

LEADERSHIP
GEMS

RIA STORY

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WHAT READERS ARE SAYING ABOUT LEADERSHIP GEMS

“A very thought provoking, and easy to read collection of truths....Ria explains them in a way that they are easy to remember, thus making it easier for the reader to understand and practice great leadership.” J. Johnson

“What an inspiration you are to all of us especially the women audience. Your book is a clear example & step by step guide on how to become an effective leader. It is so easy to read and simple yet meaningful which is the beauty of this book.” K. Poonawala

“What a great read! Thank you for such an inspiring and heartfelt book. Keep up the excellent work!” A. Ramirez

“I wanted to thank you for your book Leadership Gems (for Women). Your insights are right on target and this will help me in my work!”

S. Guerard

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INTRODUCTION

Regardless of whether you are a front line employee or the CEO of a multi-billion dollar organization, the principles in this book will help you become more successful, more influential, and a higher level leader.

All of us have some influence naturally, and some of us have more than others. We are all influencing someone at some level, even though we may not realize it. Leadership is influence. Therefore, we are all “leaders.” The question is, what are we doing with our influence? And, how can we increase it?

Natural ability isn’t enough to help you be successful as a leader. You must intentionally develop your skills by developing the characteristics covered in this book, so you can lead and influence others at home, at work, at church, or even as a volunteer.

Leadership is one of the most profoundly complex, and at the same time, incredibly simple concepts.

John C. Maxwell states it well, *“Leadership is influence.”* Influence is simple and easy to understand. If you are influencing someone to do, say, or think something different, you are leading them.

But understanding why, how, when, and who you are influencing becomes very complex. “How do I increase my influence (leadership) with others?” is a question all of us should devote significant time, thought, and consideration to.

We all want, and at some level need, to be successful in life. Relating leadership to success is fairly simple.

However, leadership is also extremely complex – because it’s increased primarily by developing your character. Developing your character will improve your ability to influence (lead) yourself initially and others

secondarily.

Your character is the determining success factor in your life. Your character is the defining factor in how you will face life's challenges. Your response to success, failure, joy, pain, sickness, health, poverty, or wealth will all be based upon your character. Character is far more than your talent, natural gifts, skills, and abilities. Character is the foundation upon which you will build your legacy.

Character is based upon intangible characteristics that will determine your success: attitude, work ethic, perseverance, resilience, discipline, courage, humility, and many more. Character is not based upon, or determined by, your education, background, race, ancestors, or experiences in life. Each and every day, you are writing your internal script by choosing your values. Then, your script (resulting character based upon the values you have internalized) will dictate your decisions and responses in any given situation.

True character is revealed in times of adversity, pressure, and stress. When you squeeze a lemon what do you get? Lemon juice. The true nature of a lemon cannot be hidden, and the same is true for you.

In this book, you will discover 30 characteristics of very successful leaders and learn how to develop them. Are there more than 30? Yes, of course, but very few people are willing to read an encyclopedia of leadership, so I had to choose those I felt would be most relevant.

Developing these "*Leadership Gems*" will certainly help you develop your character, and thus increase your ability to influence (lead) others in every given situation.

Isn't that a bold claim? Absolutely. However, I make this statement with complete confidence. I know it's true because I have learned to apply them and achieved amazing results.

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Some of these characteristics will come easier to you than others. You may be tempted to downplay the significance of those that don't come easy, but in truth, those are the ones you should focus on most. In terms of character, we should focus on developing weak areas. In terms of abilities, or competencies, we should focus on developing areas of strength. Character always compounds competency.

Leaders are like diamonds. They are unique and individual. No two are just alike. They are rare, very valuable, formed under pressure, and are very strong.

The word diamond comes from the Greek word "*adamas*" meaning tough, unbreakable, or indestructible. As my husband Mack says, "*Shiny objects get noticed. So do shiny people.*"

Don't be afraid to shine bright in your areas of strength, but relative to your character, don't neglect to develop your areas of weakness. Brad Milford said, "*Gems are mined and discovered. They definitely can't shine without light. There is power in the light you draw in as well as what you radiate. The desire is for you to be brilliant.*"

Now, let's start mining leadership gems.

