

The Wonderful World of Power Skills: *Achieving Exceptional Performance*

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Housekeeping

- Informal and comfortable environment
- Support and learn from one another
- Let's make this a great experience
- 10-minute breaks on top of each hour



Introductions

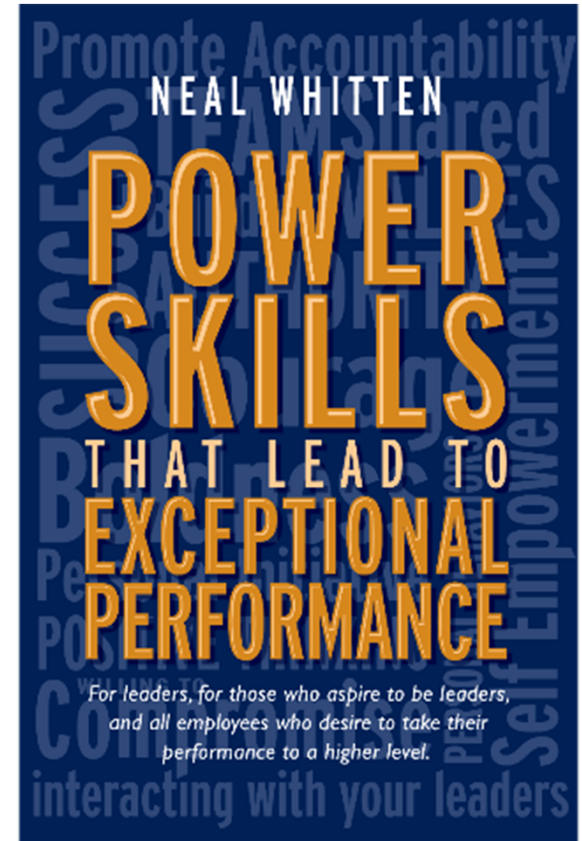
(If time permits)

- Attendees
 - Name?
 - Located?
 - Company?
 - Briefly, what do you do?
 - Briefly, what is your objective for being here?
- Neal



Learning objectives

- Identify **Power Skills** that can take your performance to a higher level
- Learn how to think and act effectively for success
- Build a **Power Skills** foundation for an organization that can result in continuously and holistically evolving
- Net: Achieving exceptional performance both for you and for your organization
- Based on my new book



Seminar audience

- For project managers, leaders, and aspiring leaders who want to take their professional and personal performance to a higher level
- For all members of a project, team or organization in helping them become more productive, accountable and valuable contributors



Agenda

- Introduction to *Power Skills*
- Foundational *Power Skills*
- *Bonus:* Introduction to 3 greatly beneficial exercises
- Identify your top 3 takeaways



Introduction to ***Power Skills***



What are *Power Skills*?

- *Power Skills* include soft skills, people skills, behavioral skills, personality traits,...
- *Power Skills* reminds me that I have the power to perform if I choose to take it
- *Power Skills* are personal; they are about how you choose to express yourself, both inwardly and outwardly
- *Power Skills* are a top asset in today's ever-changing world
- *Power Skills* are the skills of success



Newsflash!

- We all have great potential to achieve things that are most important to us... through exceptional performance
- Most of us fall far short from being the best we can
- We don't know how to think and act effectively
- This workshop reveals how to do just that!



But there's more!

- If these **Power Skills** are taught and nurtured to all members of an organization, I assert:
 - Your organization will holistically grow and prosper, and make necessary self-corrections along the way
 - Changes will originate and be placed into practice from the bottom up—not through top-down management
- Adopting these **Power Skills** can lead to exceptional performance both for individuals and for their organizations



What does exceptional performance look like for an individual?

- New company of 25 employees
- All employees have been trained in the *Power Skills* revealed in this workshop
- 5 project teams of 5 members each (including a PM/team)
- Each team is building a separate product
- Something new for company: All products must work with one another
- PM Maria calls meeting of other 4 PMs
- Architect Review Board is created with one tech rep from each team
- Board ensures interfaces across products are defined, designed, enforced, and any issues resolved



What just happened?

- A major process was initiated without management intervention
- Maria was not directed to create the Architect Review Board
- Maria did so because she had to for her product to work with the other products
- Maria practiced self-reliance and exemplified exceptional performance
- The fast-growing company will continue to grow holistically and efficiently because each employee had been trained to think and act accordingly



Several *Power Skills* are in play by Maria

- Think for yourself
- Mind your own business first
- Think like a leader
- Routinely practice boldness and courage
- Understand and practice empowerment

These *Power Skills* and many others will be described in this workshop



Dependency on management is too high

As an organization grows, it is notoriously common for:

- Individuals to become more dependent on their bosses and coworkers for direction
- Processes to become entangled in excessive bureaucracy
- Agility to think and perform tends to go out the proverbial window
- Individuals to increasingly believe that one person cannot make a significant difference
- The burden of growth and accountability for the organization to be placed on the backs of management
- Individuals to lack sufficient **Power Skills** training



What should happen?

- Most organizations are top heavy with too many managers at all levels
- Parent-to-child relationship commonly in play does not work and no one wants it
- With proper training, more responsibility and accountability should be transferred into the non-manager ranks
- The result will be that organizations will grow naturally, become far more efficient, morale will increase, products and services will improve, and attrition will likely slow



Power Skills

- For all members of an organization, both management and nonmanagement
- Must be understood and practiced for both individuals and organizations to perform at their best
- The foundational ***Power Skills*** are introduced in this workshop
- Most people do not execute these ***Power Skills*** effectively either because of being unaware of them or because some ***Power Skills*** can be difficult to implement
- Anyone can learn to successfully perform these ***Power Skills*** with sufficient practice
- ***Power Skills*** give you the real power to get your job done effectively and efficiently
- It places the accountability for your actions squarely on you
- When you unleash this power in both the nonmanagement and management ranks, careers and the organization can prosper like never before



This workshop: What's in it for you?

- Can dramatically benefit both your career and your life
- It doubles as a mentor to help guide you through your journey
- I invite you to come along for a potentially transformative and game-changing ride in your personal pursuit of the adventure called life



Warning!

- Some of these **Power Skills** may initially cause you to exceed your comfort zone and your palms may sweat and your heart may race
- Don't expect to master them all overnight
- It's okay not to embrace them all
- The more **Power Skills** you adopt, the greater the benefit to you and your career
- Understanding these **Power Skills** will help you determine where your performance and career are heading and what you can do to deliberately change your trajectory
- I like you just the way you are
- Embrace these behaviors because that's what **YOU** want



Foundational

Power Skills



The book introduces three types of *Power Skills*

1. Foundational
2. Team related: shared values
3. Interacting with your leaders

This workshop focuses on the *foundational* ***Power Skills***



Foundational *Power Skills*

- 24 of the most important leading-edge, best-practice, results-oriented *Power Skills* to promote your professional and personal success
- These *Power Skills* can be called upon to help you through nearly any situation or event
- Your personal limitations at work and across your life are directly affected by your willingness and tenacity to deliberately embrace and execute on these *Power Skills*
- Share testimonials where your bold personal initiatives made a difference (if time permits)



24 foundational *Power Skills* divided into five categories

1. *Be your own bold self*
2. Take care of current business
3. Be a role model by your leadership
4. Use constructive interactions to improve
5. Be your best whole person

Let's look at the *Power Skills* in the first category...



