

Unwittingly

7 Ways Leaders Steal From Their Organization

Module 3 – Three Ways Leaders Cause Under-Performance

Brought to you by:

makeadentleadership.com



Shelley Holmes from MADL and for 20 years I've been coaching leaders into high performance and individuals in how to make their life flourish.

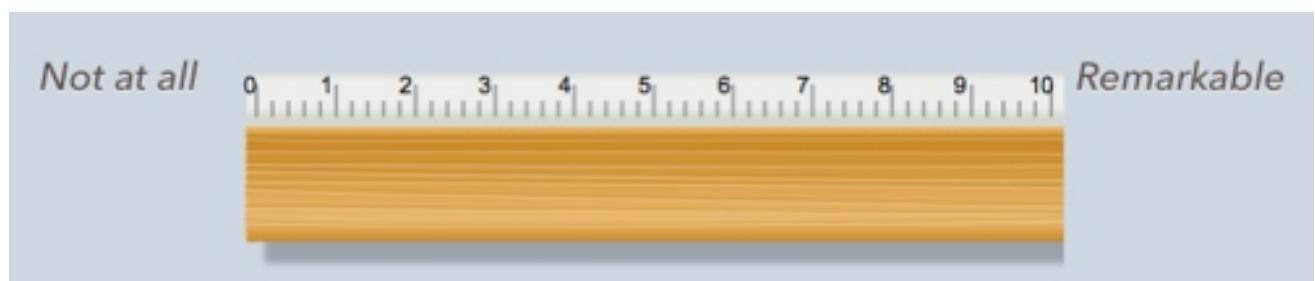
If you haven't already completed Modules 1 and 2 of this training I highly recommend that you stop right now and go do that. I consider them required viewing for any one who wants their life to flourish and to be a high performance leader. I want you to get full value from this training and it is important that you watch them in order. If you missed module one then, later in today's training, when I talk about being a business owner, you may not have the context within which I'm using that term.

Today's training is all about you making sure you are the type of leader who gets the most from your people. It is my job to help you be at your best and to bring out the best in others.

Mid-way through my career I was privileged to work at Colgate-Palmolive and to have the opportunity to work with and be led by several remarkable leaders. Those leaders showed me how to be a high performing leader. How to get the best from others and myself.

How to turn icky situations, like counseling someone about poor performance and be able to stop it from degenerating in to a slug fest that no one wins from, instead have it so that the person walks away from the conversation understanding they weren't performing at their best and yet feeling inspired to start afresh.

And in the years since, I've been constantly fine-tuning what those men and women taught me. Constantly growing my skill set. Constantly looking for ways to grow my own and my clients potential and today I'm paying it forward. The three tips today are really not rocket science, but my guess would be if you rated yourself on a scale of 1-10 - with 1 being absolutely doing none of this or didn't know about it to 10 I'm remarkable at these skills, you'd likely find you aren't at 10, nor are you at 1.



Beware of the "I knew that" syndrome. Is your performance remarkable?

So, beware of that "I knew that" syndrome. I know you might know it, but how well are you performing it? Have you got these skills and mindset embedded deep in your DNA? My goal is to get you as close to a 10 as I can on the Remarkable Leader Scale. What about you - is that where you want to be? Because if it is, I'll do my best to be part of your support team getting you there.

Yet again, we've got a lot to cover in this module and I'm going to go quickly ... because frankly time is growing short and it is almost time to get started.

