

# 17 Ideas for the modern world of work from altMBA



**You are more powerful than you think.**

Welcome to the age of leverage. A moment in time when each of us has more tools, more reach and more impact than a head of state did a hundred years ago.

Each of us has the skills and insight and power to see what's happening around us, to create new ideas, and most of all, to change the way others respond and act.

With this power, of course, comes the responsibility to actually do something with it.

At the same time that individuals have been handed the power

to make extraordinary change, a second law is working just as hard:

## **It's bigger than you.**

The network effect is fueled by Metcalfe's law—the power of a network goes up with the square of the people on that network.

The more people who use fax machines (or Twitter, if you want to update the idea) the more powerful the machine is.

The same thing is happening within organizations.

We don't need managers merely to ensure the compliance of the minions who do the work. Instead, we need leaders who realize that empowered creators, in a network, are able to make a huge dent in the status quo.

## **Leaders are made, not born.**

Leadership is for other people, it seems. Leadership is for someone who has unusual amounts of courage, insight or perhaps arrogance.

Except that's not true. That's a myth perpetuated by folks who'd rather have you comply with their instructions.

Leadership, as we have seen over and over again, is reserved for people who care. Who care enough to see, to connect, to make change happen.

As our economy shifts to one based on connection, not industry, there are more slots reserved for those that seek to make change happen, who will stand up and say, "follow me."

Your organization (big or small) needs more leaders like this. Are you open to making that difference?

# **Leveling up is a choice.**

Some people talk about continuing education as if it's an option.

Of course, it's not. It can't be. Not in a competitive world that's changing. The few who are standing still are falling behind. The few that say that they have no time will have even less time later when the urgency to catch up increases.

There are far too many barriers in our economy, but once you're inside the system, the opportunity to level up is largely driven by you, by what you choose to absorb, by who you choose to learn from.

# **They say you can't, we know you can.**

They have been saying it so long that they have become you. You've bought into the prevailing nonsense about natural limits, or about plateaus. They (and you, perhaps) might want to believe you need to wait until it's your turn.

But it is your turn.

Right now.

# **Dance with fear.**

Fear cannot be extinguished. Averting your eyes and pretending it doesn't exist won't help. Avoiding the opportunity to level up won't help. Keeping your head down won't help.

The fear remains.

Since the fear is going to remain no matter what you do, fleeing makes no sense.

Perhaps it pays to learn to use it as a compass instead...

The fear points you in the direction you need to go. Toward it, not away.

## **See, assert, change**

A simple three-part approach to every situation:

1. See what's going on. Learn to notice. Determine where the assets are, the limits, the worldviews.
2. Assert what you seek to do. Tell a story that resonates. Make your claim, "here, I made this."
3. Change the system, the rules, the people around you. All good work revolves around change. If you're not seeking to change something, no need to go to work today. But we hope you will.

## **Overwhelmed is temporary**

Sometimes we talk about drinking from the fire hose as if there's something extraordinary about lots of water coming through a pipe.

The goal of the fire department, of course, is to have bigger pipes, because it makes it easier to put the fire out.

Well, the same thing is now true of the information headed at us, and the opportunities we have to process it, to connect and to create.

One option is to artificially limit what we do, what we try, what we learn. To continually guard against raising our hand, so we will never find itself whelmed (over or under).

The other option is the option of being alive, of making a ruckus, of exploring the space.

It is the option of more cowbell.

We can practice this. We can discover that the edges aren't where we thought they were, that our limits are rarely being tested.

## **Out loud, in public**

Privacy left the building a long time ago. You are being tracked. Measured. Watched.

It's part of our economy based on connection, and it's not going to stop watching while you take a few minutes to do something embarrassing or personal.

And hiding isn't your style. Nor does it help very much.

What happens when you sprint, when you go full out, and when you do it with full knowledge that others are watching?

## **Hard work is far better than busy work**

Work is personal. It's an expression of who we are and the change we seek to make.

Work can be art if we care.

Or, if we refuse to be vulnerable, work can merely become the way we spend our days, a 60-year-slog on the way to not work.

Sign us up for making a difference.

## **The crowd is wrong. The critics are wrong. Useful feedback is precious.**

Is there someone smarter than you regularly giving you generous feedback?

Do they understand where you're going and what change you're

trying to make in the world?

If they don't care enough to know that, how can they possibly help you get there?

## **Management matters. So does Leadership.**

Managing competing priorities. Managing conflicting directives. Managing energy, passion and discord.

And leadership matters. Having the guts to say, "follow me." Being able to see what hasn't happened yet, or what needs to happen. Giving other people the power to make something happen.

Spend time encouraging other artists.

Teach, with the intent of making change.

## **"Here, I made this." Or possibly, "Here, we made this."**

Of course, you used to make stuff all the time. You made jokes, or craft projects or even homework.

Now, alas, it's really easy to hide. Easy to go to meetings. Easy to put it off until tomorrow.

Deadlines remind us of death. But initiating, instigating, becoming an impresario—these are the things that make us fully alive□□.

## **See the end before you begin the**

# **journey.**

Is that asking too much?

The work doesn't exist merely to please the boss or the client tomorrow.

The work is an arc. A progression of crafted deliverables to make change happen.

And the work is bigger than me, or you.

To do our work, then, we have to commit to seeing the change before we begin.

Because if we don't, how will we know when we get there?

# **Culture defeats everything.**

We accept the culture as something fixed, immutable, impervious to our efforts to change it.

And because it feels so permanent, we also begin to ignore it. A bit like gravity.

But culture is the deal maker, the deal breaker, the energy that changes everything.

Do culture on purpose. It's worth it.

# **It's personal.**

Of course it is. Would you have it any other way?

And since it's personal, make it matter.

Make it better.

Make change.

*This post appeared originally on [Seth Godin's altMBA](#) Very interesting program. Check it out!*

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