Be your own bold self

1. Break the rules occasionally
2. Never avoid necessary confrontation
3. Routinely practice boldness and courage
4. Think for yourself
5. Do not allow what others think about you to be more important than what you think about yourself



Break the rules occasionally

- *Workplace rules are made for 95% of employees 95% of the time. (I'm not talking about breaking ethical or legal rules.)*
Pat McCarty*
- Exceptional performance requires pushing the envelope
- *Being responsible sometimes means “pxxxxxg” people off.*
Colin Powell
- Last time you were confronted for exceeding your authority?
- In most cases, it is better to beg forgiveness than to ask permission



* *The Gift of Wisdom: Lessons for a Lifetime*, by Neal Whitten

Break the rules occasionally (cont.)

— *Example* —

- Escalation path
 - Voicemail from Cedric
 - Escalation to Wally, 2nd level Manager
 - Escalation to Debi, Director
 - Escalation to Danica, Division Director
 - Escalation to Riggs, VP
 - Surprising VP at airport
- Breaking perceived rules
- Immediately afterwards, I informed my boss



Never avoid necessary confrontation

- Always give problems the sense of urgency and importance they deserve
- How you deal with conflict defines the difference in being the best or being a wannabee
- ***Example: Compare 3 PMs***
 - Anthony – Sr PM
 - Beth – New hire; Masters in Project Management
 - Carlos – Sr PM



Never avoid necessary confrontation (cont.)

- ***Example: Molly and Michelle negotiate***
- Conflict hardly ever as bad as we imagine it will be
- Do not be intimidated by others
- Strive for the best business decision
- Strive for a win-win
- I never run from conflict



Routinely practice boldness & courage

- ...to be a consistently effective leader
- *Boldness definition: The act of responding to a situation in a manner that may be viewed as daring to some but is essential to effectively address the issue at hand*
- Boldness is not being rude, reckless, insensitive, arrogant or obnoxious; these behaviors are never acceptable
- **Example: Picture two “identical” people...**



Routinely practice boldness & courage (cont.)

- *Courage definition: The act of confronting a fear—something that we may be afraid of—but we choose to face, nonetheless*
- Too little courage? Fake it!
- Exercise: Hand on head...
- *Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage.*

Anais Nin, French-born U.S. writer



Think for yourself

- Challenge tradition, authority and the status quo in a professional and mature manner
- Routinely question your own behaviors and actions



Think for yourself (cont.)

— *Example* —

- Kiara – senior Manager of Testing
 - Q1: What is a tester's role?
 - Q2: Is tester accountable for quality delivered to production?
 - Q3: Is tester responsible for quality delivered to her?
- You are responsible for the quality and timeliness of a delivery to you!



Do not allow what others think about you...

- ...to be more important than what you think about yourself
- Listen for any helpful snippets but remain in control of you
- Being liked is over-rated; being respected is not
- ***Example: Parable of cat chasing its tail***



Take care of current business

6. Manage daily to your top three priorities
7. Mind your own business first
8. Live in your present moments
9. Don't make it personal or take it personally
10. Embrace integrity in all that you do



Manage daily to the top 3 priorities

- If I were to put you on the spot...
- To-do list
- Work off in 2-3 days
- 30 minutes or more available
- What if more than one project?
- What if never work on top 3 that day?
- They define your value, contributions and, ultimately, your career
- #1 reason why projects fail



Manage daily to the top 3 priorities (cont.)

— *Example* —

- I get a call from a senior VP of a large US-based company
- Inherited project 6 weeks ago
- Expected to be 11 months and about 60 members
- Currently 3+ years and 500+ members
- No clue when project will end
- Asked if I would turn project around
- 2-day project review
- Top 3 problems (actually 5)
- 75 additional problems



Mind your own business first

- When you go to work each day, behave as if you own the business and that business is defined by your domain of responsibility
- *Domain of responsibility: Includes all responsibilities and commitments that fall within the scope of your assignment. It is the area for which you are accountable*
- You are a businessperson first
- Focus first on your assignment
- The success of your assignments strengthens the success of your company



Mind your own business first (cont.)

— *Example* —

- You own the company
- 10 projects
- 10 project managers
- Project#1 is run by Matt; 30% of revenue next year
- Other 9 projects are equally weighted at about 8% of revenue each
- What do you say at a meeting of all 10 PMs about how each should respond if asked to help Matt should his project get in trouble?



Live in your present moments

- Present moments are all you have
 - The past does not exist
 - The future does not exist
- Fully engage in your present moments
 - Remove negative emotions of worry and guilt



Live in your present moments (cont.)

— *Example* —

Conference call and recovering from a mistake

- Mentoring in blocks of 30 minutes
- Vijay requested 2 blocks
- Knock on door... Relax a moment
- I suggested 4 actions:
 - Admit you made a mistake
 - State your plan of action – accountable
 - State your plan so it does not repeat – professional
 - Let it go!
- What would you have done?



Live in your present moments (cont.)

— *Another example* —

- Project manager of a sizeable, high-profile project
- Boss informs me I have a meeting with a HQ executive in 1 hour
- 30 second sweat moment
- 59 minutes and 30 seconds to prepare
- Stayed in my present moments and prepared the best I could
- When you come to work, concentrate in the now, not the past or the future



Don't make it personal or take it personally

- It's all about what's best for the business
- Don't allow others to turn a business issue into a personal issue



Don't make it personal or take it personally (cont.)

Examples:

- A coworker disagrees with you on an issue
- You lost your issue in an escalation
- You view that your promotion is overdue
- Two team members are unable to resolve an issue among themselves



Embrace integrity in all that you do

- *Integrity: Knowing the difference between right and wrong and choosing the right action*
- Your integrity is indicative of your character
- Most of you will encounter illegal or unethical behavior at least a half-dozen times in your career; it may not be common, but it is not uncommon
- What to do?
 - Distinguish right from wrong
 - Never support improper behavior



Embrace integrity in all that you do (cont.)

— *Example* —

When confronted with illegal or unethical behavior, you have several choices which include:

- Do nothing
- Mitigate the situation
- Distance yourself
- Be a whistle-blower
- Be an anonymous whistle-blower



Be a role model by your leadership

- 11. Think like a leader
- 12. Treat others as you would like to be treated
- 13. Trust but verify; Inspect what you expect
- 14. Understand and practice empowerment
- 15. Treat all project members equally
- 16. Promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity



Think like a leader

- Most cherished asset?
- It's not about the ability of those around you to lead; it's about your ability to lead, regardless of what is happening around you
- Effective leaders look for solutions
- Leaders foretell a company's success



Think like a leader (cont.)

— *Example* —

- David works for me
- David is a PM
- Project failed
- David declares:
 - It wasn't my fault
 - There was nothing I could do about it
- If it is to be, it is up to me
- Effective leaders look for solutions



Treat others as you would like to be treated

- We are remarkably similar even though we can look very different and come from diverse cultural backgrounds
- We have great aspirations and high needs
- We are high maintenance whether we like it or not or admit it or not
- *Golden Rule: Treat others as you would like to be treated*
- There is no better rule to follow when working with or serving others
- Practice taking the high road
- In most cases, your behavior will be reciprocated
- *I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.*

Maya Angelou, American poet and civil rights activist



Treat others as you would like to be treated (cont.)