CHAPTER ONE
BE AUTHENTIC

“The authentic self is the soul made visible.”

~ Sarah Ban Breathnach

Authenticity is a paradox.

Merriam-Webster defines paradox as, “...a person, situation, or action having seemingly contradictory qualities or phases.”

There is a paradox in authenticity because we all want authenticity in everything and everyone else, but we struggle to be authentic ourselves.

Authenticity requires us to be vulnerable. And, vulnerability is commonly, and incorrectly, perceived as a “weakness.”

It’s not a weakness. It’s a great strength. Only a strong person can make visible his soul and be confidently unashamed of what is found there. Not because he is perfect, but because he acknowledges he is not, although he is striving to be better.

Because authenticity builds trust, it is priceless when it comes to relationships and leadership.

When it comes to influence, those who are genuine, real, honest, and upfront with us have a lot of influence with us because we know we can trust them. Their word is worth something because we know they are always honest. We may not always like what they have to say because sometimes the truth isn’t easy to hear. But, we always value that we can count on it being truthful.

Authenticity requires a fine balance between tact and truth, but both should be respected equally. Being authentic is a choice to be true to your core values, your self, and to honor that in your relationships with other people.

Brené Brown said, *“Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It’s about the choice to show up and*

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be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen."

There is an incredible amount of pressure on those who are in a formal leadership position to conform to society's standard of what an "ideal" leader looks and acts like. The "ideal" leader doesn't admit mistakes, doesn't get emotional, doesn't build relationships, isn't afraid of conflict, and doesn't have any problem balancing his or her role as parent, spouse, and person, with his or her role as manager, CEO, or business owner. The worst of it is the misconception that your role as a leader takes priority over your role as person.

To be blunt, that's B.S.

No, not that "B.S.," I mean it's a Belief System. And, it doesn't serve anyone. Who you are as a person defines who you are as a leader. Your greatest strength as a leader is to be true to yourself and let your own natural leadership style shine.

The most effective leaders have a greater natural inclination toward building a relationship with those they want to influence. That is an incredible strength. Regardless of who you are trying to lead, you will have more influence if they feel like you value them as a person. Remember, authenticity is a strength because it builds trust. Trust will always increase influence.

Dale Carnegie said, *"Influence is ultimately an outcropping of trust - the higher the trust, the greater the influence."*

My husband Mack always says, *"When you increase your influence, you increase your options."* So, increasing trust increases our leadership ability, which in turn increases the options we have available to us. We simply have to be intentional about being authentic in order to build trust.

LIVE AUTHENTICALLY

Look for ways to be more authentic in your daily life. If you aren't fine, don't tell others you are. Admit things aren't fantastic and ask for help, support, or even prayer. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't make it up or guess. Admit you don't know, ask for time to find the answer, and then ensure you follow up. If you don't agree with something, don't go along with it just to keep the peace. Work to intentionally resolve the issue through constructive dialogue.

True influence and leadership aren't based on appearing to be different than you are. It's based on your authenticity and your willingness to develop your character. That's what turns authenticity into a strength instead of a weakness.

Success isn't based on your ability to cover up your flaws. Success is based on your ability to overcome them.

We often are afraid to be authentic because we are afraid of being vulnerable. What if someone finds out we aren't perfect? What if someone realizes we make mistakes? What if someone realizes we are flawed, human, and don't have a Facebook perfect life? In truth, they already know it. None of us are perfect.

We all make mistakes and have weaknesses. We don't need anyone to tell us – we already know it. We know it about everyone else, and as much as we are afraid of them finding out, everyone already knows it about us. The question they have is, do we know it? We understand people aren't perfect. We don't expect them to be. We respect those who don't pretend to be.

CHAPTER TWO

BE PROACTIVE

“I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions.”