Here's A Shortcut For Helping People Feel That They Matter

Quick quiz. Yes or No Answers

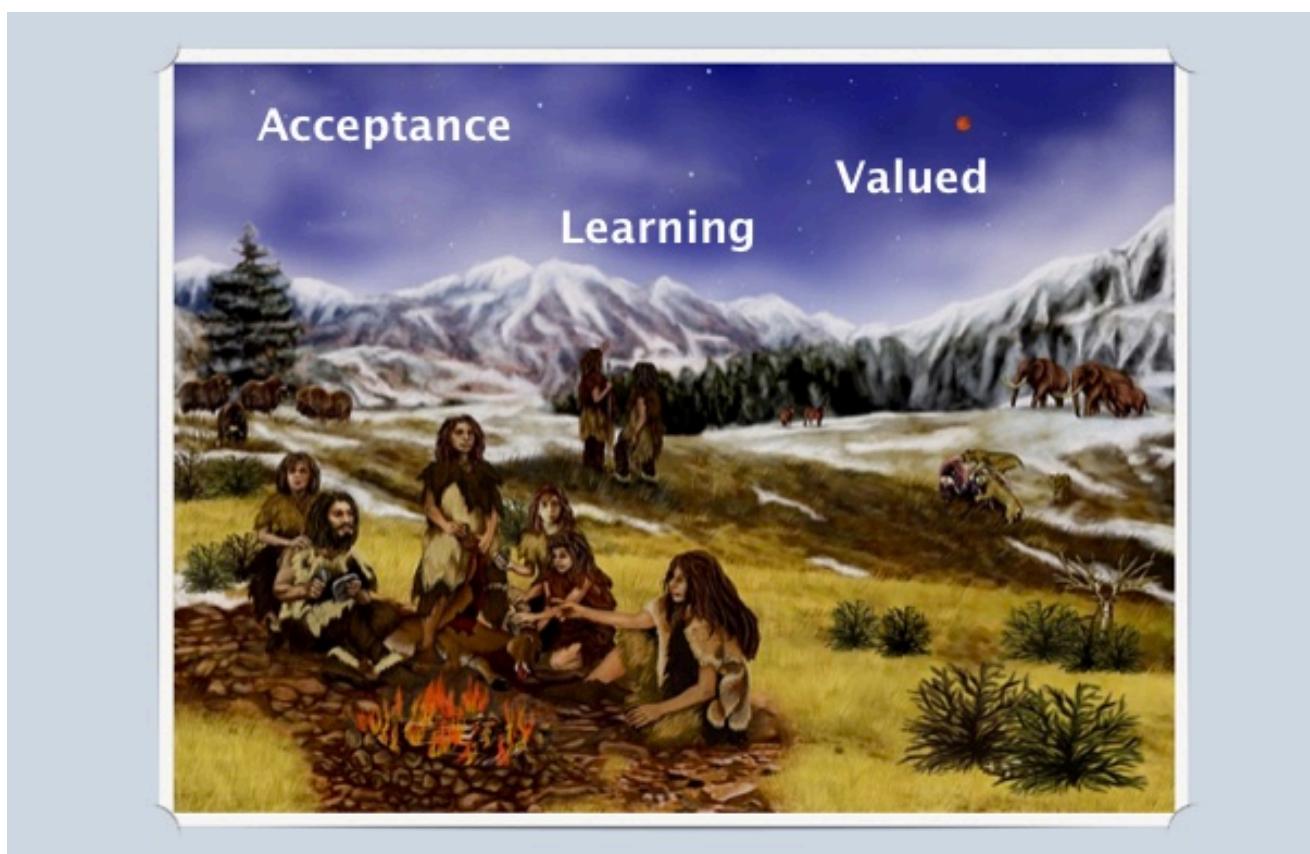
- Each day, are there people walking out the door of your workplace with knowledge, in only their head - for example how to successfully deal with a particularly difficult customer/work colleague - knowledge that could be invaluable to you and your team?
- Do your people feel that their knowledge is appreciated and valued?
- Does each person in your team feel a strong sense of belonging?

If you are a leader and your answers to these questions are anything less than 100% positive ... then you are definitely not providing excellence to your organization and you're allowing thousands of dollars every day to be whittled away from the bottom line.

Many organizations have a lot of rhetoric around being a learning organization and being inclusive. However, when you scratch the surface of these institutions you often don't find systems or processes in place that encourage people to share their knowledge and to help them feel that they belong - that what THEY contribute really is important.

And yet, sharing and feeling that we belong, that we matter is something that is innate within us ... **Since the beginning of mankind we have come together, at the end of the day, around the campfire, to share experiences, tell stories of our day and generally feel comforted by the belonging and acceptance of our tribe.**

Coming together at the end of the day to share accomplishments, nut through solutions to problems, listen with empathy to challenges faced, share some camaraderie around achievements worked through ... these make for a strong community ... a community that is learning and growing, continuously improving, helping people feel that their contribution is important. This connection and sharing is how we got from Caveman to Industrial Age to the Information Age.



Connection and sharing are two of the hallmarks of high performing teams.

So how do you stop knowledge flowing out the door every day - probably uncaptured and unshared?

How do you stop the people who work with you from feeling isolated and just a cog in the wheel?

How can you and your team share knowledge (not just information), so you all perform at higher levels?

How can you help them to feel that they are a part of a community: that they are included, accepted, valued?

And the answer isn't to be found in a WIKI or online or something like that. All the social media in the world does not make for true human connection.

In fact, it's pretty easy really. **Consider stopping 15 minutes at the end of the workday, or at least once or twice a week and bring your team together around the equivalent of the campfire!**

Get people talking about the common threads that challenge them each day. Get them talking about how they can push the boundaries of their knowledge and insights.

And if you thinking "*We are way too busy for this*", I say to you, you are way to busy to not do this! I say to you, you are way too busy because you don't do this!

Remember, I said one of the practices that sets high performers apart is that they **spend time in reflection and insight**. This IS an extremely valuable use of yours and your team's time. It is time that may stop you from chasing your tails and putting out the same fires over and over.

For example, what if one of your team members had figured out the best way to handle a difficult boss from another department. Wouldn't that be knowledge that all your team members might benefit from? Imagine sitting around talking about your greatest success today, when a team member says,

"You know how for months we've had trouble getting John from Shipping to get the monthly reports to us

Well, I sat down and thought about the various interactions I've had with John, how he responds, what seems to fire him up, what I'd done when I seemed to be successful with him.