— *Examples* —

Practices to strive for:

- Return most phone calls by the end of the day
- Return most emails/messages by the end of the day
- Arrive to meetings on time, including yours
- Speak up if you disagree and provide support if you do agree
- Meet your commitments
- Don't escalate an issue without first attempting to work it out
- Do not speak ill of others unless privately with that person
- Do not lie or distort the truth
- Do not take things personal or make them personal



Trust but verify; Inspect what you expect

- Insist on metrics, checks and balances and other tools
- Blind trust can be a huge mistake
- **Example**
 - Project originally planned for 8 months; 16 months have passed
 - Performed project review
 - New plan estimated complete in 6 more months
 - One month later, I asked PM top 3 priorities
 - Top priority was to validate product requirements—a 6-week activity with 2 weeks remaining; it was 4 weeks late
- If you are being micromanaged, you invited it
 - If you don't inspect the work of others as needed, your work will become the focus of inspection
- Don't trust anyone, question everything, assume nothing
- Listen to your great instincts
- It's not personal; it's business



Understand and practice empowerment

- Empowerment – overused word; underused concept:
 - Understanding your job
 - Taking ownership of your job
 - Doing whatever is necessary—within legal and ethical parameters—to accomplish that job



Understand and practice empowerment (cont.)

— *Example* —

- Client in Germany
- Past attendee: Heidi
- Needed discussion and approval from inaccessible Group Manager
- Fold-up chair at GM's car
- Use good judgement on safety and risk



Treat all project members equally

- Projects can be made up of at least four diverse groups:
 - Company personnel
 - Client personnel
 - Vendors
 - Contractors
- Imperative that they are treated the same
- Everyone and every group is held accountable



Treat all project members equally (cont.)

— *Example* —

- Project consists of members from all 4 groups
- Project completes substantially late
- Client brings litigation to PM's company
- PM respectfully confronts client executive
- PM says he knows that client team butters his bread so gave it some slack
- Client executive says he butters the bread, not client team
- A chain is only as strong as its weakest link



Promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI)

- *Diversity: Recognizing and accepting the inherent differences among people. It's less about what makes people different and more about understanding, accepting, and valuing those differences.*
- *Equity: About creating opportunity and advancement for all those different people. Caution: It's also about fairness and treating everyone justly.*
- *Inclusion: The extent to which team members, employees, and other people feel a sense of belonging and value within a given organizational setting. It's a workplace culture that reaches out to all people.*

Extracted from Ideal website: [Ideal.com/diversity-equity-inclusion/](https://www.ideal.com/diversity-equity-inclusion/)



Promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity (cont.)

- Benefits of promoting DEI:
 - Employees feel included
 - More engaged
 - Feel more appreciated and respected
 - Commitment and trust increases
 - Work smarter with higher quality work
 - Increased morale
 - Magnet for diverse clients

Drawn from 10 Benefits of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace, August 11, 2021, www.themissionhr.com

- Workplace and world are changing fast
- Changes often occur because of business demands, but DEI benefits humanity as well



Promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity (cont.)

As a leader, you are in a perfect position to promote DEI:

- Giving each team member an equal opportunity to fulfill team member roles and responsibilities
- Holding team members equally accountable for their assignments
- Listen to all team members, not just vocal ones
- Recognizing and rewarding all team members fairly
- Demonstrating no special treatment for any team members
- Soliciting ideas from entire team for creating shared values
- Being humble in acknowledging that you have more to learn and are open to other views



Use constructive interactions to improve

- 17. Seek out a mentor
- 18. Evaluate yourself daily
- 19. Promote mutual relationships
- 20. Treat your customer as if it matters



Seek out a mentor

- Best method of learning the application of a profession:
mentor – trusted counselor
- Have you ever wished you had a mentor?
- Most mentees have the right answer
- **Example**
 - Major aerospace company set to build next gen commercial aircraft
 - Would I be a great candidate?
 - My background



Evaluate yourself daily

- At the start of each day, spend a few minutes of quiet time evaluating your performance from the day before:
 - List top three things you could have done better
 - List top three things you did that you were especially pleased with
 - Identify what you can do today (the next day) to apply those lessons
- Immediate self-assessment can help you recover from missteps while the trail is still warm
- Imagine your performance a year after evaluating yourself daily
- *Nothing so conclusively proves a man's ability to lead others as what he does from day to day to lead himself.*

Thomas J. Watson, industrialist, entrepreneur, former IBM chairman



Promote mutual relationships

- When relationships are strong, more can get done in less time and with less stress
- ***Examples to build stronger relationships***
 - Make lunch dates once or twice a week
 - Briefly linger after some group meetings
 - Schedule time to network and develop relationships
 - Volunteer assistance
 - Do not blindside
 - Refrain from blaming others
 - Keep your commitments
 - Admit when you make a mistake or are wrong
 - Don't talk bad about others
 - Acknowledge the contributions of others
 - Do something daily that can strengthen a relationship



Treat your customer as if it matters

- As if the future of your company and your employment rests upon your ability to satisfy your customer on the transaction being performed right now
- *It's all about: Have you satisfied the customer with the product or service you provided?*
- **Example**
 - Julie is PM
 - External customer
 - 10-month schedule; 10 team members
 - Invites customer rep to weekly project meetings
 - Monthly, meets with senior customer person
 - Quarterly, administers a survey (next slide)



Treat your customer as if it matters (cont.)

Sample survey

1. Are you satisfied that you are sufficiently kept informed of project-related information important to you?
2. Are you satisfied with the client-provider relationship?
3. Are you satisfied with the product quality being produced?
4. Are you satisfied with the change control process?
5. Are you satisfied with the management of the budget?
6. Are you satisfied that regulatory issues are under control?
7. Are you satisfied with the success of the project to date?
8. What is your risk forecast in terms of achieving the delivery date as it is currently scheduled?
9. What are your top three concerns?
10. What are your top three areas of satisfaction?
11. Any additional comments?



Be your best whole person

- 21. Be a champion for work-life balance
- 22. Have fun in your work
- 23. Decide who you choose to be
- 24. Be a good actor



Be a champion for work-life balance

- *Don't put off the important and fun things until later. Later can have a habit of never arriving.*

Pat McCarty, retired senior project executive IBM

- Work-life balance: no right or wrong
- Can change year-to-year; even day-to-day
- About achieving an acceptable harmony between your work life—or career—and your personal life
- With technology, balance can seem more elusive than ever



Be a champion for work-life balance (cont.)

- Poor work-life balance:
 - Unhealthy levels of stress and unhappiness
 - At risk: personal relationships, your career, and development as a person, to name a few
 - You run the risk of burning out and hating your job, maybe even yourself
 - One day you realize you're not happy with your life
- Never too late to drive towards the balance you most desire
- Ideas for your consideration
 - Put yourself first (airplane, care-giver)
 - Protect your private time (catching your breath, recharging your energy, reach a level of understanding and acceptance of yourself)
 - “Me” time (reserve 1-2 hours/day)
 - Sometimes doing nothing can be what your health and life needs
 - Regular exercise, adequate sleep, nurturing diet



Have fun in your work

- You spend a huge portion of your waking life at work
- Finding fun in your job:
 - Benefits productivity
 - Increases motivation
 - Reduces stress
 - Makes day go faster
 - Boosts career enjoyment
- Two paths
 - Fun activities
 - Personal mindset



Have fun in your work (cont.)

- Fun activities:
 - Celebrate achievements
 - Casual Fridays
 - Build a rec room
 - Friendly competition
 - Set aside a fun day
- Personal mindset:
 - Embrace gratitude
 - Initiate workplace relationships
 - Help others
 - Improve your value to the organization
 - Own your attitude
- Fernando was asked: *Are you having fun?*



Decide who you choose to be

- Then muster the courage to walk the thought
- You are who you perceive yourself to be; your vision becomes your reality
- Things happen for a reason
- Your performance is based on how you think
- Live the life you most imagine
- *If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams and endeavors to live the life he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.*



Henry David Thoreau, American writer, philosopher, and naturalist

Be a good actor

- First decide who you choose to be
- Now focus on being a good actor to transform that vision into reality
- Be convincing; do so with passion and conviction
- Learn to manage your emotions
- Here's the process:
 1. Think about a behavior to adopt
 2. Then act on that thought to replace an old behavior with the more desirable behavior



Be a good actor (cont.)