~ Stephen R. Covey

If I asked a group of people to define “proactive,” I would probably get a wide variety of responses such as: taking initiative, anticipating, preparing for, or taking control of. But, to be proactive, as Dr. Stephen R. Covey defines it, is to respond to any given situation based on values, instead of emotions.¹

Being proactive is more than just taking action or initiative. It’s recognizing, as humans, we have the unique capability to choose our response in any given situation. As Dr. Covey states, *“Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions. We can subordinate feelings to values. We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen.”*

That’s powerful – because it means regardless of what happens to you in life, you have the ability, and responsibility, to decide what you will think. How you think determines what you feel. How you feel determines what you do. What you do determines the results you get in life. The opposite of proactive is reactive, which means empowering something else to control you. Reactive people allow their physical environment, or external conditions, to control how they feel. They allow what happens on the outside to dictate how they feel on the inside.

External conditions can influence you, but they don’t determine you. Life will happen. It won’t always be easy, good, or fun. You might get sick. You may lose your job, get divorced, or lose a loved one. I hope your story isn’t like mine, one of years of sexual abuse as a teenager. But, I’m certain you have or will experience adversity in life. We all do.

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Being proactive means choosing your response to what happens based on your values, instead of reacting based on your emotions. We've probably all made the mistake of blowing up in a situation, getting mad, and saying or doing something we later regret. We've probably all experienced a time when we empowered ourselves, rather than allowing something or someone else, to dictate our response. Maybe you've seen a friend or loved one who is terminally ill, suffering greatly, or handicapped, and yet rises above their circumstances with a positive spirit and incredible strength. It's not easy to do, but it does get easier the more you do it.

When we are proactive, we greatly increase the amount of influence we have with other people. Our ability to lead at a high level increases exponentially when we can first lead and influence ourselves well.

Years ago, I was searching for a candidate to fill an open position in my department at work. After many resumes, several interviews, and several months of searching, I found an extremely qualified person with relevant experience. She was a perfect fit for the position, was from out of town, and was relocating to be close to her future husband. We hired her.

A few weeks after she started work, she and I sat down together for a one-on-one training session. Uncharacteristically, she was disengaged during the session. Finally, realizing we weren't accomplishing anything, I pushed the computer screen away and I asked her what was on her mind.

"I'm not sure I can keep working here," she replied, breaking down into tears. "My fiancé broke up with me because he was seeing someone else. I am thinking about moving back home since we aren't getting married."

I was floored. After months of searching, rounds of

interviews, and no small expense, I had gone to great lengths to hire her, train her, and now I was probably going to lose her. It would take several more months to replace her. I had about half a second to choose my response. I could be reactive based on my feelings of frustration and disappointment, or I could be proactive based on my values of helping her make the right decision for herself and respecting her trust and confidence in me. I replied, *“Whatever decision you need to make regarding moving back home or staying here, I will support you. If you decide to leave, I will give you a good reference based on your time here. If you decide to stay, I’ll be happy to have you. You need to think about what is best for you right now. If this job isn’t the answer, I’ll help you find another one back home.”*

That wasn’t easy to say. I really wanted her to stay. But, I was able to be proactive. I realized, if she knew I supported her and cared about her either way, she would make the best decision for herself. If she made the best decision for herself, it would be the best decision, in the long run, for me and the organization. She chose to stay.

If being proactive is a challenge for you, look for ways to start being proactive in small ways. If your order gets messed up at the restaurant, remember everyone makes mistakes. You aren’t perfect either. If you make a mistake at work, don’t get angry. Search for the lesson in it. When it’s raining, smile anyway. If your 16 year old daughter gets pregnant out of wedlock, choose to love her more.

Start by being proactive with small things, and the big things will become easier. Your influence with anyone and everyone will grow over time.

CHAPTER THREE

BE RESPONSIBLE

“The price of greatness is responsibility.”

~ Winston Churchill

Being a leader, whether you are a formal leader, the boss, or a parent, comes with responsibilities. Most of us understand this on a broad level – to be a leader means to be a role model, set an example, etc. But, what does it really mean to be responsible or to take responsibility?

Jim Rohn said, *“Character isn’t something you were born with and can’t change, like your fingerprints. It’s something you weren’t born with and must take responsibility for forming.”*

Taking responsibility as a leader means accepting responsibility for developing your own character and then helping someone else develop theirs. John C. Maxwell stated, *“Reaching your God-given potential requires taking responsibility for yourself and your life. It means taking an active leadership role with yourself.”*

By reading this book, you have accepted that responsibility at one level. However, you must apply the principles and share them with others to increase your leadership to the next level.

