comes to teamwork, emotions matter a lot because emotions are contagious. Negativity is the most contagious of all. It’s easy to catch and easy to spread.

The next time you go into a break room, lunch room, a meeting, or walk up to any group of people, simply listen for a few minutes and see if positivity or negativity has infected the group. The majority of the time, it’ll be negativity because negativity is highly contagious.

Negativity infects nearly every team to some degree, some much more than others. When you encounter a group infected with negativity, be careful. You don’t want to become infected too. Negativity will have a terrible

impact on your career. It reduces your income, makes you less likely to be promoted, minimizes the opportunities that will come your way, and decreases your influence.

When you hear the negativity coming from one person, pay close attention and see if the other people join in (low impact players) or if they attempt to spread some positivity (high impact players). High impact players are easy to spot in a negative crowd. They'll either be silent or "Be Positive."

In many blue-collar break rooms, lunch rooms, and on the factory floors of many manufacturing facilities across the country, I've discovered over the years the negative voices are always the loudest.

If a high impact player tries to spread a little positivity, they'll likely be bombarded with negativity from all the low impact players. Be prepared. You're likely to be outnumbered. That's just the way it is. High impact players are often in the minority.

As Daniel Goleman remarked, "Controlling impulses like frustration and anger is a crucial aspect of character." You can't be frustrated, angry, and positive at the same time. When you choose to "Be Positive," you are saying no to frustration and anger. When you choose to be frustrated and angry, you are saying no to being positive.

Several days had passed since Blue-Collar Bob had received the common-sense lesson on "schooling" and "education" from the legendary 1800's Mississippi River Boat Captain, Mark Twain. Bob was on his way to the bulletin board once again. He discovered something interesting on the board last time, so he thought he would swing by to see if anything new had been posted.

To Bob's surprise, Twain's quote had been taken down. But, it had been replaced with another quote.

Bob began to read these words from Jeffrey Gitomer,

“A positive attitude is a self-imposed blessing.”

Bob was often frustrated and angry as he worked hard on the front lines. He had a negative attitude because he didn't have much influence with his team: his boss and the co-workers he interacted with regularly. Bob had all kinds of ideas, but no one would listen to him, much less ask for his opinion.

As Bob walked away from the board and toward his work area, he repeated Gitomer's words, “A positive attitude is a self-imposed blessing.” He was trying to decide if the statement was true or not.

What Bob knew for sure was he didn't have a positive attitude. Bob went about his day as usual, glum and downcast. But, he couldn't quit thinking about the quote. Even after work, it was still on his mind. That night, he decided to change his attitude to test out the principle contained in the quote. He knew it wouldn't be easy, but he knew he was missing out on something. “Life shouldn't be so dreary and miserable,” he thought to himself, “I'll give it a try.”

The next day, Bob approached everyone with a smile and a hello instead of a frown and a growl. He was intentionally positive all day. It was hard, but he did it.

That evening Bob reflected on his day. He was still physically tired from the work, but he wasn't mentally tired from stress. Nothing on the outside had changed, but something on the inside had changed. For the first time in a long time, Bob had a good day. “That was a self-imposed blessing. Be positive.” he thought to himself.

*“When morale is low, the only way to get the ball rolling is to start pushing it yourself.”*

*~ John C. Maxwell*

# TRAIT 6

## BE FLEXIBLE

WHEN CHANGE HAPPENS,  
SOME THRIVE AND SOME TAKE A DIVE

*“Live out of your imagination, not your history.”  
~ Stephen R. Covey*

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CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“Facing reality can be painful and difficult, but  
the consequences of not confronting it are  
always far worse.” ~ Henry Cloud*

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Do you know about the [Special Blue-Collar Leadership® Offer](#)? Get complimentary copies of books with on site leadership speaking/training from Mack and Ria.

We spoke at Yale University’s School of Management  
on the topic of

*Blue-Collar Leadership®: Innovation in Talent Development.*

[Watch our entire 1 hour presentation here.](#)

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# TRAIT 7

## BE FOCUSED

MINIMIZING YOUR DISTRACTIONS  
MAXIMIZES YOUR RESULTS

*“Winners concentrate on winning.  
Losers concentrate on getting by.” ~ Truett Cathy*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Man’s basic vice...is the act of unfocusing his mind,  
the suspension of his consciousness, which is not  
blindness, but the refusal to see, not ignorance,  
but the refusal to know.” ~ Ayn Rand*

# TRAIT 8

## BE DISCIPLINED

GIVE YOURSELF A COMMAND  
AND FOLLOW THROUGH

*“Today is always the result of actions and decisions taken yesterday.” ~ Peter Drucker*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“In a culture of discipline, people do not have jobs; they have responsibilities.” ~ Jim Collins*

# TRAIT 9

## BE INTENTIONAL

ACTION TODAY LEADS  
TO OPTIONS TOMORROW

*“Small deeds done are better than  
great deeds planned.” ~ Peter Marshall*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“I will never have all of the answers, but that will not  
stop me. I will go with what I have.” ~ Jimmy Collins*