Example: Take a ride-along with me

- Reviews of projects in trouble
- Typically, 10-20 people in review meeting
- I know less than anyone about the project
- My ability to be a quick study is on display
- My credibility as a project reviewer is on the line
- Potential some people will be embarrassed
- People can withdraw or be defensive
- I must deal with a wide range of personalities
- I must pace to complete review on time



Be a good actor (cont.)

- How do I cope under the pressure and stress?
 - Think for yourself
 - Never avoid necessary confrontation
 - Don't make it personal or take it personally
 - Routinely practice boldness and courage
 - Do not allow what others think about you...
 - Live in your present moments
 - Embrace integrity
 - Trust but verify; inspect what you expect
 - Treat others as you would like to be treated
 - Think like a leader
 - Seek out a mentor
 - Evaluate yourself daily
- *I know I can do this.* Confidence and competence increased with practice.



Once again: *Warning!*

- Some of these **Power Skills** may cause you to exceed your comfort zone
- Don't expect to master them all overnight
- The more behaviors you adopt, the greater the benefit to you and your career
- Understanding these **Power Skills** will help you determine where your performance and career are heading and what you can do to deliberately change your trajectory



Power Snippets

Foundational *Power Skills* that Lead to Exceptional Performance



FOUNDATIONAL POWER SKILLS

These Power Skills can dramatically benefit your career and your life.

Be Your Own Bold Self

1. ***Break the rules occasionally.*** Oftentimes, you will find that following conventional rules will not effectively or efficiently solve an issue.
2. ***Never avoid necessary confrontation.*** Always give problems the sense of urgency and importance they deserve.
3. ***Routinely practice boldness and courage to be a consistently effective leader.*** Your behavior drives your success.
4. ***Think for yourself.*** Challenge tradition, authority, and the status quo in a professional and mature manner. Routinely question your own behaviors and actions.
5. ***Do not allow what others think about you to be more important than what you think about yourself.*** Listen for helpful snippets but remain in control of you.

Take Care of Current Business

6. ***Manage daily to your top three priorities.*** They define your value and contributions and, ultimately, your career.
7. ***Mind your own business first.*** Behave as if you own the business and your business is defined by your domain of responsibility.
8. ***Live in your present moments.*** Don't dwell on yesterday. Admit mistakes, learn from them, apply those lessons going forward... and move on. And don't worry about the future. Plan for it but live fully in the now.
9. ***Don't make it personal or take it personally.*** It's all about what's best for business.
10. ***Embrace integrity in all that you do.*** Listen to your inner voice and treat it as the wise and trusted friend it is.

Be a Role Model by Your Leadership

11. ***Think like a leader.*** It's not about the ability of those around you to lead; it's about your ability to lead, regardless of what is happening around you.
12. ***Treat others as you would like to be treated.*** You will be remembered and revered for how you made others feel.
13. ***Trust but verify; Inspect what you expect.*** Strive to build trust among project stakeholders, but insist on metrics, checks and balances, and other tools to ensure outcomes are being met.

“Ideas to help you become more successful.”

FOUNDATIONAL POWER SKILLS (cont.)

These Power Skills can dramatically benefit your career and your life.

14. ***Understand and practice empowerment.*** Understand your job, take ownership of it, and do whatever is necessary — within legal and ethical parameters — to accomplish it.
15. ***Treat all project members equally.*** All project members, regardless of where they come from or to whom they report, must be held accountable for their commitments.
16. ***Promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity.*** Benefits include employees are more engaged, feel more appreciated and respected, and their commitment, trust, and morale increase. However, DEI must be implemented fairly and justly.

Use Constructive Interactions to Improve

17. ***Seek out a mentor.*** We can learn far more and far faster when we can draw strength from those who have gone before us.
18. ***Evaluate yourself daily.*** As professionals, self-assessments of our actions are essential for our continued growth, professional maturity, and effectiveness.
19. ***Promote mutual relationships.*** When your relationships are viewed as strong, more can get done in less time, with less stress, with greater productivity, and you probably like your job more.
20. ***Treat your customer as if it matters...*** as if the future of your company and your employment rests upon your ability to satisfy your customer on the transaction being performed right now.

Be Your Best Whole Person

21. ***Be a Champion for Work-Life Balance.*** Almost everyone wishes they had realized the importance of work-life balance sooner rather than later. Doing so can mean less regrets and a more deliberate life. But whatever your age, you can still seize control and drive towards the balance you most desire.
22. ***Have fun in your work.*** Finding fun in your job is important at so many levels from benefiting your productivity, increasing motivation, reducing stress, making your day go faster, and boosting your career enjoyment.
23. ***Decide who you choose to be.*** This book is exposing you to important Power Skills that can change your career and your life. You can cherry pick the Power Skills you choose to embrace or go all out and seriously consider them all when their use can make a difference.
24. ***Be a good actor.*** Continuously work at being the person you choose to be. You first identify a Power Skill to adopt. Then you act on that thought to replace an old behavior with the more desirable behavior.

“Ideas to help you become more successful.”

These Power Skills are discussed in the book: *Power Skills that Lead to Exceptional Performance*, by Neal Whitten, published by Business Expert Press, Copyright © 2023 Neal Whitten.

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Bonus: Intro to three exercises

1. Questionnaire for Self-Assessing Your Foundational ***Power Skills*** (as time permits)
 - Gain insight into how proficient you perceive your performance to be in the 24 foundational ***Power Skills***
2. Determine Top 3 ***Power Skills*** of Importance to You (homework)
 - Determine your top three ***Power Skills*** with which to focus
3. Performance Improvement Plan (homework)
 - Create a Performance Improvement Plan for each of these three ***Power Skills***. These plans can give you structure on your journey to mastering the ***Power Skills***



Additional bonus

- New book, ***Power Skills that Lead to Exceptional Performance***, reveals hidden website page:
nealwhittengroup.com/powerskills/
- Website page contains 6 documents that can be printed:
 1. List of 24 Foundational ***Power Skills***
 2. List of 15 ***Power Skills*** for a Team
 3. List of 17 ***Power Skills*** for Interacting with Your Leaders
 4. Questionnaire for Self-Assessing Your Foundational ***Power Skills***
 5. Template for Determining Top Three ***Power Skills*** of Importance to You
 6. Performance Improvement Plan Template
- Website page also contains ***online interactive*** Questionnaire to determine your mastery of the 24 foundational ***Power Skills***



Questionnaire for Self-Assessing Your Foundational *Power Skills*

Let's now take the self-assessment tool to determine how proficient you perceive your performance to be in the 24 foundational *Power Skills*.



Questionnaire for Self-Assessing Your Foundational Power Skills

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If you have completed Chapter 1. Foundational Power Skills, from the book *Power Skills that Lead to Exceptional Performance* by Neal Whitten, you are ready to take the self-assessment tool here—also called the *Questionnaire*. If you have not yet read Chapter 1, you can still take the questionnaire; however, it may be less meaningful to you since you will not have been introduced to the foundational Power Skills that the questionnaire will reference.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to gain insight into how proficient you perceive your performance to be in the 24 foundational Power Skills introduced in Chapter 1. After taking the questionnaire, you will calculate your score and we will discuss what that score might mean to you.