If you don’t accept that responsibility, you won’t be able to become very successful as a leader or highly effective in any area of life for that matter. Let’s look at two ways accepting responsibility improves leadership and increases influence:

RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHERS

As a leader and/or parent, spouse, co-worker, friend, etc., your first responsibility is *to* others. This is the foundation for influence. This means leadership of others starts with leadership of self. You can’t lead anyone else at a high level if you aren’t able to lead yourself well first

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because you can't give someone what you don't have.

Leadership isn't something you do. It's something you are. And, it starts inside you. We all have influence on some level, with some people. If we want to increase our influence to a higher level, impact more people, and create a greater legacy in the lives of others, we must start by accepting the responsibility for striving to be better ourselves. We must work to develop leadership qualities within ourselves first.

The responsibility *to* others comes when you are ready to say, *"I'll work on me first, so I can help you."* Until and unless you are ready to accept that responsibility, you won't be able to become a very successful leader.

Would you prefer to choose your vacation destination based on the advice of a tour guide or a travel agent? Advice from someone who has actually been there is much more valuable than advice from someone who has only seen the brochure. Being an effective leader of yourself before leading others is much the same.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS

Although the first responsibility is foundational, and you can't influence many without it, the second responsibility is perhaps where you actually build more influence. Accepting responsibility is a give and take. First, you give: knowledge, credit when things go right, respect, love, help, coaching, opportunities and experiences, freedom, and through delegation, even responsibilities.

In other words, you nurture others and help them grow.

And, then you take: the blame, the responsibility when things don't go well, the burdens, the responsibility for removing roadblocks, their input, their feedback, and the

time to listen. In other words, you become accountable. Rudy Giuliani wrote about this in his book, *Leadership*, and said, “*More than anyone, leaders should welcome being held accountable. Nothing builds confidence in a leader more than their willingness to take responsibility for what happens during their watch.*”¹ In fact, he summarizes his entire leadership philosophy with a two-word sign that sits on his desk. It says, “*TM RESPONSIBLE.*”

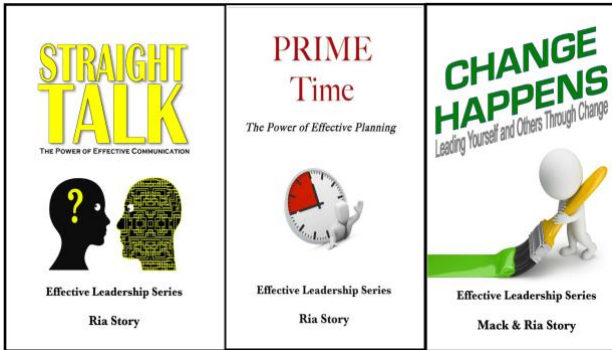
The leader who will accept responsibility *to* and *for* others on the team, in the organization, or even in the family will very quickly increase his or her influence.

Ask yourself how you can accept or ask for additional responsibility in either your professional life or your personal life. At work, it could mean asking to take the lead on a new project or volunteering to lead a focus group. At church, it could mean starting a study group, so you can bring together a group of couples who want to increase their influence with their families. At home, it could mean becoming the leader by setting a good example with your food choices and helping your children or spouse do the same.

Accepting responsibility for everything in your life is the key to being able to change anything in your life. Accepting more responsibility in any area of your life will allow you to develop greater influence in that area of your life. More responsibility equals greater influence and control.

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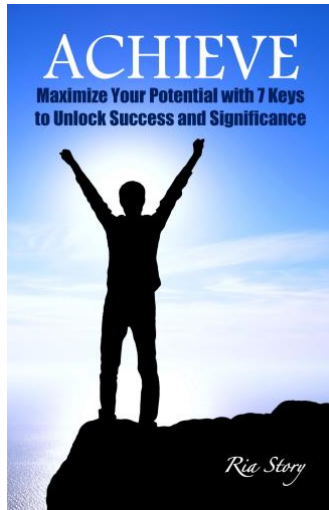
READ MORE BOOKS BY RIA