# TRAIT 10

## BE DRIVEN

PURPOSE CREATES FOCUS

*“Success comes to those who hustle while they wait.”  
~ Thomas Edison*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Success bases our worth on a comparison with others. Excellence gauges our value by measuring us against our own potential.” ~ John Johnson*

# TRAIT 11

## BE INSPIRED

GO WITHIN OR YOU WILL GO WITHOUT

*“I have never seen great performers who felt themselves to be out of control of their own performance, emotions, direction, purpose, decisions, beliefs, choices, or any other human faculties. They don’t blame others or external factors. The greats are not like lesser performers, who try to explain away their failure as being somehow caused, forced, or controlled by someone else.” ~ Henry Cloud*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“The thing that makes us love our jobs is not the work that we’re doing, it’s the way we feel when we go there.” ~ Simon Sinek*

# TRAIT 12

## BE PROUD

EXHIBIT CONFIDENCE WITHOUT ARROGANCE

*“Often, the most difficult ego to deal with is your own.”  
~ Jocko Willink*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“You will never get to the next level if you can’t  
embrace feedback about your performance  
at the current level.” ~ Henry Cloud*

# TRAIT 13

## BE BRAVE

DO THE RIGHT THINGS  
FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

*“Having the moral willpower to put ethical principles above self-interest and always do the right thing takes a lot of character, especially when no one else seems to be living up to such high standards.”*

*~ Michael Josephson*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Every time I see someone that says, ‘I have a weak leader,’ I always say, ‘Lucky you!’ Take advantage of that. LEAD!” ~ Jocko Willink*

# TRAIT 14

## BE TEACHABLE

EMBRACE A BEGINNER'S MINDSET

*“The most fundamental success factor is one’s mindset.” ~ Alan Weiss*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“If we become increasingly humble about how little we know, we may be more eager to search.”  
~ Sir Ian Templeton*



# TRAIT 15

## BE OPEN-MINDED

THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY

*“We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we are curious, and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”*

*~ Walt Disney*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“The successful man will profit from his mistakes and try again in a different way.” ~ Dale Carnegie*

# TRAIT 16

## BE APPROACHABLE

WHO YOU KNOW  
DETERMINES WHERE YOU GO

*“My success, personally and professionally, is based on my ability to connect and communicate. And, so is yours.” ~ Ria Story*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Relationships are about relating. If you don’t spend time relating with your team, there won’t be any relationship.” ~ Rob Waldman*

# TRAIT 17

## BE HELPFUL

WHAT YOU DO REVEALS WHO YOU ARE

*“We have to humble ourselves, and the way we do that is by serving other people.” ~ Tim Tebow*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“We all have the power to help many people, but do we have the courage to start with one?” ~ Tom Telesco*

# TRAIT 18

## BE OBSERVANT

WITH PEOPLE, THE SMALL THINGS  
ARE THE BIG THINGS

*“People who are empathic are more attuned to the subtle social signals that indicate what others need or want.” ~ Daniel Goleman*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“A basic truth of life is that people will always move toward anyone who increases them and away from those who devalue them.” ~ John C. Maxwell*

# TRAIT 19

## BE ENGAGED

### ENGAGEMENT LEADS TO INVOLVEMENT

*“I am responsible for taking action, asking questions, getting answers, and making decisions.*

*I won’t wait for someone to tell me.*

*If I need to know, I’m responsible for asking.*

*I have no right to be offended that I didn’t ‘get this sooner.’ If I’m doing something others should know about, I’m responsible for telling them.” ~ Garry Ridge*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“Being proactive will allow you to stand out among your peers as someone who is a leader or who has leadership potential.” ~ Ria Story*

# TRAIT 20

## BE PRESENT

MINE THE GOLDEN NUGGETS;  
DUMP THE DIRT

*“If I read a book that cost me \$20 and I get one good idea, I’ve gotten one of the greatest bargains of all time.” ~ Tom Peters*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Know how to listen and you will profit even from those who talk badly.” ~ Plutarch*

# TRAIT 21

## BE UNDERSTANDING

SEEK TO UNDERSTAND WHAT OTHERS  
ARE SEEING AND FEELING

*“Empathy, another ability that builds on emotional self-awareness, is the fundamental ‘people skill.’”  
~ Daniel Goleman*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“When we listen deeply to the other person, we are listening to the words they say and the words they don’t say. We are listening to the feelings they are expressing.” ~ Ria Story*

# TRAIT 22

## BE COMPETENT

LEVERAGE STRENGTHS;  
IGNORE WEAKNESSES

*“Making strengths productive is much more than an essential of effectiveness. It is a moral imperative. To focus on weakness is not only foolish; it is irresponsible.” ~ Peter Drucker*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“It’s not more knowledge, it’s not more education we need, and it’s not more facts. It’s a better use of what we already have that we need to have.”  
~ Napoleon Hill*



# TRAIT 23

## BE CERTAIN

DO YOU KNOW?  
OR, DO YOU THINK YOU KNOW?