Completing the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is comprised of 67 questions. There are six possible answers for each question. The answers have a number associated with them, 0-5. Circle the number that best represents your answer. When you finish the questionnaire, you will add all the numbers and divide by 24. This will yield your score. More on what this score means after you have completed the questionnaire.

You are now ready to take the questionnaire.

Break the rules occasionally

1	As the need presents itself, do you resort to unconventional solutions (that are ethical and legal) in the pursuit of business success?	Always 5	Almost always 4	Some- times 3	Seldom 2	Never 1	No Comment 0
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Never avoid necessary confrontation

2	Do you give problems the sense of urgency and importance they deserve?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
3	Do you allow others to intimidate you into being less effective than is possible?	Never 1.25	Seldom 1	Some- times .75	Almost always .5	Always .25	No Comment 0

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4	Do you ensure that you make the best business decisions even when others may <i>not</i> be happy with those decisions?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
5	Do you avoid necessary confrontation?	Never 1.25	Seldom 1	Some- times .75	Almost always .5	Always .25	No Comment 0

Routinely practice boldness and courage to be a consistently effective leader

6	When necessary, do you demonstrate boldness in the performance of your assignments?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
7	Do you demonstrate courage when confronted with something that you fear?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0

Think for yourself

8	Do you challenge tradition, authority, and the status quo in a professional and mature manner?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
9	Do you routinely question your own behaviors and actions?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0

Do not allow what others think about you to be more important than what you think about yourself

10	Do you typically place a higher value on what you think about yourself over what other people think about you?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
11	Is being liked at work a primary objective for you?	Never 2.5	Seldom 2	Some- times 1.5	Almost always 1	Always .5	No Comment 0

Live in your present moments

12	Do you live in your present moments (versus in the past or the future)?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
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13	Are you able to emotionally process any past mistakes or situations so that they do <i>not</i> negatively affect your present moments?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
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Don't make it personal or take it personally

14	Do you avoid taking things personally and/or making things personal?	Always 1.67	Almost always 1.33	Some- times 1	Seldom .67	Never .33	No Comment 0
15	Do you refrain from speaking ill of others (other than privately with that person)?	Always 1.67	Almost always 1.33	Some- times 1	Seldom .67	Never .33	No Comment 0
16	Do you do things because they are the right business things to do, not because you or someone else takes things personally?	Always 1.67	Almost always 1.33	Some- times 1	Seldom .67	Never .33	No Comment 0

Mind your own business first

17	Do you routinely conduct yourself as if you own the business and the business is defined by your domain of responsibility?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
18	Do you place a higher priority on your own assignments than on looking out for the company? In other words, unless you were directed by your leadership to work on a non-assignment task, do you first steadfastly focus on your own assignments?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0

Embrace integrity in all that you do

19	Do you volunteer the truth without having to be coaxed or encouraged?	Always .71	Almost always .57	Some- times .43	Seldom .29	Never .14	No Comment 0
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20	Are you truthful when you make commitments?	Always .71	Almost always .57	Some- times .43	Seldom .29	Never .14	No Comment 0
21	Are you truthful about your project progress and problems?	Always .71	Almost always .57	Some- times .43	Seldom .29	Never .14	No Comment 0
22	Are you truthful about mistakes you have made that can benefit others knowing about them?	Always .71	Almost always .57	Some- times .43	Seldom .29	Never .14	No Comment 0
23	Do you do the right thing?	Always .71	Almost always .57	Some- times .43	Seldom .29	Never .14	No Comment 0
24	Do you condemn unethical or illegal behavior?	Always .71	Almost always .57	Some- times .43	Seldom .29	Never .14	No Comment 0
25	Do you refrain from lying or distorting the truth?	Always .71	Almost always .57	Some- times .43	Seldom .29	Never .14	No Comment 0

Manage daily to your top three priorities

26	At any given moment, can you identify your top three priorities that you need to be working?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
27	Do you begin each day with a to-do list that identifies your top three priorities for the day?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
28	Do you focus on your top three priorities most days?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
29	Do you work off your top three priorities at least weekly and replace them with new priorities?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0

Trust but verify; inspect what you expect

30	Do you require plans, metrics, and checks and balances to ensure that important commitments are planned and trackable?	Always 1.67	Almost always 1.33	Some- times 1	Seldom .67	Never .33	No Comment 0
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31	Unless a person has appropriately earned your trust, do you typically inspect what you expect from others?	Always 1.67	Almost always 1.33	Some- times 1	Seldom .67	Never .33	No Comment 0
32	Do you believe that you are at least partially accountable for the quality and timeliness of deliverables to you from others?	Always 1.67	Almost always 1.33	Some- times 1	Seldom .67	Never .33	No Comment 0

Treat others as you would like to be treated

33	Do you treat others the way that you would like them to treat you?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
34	When you are faced with negative behavior by a coworker, do you take the high road and respond in a manner that you would wish the person had originally adopted?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0

Think like a leader

35	Do you practice that leadership is <i>not</i> about the ability of those around you to lead, but about your ability to lead regardless of what is happening around you?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
36	Do you practice leadership that sees your role as predominantly serving, developing, and nurturing others rather than focusing on yourself?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0

Treat all project members equally

37	Do you hold each team on a project just as accountable for its commitments as any other team?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
38	Do you give preferential treatment to some project members?	Never 2.5	Seldom 2	Some- times 1.5	Almost always 1	Always .5	No Comment 0

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Understand and practice empowerment

39	Do you have a good understanding of what is expected of you in your job?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
40	Do you take charge of your job (versus wait for others to direct you)?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0

Seek out a mentor

41	Do you seek out a mentor when doing so would be most helpful?	Always 5	Almost always 4	Some- times 3	Seldom 2	Never 1	No Comment 0
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Treat your customer as if it matters

42	Do you treat your customer as if the future of your company and your employment rests upon your ability to satisfy your customer on the transaction being performed right now?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
43	If you conducted a survey of your customer's satisfaction with your performance, would the survey results give you high marks?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0

Promote mutual relationships

44	Do you schedule time to network and develop relationships?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
45	Do you return texts, phone calls and e-mails efficiently?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
46	Do you take some action daily that can strengthen a relationship?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
47	Do you generously give coworkers the recognition they have earned?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0

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Evaluate yourself daily

48	Do you believe there is sufficient benefit in evaluating your performance daily?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
49	Do you evaluate your performance daily or weekly?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0

Promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity

50	Do you regularly promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in your team and organization?	Always 1	Almost always .8	Some- times .6	Seldom .4	Never .2	No Comment 0
51	Do you take the time to listen to all team members, not just the vocal ones?	Always 1	Almost always .8	Some- times .6	Seldom .4	Never .2	No Comment 0
52	Do you ensure there is no special treatment for any team members?	Always 1	Almost always .8	Some- times .6	Seldom .4	Never .2	No Comment 0
53	Do you solicit ideas from the entire team for creating a team's core/shared values, so everyone has a role in defining the team's culture?	Always 1	Almost always .8	Some- times .6	Seldom .4	Never .2	No Comment 0
54	Do you implement an open-door policy where diversity, equity, and inclusivity concepts and practices can be discussed?	Always 1	Almost always .8	Some- times .6	Seldom .4	Never .2	No Comment 0

Be a champion for work-life balance

55	Do you habitually put off the important and fun things in your life until later?	Never 1.25	Seldom 1	Some- times .75	Almost always .5	Always .25	No Comment 0
56	Are you satisfied with your work-life balance?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0

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57	Do you believe that the outcome of your day, week and month is predominately based on the decisions that you have made throughout each day?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
58	As a rule, do you put yourself first in your life?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0