The Effective Leadership Series books are written to develop and enhance your leadership skills while also helping you increase your abilities in areas like communication and relationships, time management, planning and execution, and leading and implementing change. Look for more books in the Effective Leadership Series:

- *Straight Talk: The Power of Effective Communication*
- *Change Happens: Leading Yourself and Others through Change*
- *PRIME Time: The Power of Effective Planning*
- *Leadership Gems for Women: 30 Characteristics of Very Successful Women*

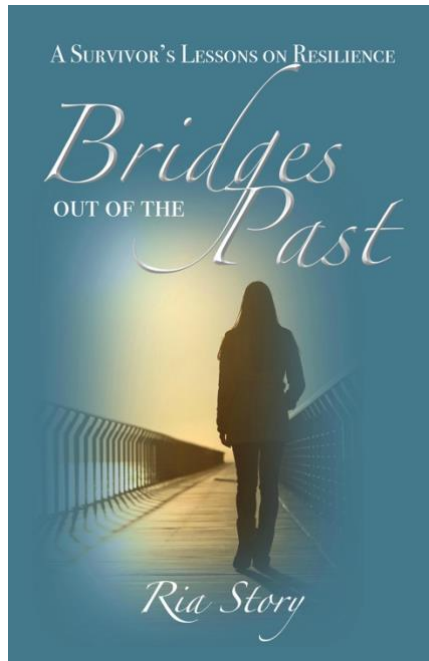
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You have hopes, dreams, and goals you want to achieve. You have aspirations of leaving a legacy of significance. You have untapped potential waiting to be unleashed. But, unfortunately, how to maximize your potential isn't something addressed in job or skills training. And sadly, how to achieve success and find significance in life isn't something taught in school, college, or by most parents.

In *ACHIEVE: Maximize Your Potential with 7 Keys to Unlock Success and Significance*, Ria shares lessons to help you become more influential, more successful and maximize your potential in life. Three-page chapters are short, yet powerful, and provide principles on realizing your potential with actionable takeaways. These brief vignettes provide humorous, touching, or sad lessons straight from the heart that you can immediately apply to your own situation.

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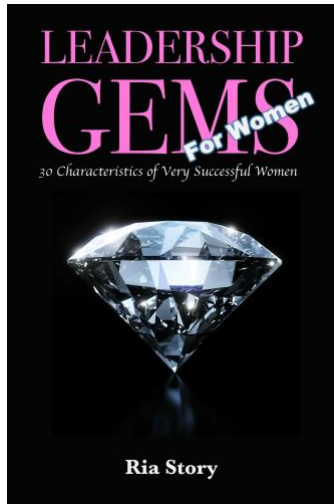


It's not what happens to you in life. It's who you become because of it. We all experience pain, grief, and loss in life. Resilience is the difference between *"I didn't die,"* and *"I learned to live again."* In this captivating book on resilience, Ria walks you through her own horrific story of more than seven years of sexual abuse by her father. She then shares how she learned not only to survive, but also to thrive in spite of her past. Learn how to overcome challenges, obstacles, and adversity in your own life by building a bridge out of the past and into the future.

(Watch 7 minutes of her story at RiaStory.com/TEDx)

Ria Story

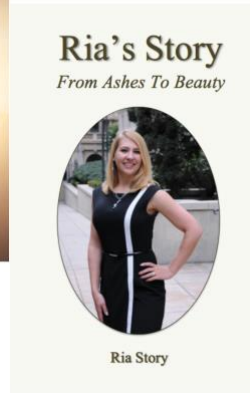
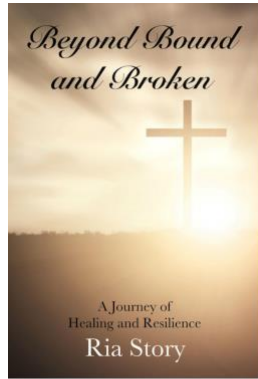
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Women are naturally high impact leaders because they are relationship oriented. However, it's a *"man's world"* out there and natural ability isn't enough to help you be successful as a leader. You must be intentional.