*“Don’t speak with certainty on an issue of which  
you are unsure!” ~ John C. Maxwell*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Your pride will blind you to what you  
most need to learn.” ~ Paul Akers*

# TRAIT 24

## BE MOTIVATIONAL

MOTIVATION LEADS TO INSPIRATION

*“Logic helps people to think,  
but emotion urges them to act.” ~ Alan Weiss*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Lead and people will follow;  
point and people will run.” ~ Paul Akers*

# TRAIT 25

## BE INSPIRATIONAL

INSPIRATION LEADS TO ADMIRATION

*“There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself.” ~ Lundin, Paul, & Christensen*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“The needs of large-scale organizations have to be satisfied by common people achieving uncommon performance.” ~ Peter Drucker*

# TRAIT 26

## BE AWARE

UNTIL YOU'RE AWARE, YOU CAN'T BEWARE

*“All lasting growth requires awareness. Unfortunately, if you lack awareness, then you don’t know that you are unaware. It’s a blind spot. You don’t know what you don’t know, and you can’t see that you are unable to see.” ~ John C. Maxwell*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“You can’t make the other fellow feel important in your presence if you secretly feel that he is a nobody.”  
~ Les Giblin*

# TRAIT 27

## BE CAREFUL

SOME WILL LIFT YOU UP;  
SOME WILL TEAR YOU DOWN

*“If man chooses irrational values, he switches his emotional mechanism from the role of his guardian to the role of his destroyer.” ~ Ayn Rand*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“It’s the relationships we build and the people whom we trust that give us the courage to take risks and make ourselves better.” ~ Rob Waldman*

# TRAIT 28

## BE OPTIMISTIC

HOPE ISN'T A STRATEGY,  
BUT IT'S NEEDED TO DEVELOP ONE

*“People who are optimistic see a failure as due to something that can be changed so that they can succeed next time around, while pessimists take the blame for failure, ascribing it to some lasting characteristic they are helpless to change.”*

*~ Daniel Goleman*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Most people will achieve their greatest success one step beyond what looked like their greatest failure.”*

*~ Brian Tracy*

# TRAIT 29

## BE REALISTIC

YOUR VALUES ARE THE FOUNDATION  
OF YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES

*“Values are not simply posters on a wall. In order for a culture to be strong, your values must be clear and your values must be lived.” ~ Simon Sinek*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Aspiring to greatness is easy, achieving it isn’t.”  
~ Ria Story*

# TRAIT 30

## BE RELENTLESS

UNTIL YOU QUIT, YOU HAVEN'T FAILED

*“If we succeed, it will not be because of what we have, but it will be because of what we are; not because of what we own, but rather because of what we believe.”*  
~ Lyndon B. Johnson

CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“It’s always too soon to quit, and it’s always easier to succeed at what you’ve started than to quit early and fail.”* ~ Truett Cathy

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Mack has also written [Blue-Collar Leadership®: Leading from the Front Lines](#), [Blue-Collar Leadership® & Supervision: Unleash Your Team’s Potential](#), and [Blue-Collar Kaizen: Leading Lean and Lean Teams](#). As of 2018, [Mack](#) and his wife, [Ria](#), have published [22 books on leadership development and personal growth](#).



We spoke at Yale University's School of Management on the topic of *Blue-Collar Leadership®: Innovation in Talent Development*. [Watch the entire 1 hour presentation here.](#)

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If you're willing to invest in your  
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~Mack Story

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*"My first words are, GET SIGNED UP! This training is not, a stress, not your everyday leadership seminar!" Sam, VP & COO*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mack's story is an amazing journey of personal and professional growth. He began his career in manufacturing on the front lines of a machine shop. He grew himself into upper management and found his niche in lean manufacturing and along with it, developed a passion for leadership development.

Mack has logged over 11,000 hours leading cross-functional blue-collar leaders and their teams through various types of process improvement, organizational change, and cultural transformation.

Mack is also the author of *Defining Influence*, *10 Values of High Impact Leaders*, *Change Happens*, *10 Foundational Elements of Intentional Transformation*, *Maximize Your Potential*, *Maximize Your Leadership Potential*, and *Who's Buying You?*. He's an inspiration for people everywhere as an example of achievement, growth and personal development. His passion inspires people all over the world! [Listen to Audio Book samples here.](#)

A few highlights: In 2013, Mack participated in the Cultural Transformation of Guatemala with John C. Maxwell where more than 20,000 Guatemalan leaders were trained; In 2014, Les Brown invited Mack to speak at his event in Los Angeles, CA; In 2018, Mack was invited to speak at Yale University.

Contact Mack at 334-728-4143 or [mack@mackstory.com](mailto:mack@mackstory.com) for [Professional Leadership Development](#), [Keynote Speaking](#), and Cultural Enhancement/Transformation.

### [TopStoryLeadership.com](http://TopStoryLeadership.com)

Mack's wife, [Ria](#), is also an author and speaker with [an amazing personal story of overcoming seven years of extreme sexual abuse](#) by her father and others from age 12-19.

### [RiaStory.com](http://RiaStory.com)