Have fun in your work

59	Do you look forward to your workday?	Always 1.67	Almost always 1.33	Some- times 1	Seldom .67	Never .33	No Comment 0
60	Do you find ways to have fun at work?	Always 1.67	Almost always 1.33	Some- times 1	Seldom .67	Never .33	No Comment 0
61	Do you believe that you (versus someone else) are responsible for finding ways to make work fun?	Always 1.67	Almost always 1.33	Some- times 1	Seldom .67	Never .33	No Comment 0

Decide who you choose to be

62	Do you define who you choose to be rather than allow others to define it for you?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0
63	Do you believe that you have substantial control over your own destiny?	Always 2.5	Almost always 2	Some- times 1.5	Seldom 1	Never .5	No Comment 0

Be a good actor

64	Do you successfully manage your external emotions?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
65	Do you exude self-confidence?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
66	Do you remain composed under pressure?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0
67	Do you maintain a positive attitude?	Always 1.25	Almost always 1	Some- times .75	Seldom .5	Never .25	No Comment 0

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Assessing Your Score

At this point, you are ready to add all the numbers that you have circled. Divide that number by 24, the number of foundational Power Skills. This will give you a score. Notice that if you answered one or more questions by circling the *0-No comment*, this will negatively affect your score. I am hoping you will take a position on every question.

Here's what your score means:

4.5-5.0: Very impressive – role model caliber

3.8-4.4: Good – with some areas to improve

3.2-3.7: Fair – with many areas to improve

2.6-3.1: Weak – needs to improve

0.0-2.5: Poor – not contributing your fair share.

How Reliable Is Your Score?

Your score is not precise and obviously has some subjectivity since it is self-perception based. However, my experience is that the overall assessment does have value in providing a general range or view of your performance proficiency related to the 24 foundational Power Skills.

Your score is based on the questionnaire treating each of the 24 Power Skills equally. However, in reality, it is not likely that each Power Skill is equally weighted with all others. For example, *think for yourself* will likely be more impactful than *live in your present moments* for most people. Moreover, some Power Skills may have more impact for some folks depending on their vocation or their experience. For example, an experienced person is less likely to require a mentor (*seek out a mentor*).

Your score is also helpful to use as a baseline. You can choose to periodically retake the questionnaire with the goal of improving your overall performance score.

Most importantly, however, the assessment provides a great tool for your own reflection and possibly to discuss with your manager, mentor, peer, or friend. The questions and the resulting assessment values can help you face important issues that must be dealt with as you strive to continuously improve your performance.

To obtain a more objective evaluation of your behaviors and actions, consider having someone who closely works with you take the assessment about you.

Next Step?

After completing the questionnaire, you now have a sense for what Power Skills may need improvement for your performance to improve. Go now (after reviewing the Q and As below) to the document *Determine Top 3 Power Skills of Importance to You* to continue this performance improvement journey. Or you can move on to the remaining book chapters and circle back to this document later.

Question

My score was lower than I expected and what I believe it should be. The reason appears to be the answers that are available to get the highest score on each question. For example, the highest answer score is 5 which is only possible if you answer *always* or *never*, depending on the

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question. Both *always* and *never* are absolute and quite rigid, so I mostly answered *almost always* or *almost never* for many of the questions. Comments?

Answer

There are several points I would like to make here:

1. Remember, the scores are not expected to perfectly reflect your performance. They are considered subjective primarily because they are based on your perspective.
2. My experience is that the scores *do* roughly represent your ballpark performance.
3. Whatever score you calculate, it becomes a baseline should you retake the questionnaire again. Therefore, if you improve at all, it will still be reflected regardless of the baseline score perfectly representing you.
4. I considered using the answer range of 0-10 instead of 0-5. This extra granularity would mostly address your issue with *always* and *almost always*. However, I felt that I was making answering the questions too difficult and in too much detail. Whether I use the 0-10 or the 0-5 categories, the essence of your answers will still be captured so that the self-assessment will be useful.

Question

Although I agree with most of the foundational Power Skills, I have some reservation about adopting some of them, two examples being *break the rules occasionally* and *never avoid necessary conflict*. Therefore, I disagree with those Power Skills being included in the scoring of the questionnaire. Comments?

Answer

You are free to adopt any or all the Power Skills. In fact, you could delete the questionnaire questions on the Power Skills you choose not to embrace. Then, after you have added all your numerical answers, divide not by 24 (the original number of Power Skills) but by the number of Power Skills that remained after you deleted some. Note, however, if you delete a Power Skill, you must ignore all questionnaire questions related to that Power Skill.

I should add that, as the author of the 24 foundational Power Skills, my experience asserts that all of them are relevant if you want to achieve exceptional performance — that is, be the best you can be. Regardless, I am encouraged that you will benefit from the book. I respect you thinking for yourself.

Question

Under the section *How Reliable Is Your Score?*, you mentioned some reasons why the questionnaire questions cannot be equally weighted. This being the case, do you still assert that this questionnaire is all that useful?

Answer

Without a doubt, I find the questionnaire beneficial! The questions offer you insight into your mastery of the foundational Power Skills. The questionnaire also offers a beneficial exercise leading into deciding your top three Power Skills with which to focus. As I said earlier, you also benefit by creating a baseline score to later compare your progress.

What do your scores mean?

- Assessment rating:
 - 4.5-5.0: **Very impressive**; role model caliber
 - 3.8-4.4: **Good** with some areas to improve
 - 3.2-3.7: **Fair** with many areas to improve
 - 2.6-3.1: **Weak**; needs to improve
 - 0.0-2.54: **Poor**; not contributing your fair share
- Score is self-perception based
- Establish baseline score; retake periodically
- For reflection
- For discussion



Determine Top Three *Power Skills* of Importance to You (Homework)

- Identify most important behaviors that you need to improve upon
- You can add to the list of 24 foundational *Power Skills* any additional *Power Skills* that we did not discuss but you believe have special importance to you



Determine Top 3 Power Skills of Importance to You

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If you have completed Chapter 1. Foundational Power Skills, from the book *Power Skills that Lead to Exceptional Performance* by Neal Whitten, and you have completed the self-assessment tool, *Questionnaire for Self-Assessing Your Foundational Power Skills*, you are ready to determine the top three Power Skills with which you need to focus in your quest to achieve exceptional performance.

Notice from the Power Skills table below that the Power Skills for you to improve upon are selected from the 24 foundational Power Skills that were introduced in the first chapter. There is space reserved at the end of the table that you can use to optionally add additional Power Skills that we did not discuss but you believe have special importance to you.

Here's how to use this exercise instrument. For each Power Skill, circle an H (high), M (medium) or L (low) in the *1st Pass* column to designate how important you believe this behavior is to you in helping you improve your performance with the potential goal of achieving exceptional performance. Afterwards, count the number of Power Skills that were assigned an *H*. The objective is to end this exercise with your top three selections. If the count of behaviors assigned an *H* is more than three, then repeat the exercise only for those behaviors that were assigned an *H* and circle the appropriate H, M or L in the *2nd Pass* column.

For example, if the outcome from the first pass was that 10 Power Skills were assigned an *H*, then relook at only these 10 Power Skills and decide, relevant to each other, which Power Skills are rated an H, M or L. If you still have more than three Power Skills assigned an *H*, then perform the exercise again using the *3rd Pass* column. Hopefully you will identify your three most important Power Skills within three passes; if not, continue this exercise until you have your top three behaviors identified.

Before proceeding, I have a tip for you that may help you zero in on your top three Power Skills with which to focus. Look back at the answers you circled for each of the 67 questions in the questionnaire. You can ask yourself the following question for each of the 67 questions and answer by selecting from five possible answers:

Are you satisfied with your score from this question?