Ria packed Leadership Gems for Women with 30 leadership gems which very successful women internalize and apply. Ria has combined her years of experience in leadership roles of different organizations along with years of studying, teaching, training, and speaking on leadership to give you these 30, short and simple, yet powerful and profound, lessons to help you become very successful, regardless of whether you are in a formal leadership position or not.

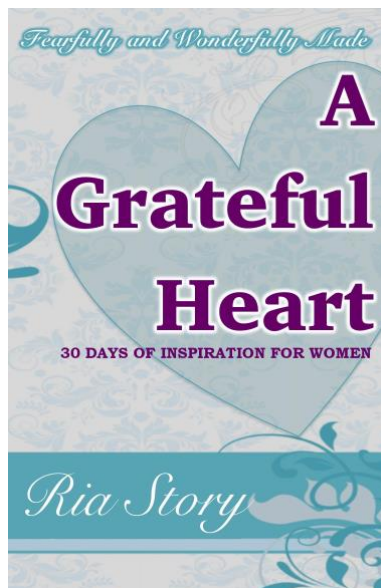
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In *Beyond Bound and Broken*, Ria shares how she overcame shame, fear, and doubt stemming from years of being sexually abused by her father. Forced to play the role of a wife and even shared with other men due to her father's perversions, Ria left home at 19 without a job, a car, or even a high-school diploma. This book contains lessons on resilience and overcoming adversity that you can apply in your own life.

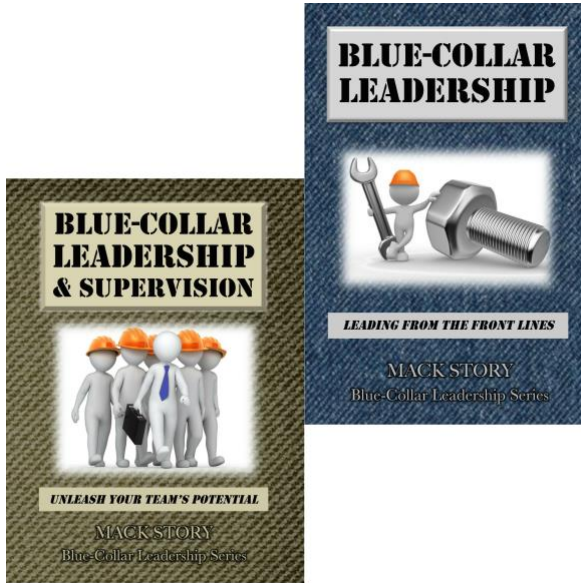
In *Ria's Story From Ashes To Beauty*, Ria tells her story of growing up as a victim of sexual abuse from age 12 – 19, and leaving home to escape. She shares how she went on to thrive and learn to help others by sharing her story.

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Become inspired by this 30-day collection of daily devotions for women, where you will find practical advice on intentionally living with a grateful heart, inspirational quotes, short journaling opportunities, and scripture from God's Word on practicing gratitude.

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Blue-Collar Leadership and *Blue-Collar Leadership and Supervision* are written specifically for those on the front lines of the Blue-Collar workforce and those who lead them. With 30 short, easy to read chapters, the *Blue-Collar Leadership Series* books contain powerful leadership lessons in a simple and easy to understand format.

Visit www.BlueCollarLeaders.com to learn more, get your free download of the first five chapters from both books, and watch Mack's video related video series.

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It's easier to compete when you're attracting great people instead of searching for good people.

Blue-Collar Leadership® & Culture will help you understand why culture is the key to becoming a sought after employer of choice within your industry and in your area of operation.

You'll also discover how to leverage the components of The Transformation Equation to create a culture that will support, attract, and retain high performance team members.

Blue-Collar Leadership® & Culture is intended to serve as a tool, a guide, and a transformational road map for leaders who want to create a high impact culture that will become their greatest competitive advantage.