5-Very 4-Satisfied 3-Somewhat 2-Hardly 1-Not satisfied

This exercise can help you find the Power Skills that you were least satisfied with your mastery. Of course, keep in mind you will be attempting to identify the top three Power Skills to focus on. Not being satisfied with your response doesn't guarantee that that Power Skill will be one of the top three to work on, but it will garner your attention as a possible candidate to consider.

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After you have identified your top three Power Skills, go to the document, *Performance Improvement Plans* and follow the instructions to develop plans that will help you improve your Power Skills in these areas.

Power Skill	1 st Pass	2 nd Pass	3 rd Pass
Break the rules occasionally. Oftentimes, you will find that following conventional rules will not effectively or efficiently solve an issue.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Never avoid necessary confrontation. Always give problems the sense of urgency and importance they deserve.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Routinely practice boldness and courage to be a consistently effective leader. Your behavior drives your success.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Think for yourself. Challenge tradition, authority, and the status quo in a professional and mature manner. Routinely question your own behaviors and actions.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Do not allow what others think about you to be more important than what you think about yourself. Listen for helpful snippets but remain in control of you.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Live in your present moments. Don't dwell on yesterday. Admit mistakes, learn from them, apply those lessons going forward... and move on.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Don't make it personal or take it personally. It's all about what's best for business.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Mind your own business first. Behave as if you own the business and your business is defined by your domain of responsibility.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Embrace integrity in all that you do. Listen to your inner voice and treat it as the wise and trusted friend it is.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Manage daily to your top three priorities. They define your value and contributions and, ultimately, your career.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Trust but verify; Inspect what you expect. Strive to build trust among project stakeholders, but insist on metrics, checks and balances, and other tools to ensure outcomes are being met.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Treat others as you would like to be treated. You will be remembered and revered for how you made others feel.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Think like a leader. It's not about the ability of those around you to lead; it's about your ability to lead, regardless of what is happening around you.	H M L	H M L	H M L

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Treat all project members equally. All project members, regardless of where they come from or to whom they report, must be held accountable for their commitments.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Understand and practice empowerment. Understand your job, take ownership of it, and do whatever is necessary — within legal and ethical parameters — to accomplish it.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Seek out a mentor. We can learn far more and far faster when we can draw strength from those who have gone before us.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Treat your customer as if it matters... as if the future of your company and your employment rests upon your ability to satisfy your customer on the transaction being performed right now.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Promote mutual relationships. When your relationships are viewed as strong, more can get done in less time, with less stress, with greater productivity, and you probably like your job more.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Evaluate yourself daily. As professionals, self-assessments of our actions are essential for our continued growth, professional maturity, and effectiveness.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Benefits include employees are more engaged, feel more appreciated and respected, and their commitment, trust and morale increase.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Be a Champion for Work-Life Balance. Almost everyone wishes they had realized the importance of work-life balance sooner rather than later. Doing so can mean less regrets and a more deliberate life. But whatever your age, you can still seize control and drive towards the balance you most desire.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Have fun in your work. Finding fun in your job is important at so many levels from benefiting your productivity, increasing motivation, reducing stress, making your day go faster, and boosting your career enjoyment.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Decide who you choose to be. This book is exposing you to important Power Skills that can change your career and your life. You can cherry pick the Power Skills you choose to embrace or go all out and seriously consider them all when their use can make a difference.	H M L	H M L	H M L
Be a good actor. Continuously work at being the person you choose to be. You first identify a Power Skill to adopt. Then you act on that thought to replace an old behavior with the more desirable behavior.	H M L	H M L	H M L
	H M L	H M L	H M L

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	H M L	H M L	H M L
	H M L	H M L	H M L
	H M L	H M L	H M L
	H M L	H M L	H M L

Question

You suggest I identify my top three Power Skills with which to focus. What if I only want to work on one or two?

Answer

Totally fine. What's important is that you feel you are making forward progress with your performance improvement. There is no rush. Go with your preferred pace. We all have those moments when we have very limited time to invest. I respect that you are making any time at all.

Develop a Performance Improvement Plan (Homework)

- Three steps to follow:
 - **Step 1.** Recognize the top three behaviors you want to improve
 - **Step 2.** Consider alternative behaviors and recognize their benefits
 - **Step 3.** Adopt the new behaviors
- ***Example exercise***



Performance Improvement Plan

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Once you have decided the Power Skills you most want to improve, this exercise template can be used to develop a Performance Improvement Plan — one for each of the Power Skills you have chosen to work on. Of course, you could work on more than three Power Skills at the same time; however, better to focus on improving three (or less) Power Skills than to take on many more and be overwhelmed and ultimately ineffective in improving on most or all the selected Power Skills.

There are six areas to be completed for each Performance Improvement Plan:

1. Identify Power Skill to be improved
2. Recall incident where this Power Skill was weak or missing
3. Identify the potential or real harm that occurred
4. Identify the inhibitors that contributed to the weak behavior
5. Identify a more effective approach utilizing the desired behavior
6. Identify the benefit that could have resulted from taking a more effective approach.

You will notice that the Performance Improvement Plan encourages you to examine your current behaviors and consider substituting new behaviors going forward. In other words, looking at the behaviors that you would examine, if the same situations availed themselves tomorrow, would you have learned from your past and behaved more effectively — as your new Performance Improvement Plan suggests? I have found that most people likely know when their behavior is less than optimal. They also have good ideas about what they should have done. The problem comes in when it is time to choose their behavior and they sometimes revert to old habits.

Consider revisiting this exercise template periodically — such as every 1-2 months. This time period will likely give you sufficient time to practice your top three Power Skills. If, after 1-2 months, you are not ready to move on to creating plans for new Power Skills, that's okay. As I said earlier, you are not in a race. It's important that you pace to your comfort zone.

Before you begin to develop the Performance Improvement Plans, check out the sample Performance Improvement Plan below that has been completed for your reference. I chose to focus on the Power Skill called, *manage daily to your top three priorities* because I have found this to be one of the most popular Power Skills for readers to focus on.

Sample Performance Improvement Plan

1. Identify Power Skill to be improved:

Manage daily to your top three priorities.

2. Recall incident where this Power Skill was weak or missing:

Upon examining my daily to-do lists with which I began each day last week, it is strikingly apparent that I not only didn't identify my top three priorities to work each day, but most of each day was also consumed with reacting to interruptions, noise, and minutia that routinely comes my way. As a result, the most important issues and actions frequently did not receive the attention that their importance required.

3. Identify the potential or real harm that occurred:

As a project manager, a recent review of the health of my project revealed that the project's top three problems (priorities) primarily resulted because they did not receive sufficient care and feeding that they required weeks earlier. As a result, there were unresolved issues causing staffing delays, incomplete and delayed key project documentation, and customer relationship issues.

4. Identify the inhibitors that contributed to the weak behavior:

The major inhibitor was my lack of knowledge of the importance of managing daily to my top three priorities.

5. Identify a more effective approach utilizing the desired behavior:

I will create a to-do list at the start of each day. The list will identify the top three priorities with which to maximize my attention. I will list on my office white board my top three priorities. This will serve as a conscious reminder to me throughout the day what I view to be my priorities. My goal will be to either resolve or to put a committed plan in place to resolve those items and, within 2-3 days, remove them from my top three priority list and replace each with a new priority. If I only have a few minutes between meetings to work on my to-do list, I may choose to work the non-top-three problems. However, whenever I can find 30 minutes or more, I will mostly focus my attention working off my top three priorities.

6. Identify the benefit that could have resulted from taking a more effective approach:

I expect my effectiveness to improve as I consciously focus on the big-ticket problems that have the most impact on my value and contributions to my project and organization — and ultimately my career. I expect my project to benefit with major issues increasingly receiving the appropriate time and attention they require.

Question

How do I know if I have created a reasonable Performance Improvement Plan?

Answer

It can be helpful if you get an opinion from someone you respect and trust. That could be your boss, a coworker, a close and honest friend, or someone you view to have mastered the Power Skill you are focusing on, if other than the short list I just mentioned. However, any plan is better than no attempt at a plan. I respect your initiative!

Question

You suggest my manager could be a good source to review my Performance Improvement Plan. Is this really a good idea?

Answer

It could be, but think this through carefully. The upside to exposing the plan to your boss is that your manager likely has relevant experience and skills whereby you could benefit from his/her review. Also, your boss would likely think more highly of you because you are actively working to increase your performance and effectiveness. The downside is that you are exposing weaknesses in your current performance that could then show up in your next performance review and you may get zinged for it. Having said all this, if you have a good working relationship with your boss and feel you won't be harmed by exposing your weaknesses, don't overlook tapping into your boss' skills to aid you.

Performance Improvement Plan Template

1. Identify Power Skill to be improved:

2. Recall incident where this Power Skill was weak or missing:

3. Identify the potential or real harm that occurred:

4. Identify the inhibitors that contributed to the weak behavior:

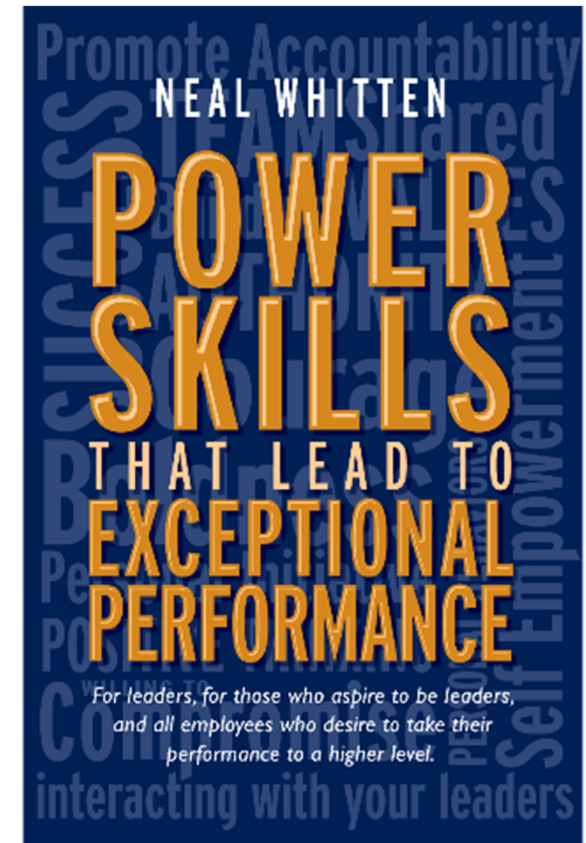
5. Identify a more effective approach utilizing the desired behavior:

6. Identify the benefit that could have resulted from taking a more effective approach:

More Power Skills in book

Three sets of Power Skills in book:

- Foundational Power Skills
(this workshop)
- Power Skills for a Team
- Power Skills for Interacting with Your Leaders



Power Snippets

Power Skills for a Team



POWER SKILLS FOR A TEAM

*Key Power Skills that every team leader
would like to see in each of their team members.*

Take Accountability for Your Responsibilities

1. ***Be truthful.*** Be honest and timely when revealing your progress and issues. When you make a mistake, admit to it, and take accountability.
2. ***Be reliable.*** Meet your commitments. Always do what you say you are going to do and when you said you would do it.
3. ***Demonstrate personal initiative.*** Practice self-reliance when appropriate. Require minimal leadership. Make things happen.
4. ***Ask for help.*** Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Doing so can not only increase your personal value but can be a big benefit to your team.
5. ***Practice being proactive.*** Make it a standard practice to think one or more steps ahead.
6. ***Focus on solutions.*** Do not engage in finger pointing and the blame game. Be a problem solver.
7. ***Practice continuous improvement.*** Seek ways to continually improve your skills as well as the processes and procedures that you and your team engage in. Be open and accepting to constructive criticism. Encourage feedback on your performance.

Support the Team by Your Personal Behaviors

8. ***Fully participate.*** Voluntarily speak up in meetings and get-togethers. Be forthcoming to both ask and answer questions.
9. ***Share knowledge.*** Knowledge is power; the best performers give it away.
10. ***Maintain a positive attitude.*** Adopt a can-do spirit. Place a constructive view on issues — seek out the sun during cloudy and stormy moments. Don't take or make things personal.
11. ***Be willing to compromise.*** Compromising on an issue is often required to resolve it. Moreover, compromising can spread good will and strengthen relationships.
12. ***Support the ideas of others.*** Be willing to listen to and be open to the ideas of others.
13. ***Give praise to others.*** Recognize the contributions of others and give credit where it is due.
14. ***Advocate a sense of humor.*** Your job is serious business but don't overlook the value of humor to lighten your load. Be willing to laugh at yourself and some of the situations you will find yourself in. If you are not having fun, you are not giving your best.
15. ***Promote team success.*** Look for ways to make the team and its leader look good. Look out for the team as if its success is defined by your actions each day.

“Ideas to help you become more successful.”

Power Snippets

Power Skills for Interacting with Your Leaders



POWER SKILLS FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUR LEADERS

*Meeting your leaders' expectations can enhance
your image, effectiveness, and career.*

Communicate with Your Leaders

1. ***Make it brief.*** Your leaders don't have time for the unabridged version.
2. ***Promote dialog.*** Your leaders need your response, your ideas, and your participation.
3. ***Don't take it personally.*** Your leaders may not handle stress any better than anyone else. Cut them some slack as you would hope others would for you.
4. ***Keep your leaders informed.*** Don't work in a vacuum; keep your leaders informed of important news.
5. ***Offer professional criticism.*** Your value increases when your interest, honesty and passion are apparent.
6. ***Offer praise.*** When you observe noteworthy ideas, actions, or deeds by your leaders, show that you appreciate their behavior.
7. ***Wear one face.*** Choose the same face regardless of the audience.
8. ***Solicit feedback on your performance.*** Ask for constructive criticism as well as praise based on your performance.

Take Ownership of Your Performance

9. ***Don't dump and run.*** Be willing to champion ideas and become part of their solution.
10. ***Bring solutions with problems.*** Clearly state the support you need from your leaders in terms of solving problems.
11. ***Close issues.*** Don't allow issues to linger, to drift.
12. ***Meet commitments.*** Demonstrate that you can be counted on; that you are reliable.

Build a Reputation

13. ***Don't complain.*** If you are complaining, you are not solving; you are part of the problem.
14. ***Make your leaders look good.*** Your job is to make your leaders look good, which makes you look good.
15. ***Support your peers.*** Choose the collaborative path rather than the competitive or contentious path.
16. ***Show you can be trusted.*** Earn the reputation of being a trusted confidant.
17. ***Be a role model.*** Without fanfare or recognition, behave in a manner that others can emulate.

"Ideas to help you become more successful."

These Power Skills are discussed in the book: *Power Skills that Lead to Exceptional Performance*,
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***Identify your top three
takeaways from the workshop***



*I want to leave you
with a thought...*

*Your career clock is
ticking.*