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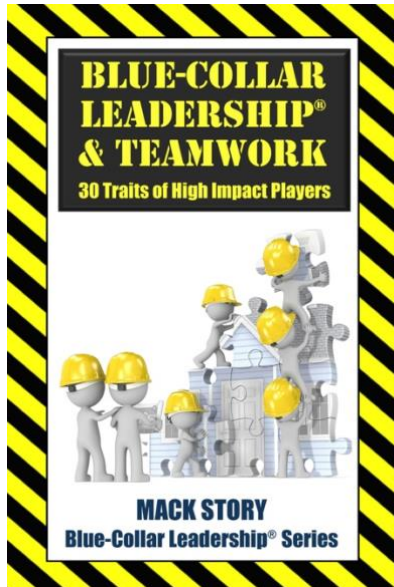


The biggest challenge in process improvement and cultural transformation isn't identifying the problems. It's execution: implementing and sustaining the solutions.

Blue-Collar Kaizen is a resource for anyone in any position who is, or will be, leading a team through process improvement and change. Learn to engage, empower, and encourage your team for long term buy-in and sustained gains.

Mack Story has over 11,000 hours experience leading hundreds of leaders and thousands of their cross-functional kaizen team members through process improvement, organizational change, and cultural transformation. He shares lessons learned from his experience and many years of studying, teaching, and

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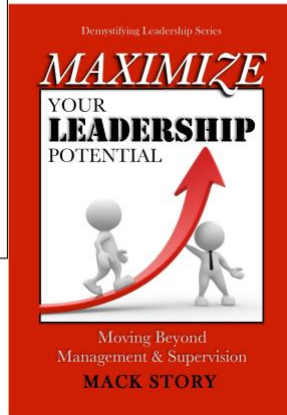
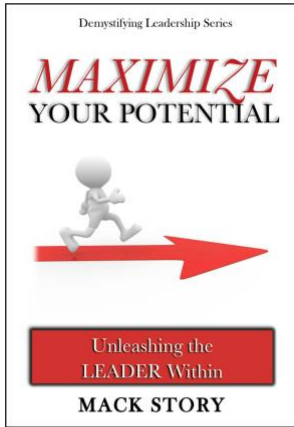
Are you ready to play at the next level and beyond?

In today's high stakes game of business, the players on the team are the competitive advantage for any organization. But, only if they are on the field instead of on the bench.

The competitive advantage for every individual is developing 360° of influence regardless of position, title, or rank.

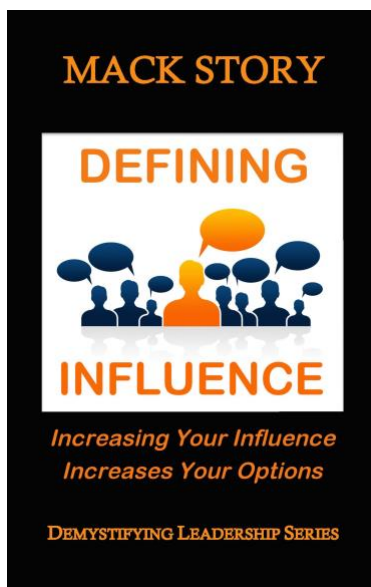
Blue-Collar Leadership® & Teamwork provides a simple, yet powerful and unique, resource for individuals who want to increase their influence and make a high impact. It's also a resource and tool for leaders, teams, and organizations, who are ready to Engage the Front Line to Improve the Bottom Line.

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Mack's *MAXIMIZE Your Potential* and *MAXIMIZE Your Leadership Potential* books are the white-collar version of the *Blue-Collar Leadership Series*. These books are written specifically for those working on the front lines and those who lead them. With 30 short, easy to read chapters, they contain powerful leadership lessons in a simple and easy to understand format.

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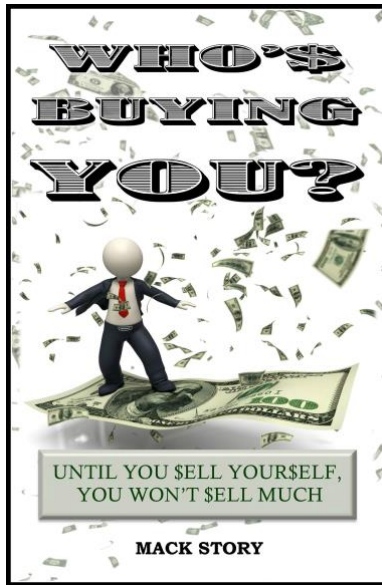


Are you looking for transformation in your life? Do you want better results? Do you want stronger relationships?

In *Defining Influence*, Mack breaks down many of the principles that will allow anyone at any level to methodically and intentionally increase their positive influence.

Mack blends his personal growth journey with lessons on the principles he learned along the way. He's not telling you what he learned after years of research, but rather what he learned from years of application and transformation. Everything rises and falls on influence.

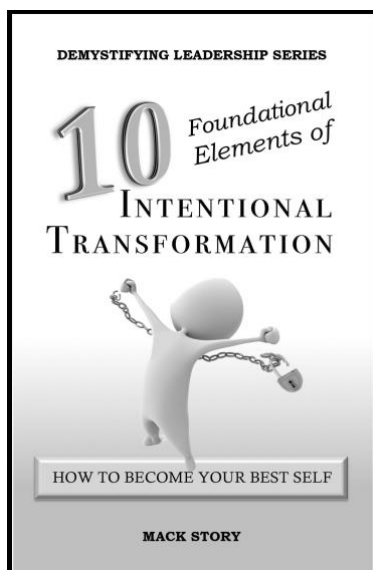
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It's no longer "Buyer Beware!" It's "Seller Beware!" Why? Today, the buyer has the advantage over the seller. Most often, they are holding it in their hand. It's a smart phone. They can learn everything about your product before they meet you. The major advantage you do still have is: YOU!

This book is filled with 30 short chapters providing unique insights that will give you the advantage, not over the buyer, but over your competition: those who are selling what you're selling. It will help you sell yourself.

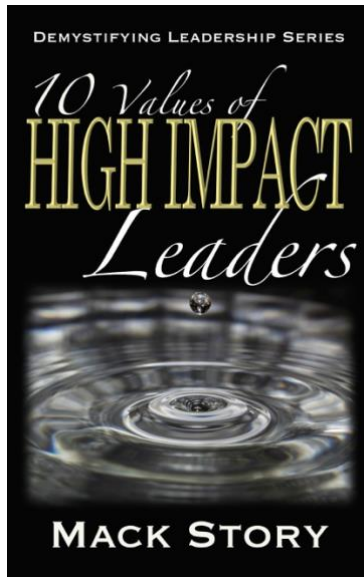
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10 Foundational Elements of Intentional Transformation serves as a source of motivation and inspiration to help you climb your way to the next level and beyond as you learn to intentionally create a better future for yourself. The pages will ENCOURAGE, ENGAGE, and EMPOWER you as you become more focused and intentional about moving from where you are to where you want to be.

All of us are somewhere, but most of us want to be somewhere else. However, we don't always know how to get there. You will learn how to intentionally move forward as you learn to navigate the 10 foundational layers of transformation.

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High impact leaders align their habits with key values in order to maximize their influence. High impact leaders intentionally grow and develop themselves in an effort to more effectively grow and develop others.


These *10 Values* are commonly understood. However, they are not always commonly practiced. These *10 Values* will help you build trust and accelerate relationship building. Those mastering these *10 Values* will be able to lead with speed as they develop 360° of influence from wherever they are.



Ria Story is empowering women to become the leaders they are destined to be™ with leadership development content specifically designed for women.

Ria teaches leadership and success principles in a real, relatable, and practical way helping you increase your influence, develop your leadership, and maximize your results.

Sexually abused by her father from age 12-19 and trafficked by him, Ria left home at 19 without a job, money, or a high school diploma. Realizing the biggest obstacle to success is embracing excuses, Ria set her goals high and worked to achieve them. Today, as a TEDx speaker, author, and certified leadership trainer with nearly 20 years of experience in addition to her MBA and several other management degrees, Ria shares the lessons she learned to be successful and influence people.

 *Fearfully and Wonderfully Me*
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~ Sam McLamb, VP & COO, CMP

“I am using your material to empower myself and my female clients. Thanks for sharing your story and a wonderful journey of growth!”

~ Sue Q, Licensed Clinical Therapist

“It was awesome! Ria has a real gift. I came away with so many helpful tools! Thank you Ria!”

~ Stefanie, Workshop Attendee

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