And your team member goes on to describe a very successful interaction. How invaluable would that insight, about how to better work with John, how invaluable would that be to the rest of your team? How much time, money effort and frustration might it save the rest of your team?

If this scenario had played out in your team today, a team member had discovered a way to work with difficult internal customer, would your team member have likely just slipped off home, not even thinking to share her discovery?

Hopefully you have a process in place that gets people regularly talking about their insights, their ahas, the challenges they'd like support with.

If you don't, it's likely this team member would have gone home and not thought to tell anyone, not because she was being obtuse, but because she hadn't been trained to think that her knowledge could be invaluable to others. The system wasn't embedded into the DNA of the organization about sharing, learning, and knowing that your knowledge matters.

Giving people a regular forum to share their knowledge, to feel like contributing community members, is priceless.

So many people feel isolated as they beaver away at the tasks at hand, more often than not, NOT having their work and their knowledge valued. Setting up forums and systems for sharing of knowledge, face-to-face, is an important way of supporting people to feel that their contribution matters, that they are an important, valued part of this team.

Having specific themes (maybe a different one for each day of the week) will make these conversations more focused. It will also enable different people to come in and out of the campfire when topics that are of greatest interest to them are discussed.

Some ideas for themes or topics you could get your people to discuss might include:

Problem Solving- "I've been trying to nut out a way to solve xxx - can we brainstorm some ideas"

Seeking Experience - "Has anyone come up against xxx? How did you resolve it?"

Testing and Confirming - "I'm planning on doing xxx with this client, can you see any flaws in my approach?"

Sharing Best Practice - "Today I hit this roadblock, and here's what I did to work through it ..."

If you think this isn't a good use of time ... I challenge you over the coming few weeks to use the questions in today's handout, to rate yourself. Take a few minutes each day to stop and answer them ... you might be surprised just how much knowledge you personally are walking out the door with each day, that you haven't thought to share with others and maybe you'll even be surprised how disconnected you are feeling.

You'll be seen as a wise and inspirational leader as you slow down and create conversations that encourage thinking and reflection, to help people see how precious they are to the team.

Let's turn our attention to our second topic today, the biggest mistake leaders make when trying to solve problems. Because when problems come up in your equivalent of the campfire chats the worst thing you can do is to start problem-solving!

The Biggest Mistake Leaders Make When Trying To Solve Problems

How do you normally handle mistakes and problems in your team? Do you use a solutions focus or a problem solving focus to get things moving in the right direction?

And the clue to the right answer is right there in the question What do you want your people to focus upon ... solutions or problems?

If you are anything like me you were raised (both personally and professionally) with a problem-solving mindset. Sure, if you have a static, predictable, tangible problem - like fixing a mechanical issue - stick with the old problem solving method - spending time identifying what went wrong, what caused it.

However, if you are living in the messy chaotic world of working with people, trying to successfully implement change in a rapidly transforming world ... then a solutions focus is a far superior tool.

Regardless of whether you are working on someone who is rude and abrasive in the team, to finding the way to maximize revenue streams or improve customer service, the quickest way to get momentum toward what you want, is to build upon the strengths, qualities, characteristics, skills, tools, resources etc that are already being successfully used.

Generally nothing is 100% bad, 100% wrong, 100% off target. And this is the strength of a solutions mindset. With solutions focus we use these three principles:



- 1. Start with the end in mind*
- 2. Identify where you are already successful*
- 3. Build upon that success toward the end you have in mind*

So, lets start with the end in mind.

Imagine you had someone that was rude and abrasive in your team.

Have you got someone in mind? It is inevitable that you won't get through your working life without coming up against someone whom is hard to get along with. And I'm sure you've visualized what it would be like if a magic wand appeared and this person turned from a snarling tiger into a co-operative, helpful puppy!

What would it look, feel, and sound like if this person stopped being rude and abrasive? What would you, this person, the rest of the people in your team, your customers and suppliers, be saying, doing feeling, if this person became someone that is easy to get along with?

Anything that has been created in this world began with a vision. An ideal of what could be. The table you sit at, the car you drive, the house you live in ... all of these things began with someone wondering "What could it look like when"

This is why the solutions focus is so important. It gets people focusing on the future on where they are going ... not looking over their shoulder analyzing what caused them to get where they are. The past is gone - yes you can learn from it — but don't spend too much time in the past, you really want to focus on what is working right now and how you can build upon it so that you can get to where you want to go. Once you've got that end result clear in your mind ...

The next step is to identify how far you are from that perfect end result.

One of the tools in Solutions focus that I love, and is quickly jumped upon by my clients, is that of Scaling. With Scaling we ask the question, "On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being never happens, and 10 being as if you've already achieved your perfect-end result, where are you?"

In truth the answer that is given is largely irrelevant. What is critical, to getting people into solutions mindset is the next question, "What got you to the number - (for example 3)?"

And here's what's essential - **you are looking for what went well, not what went wrong. You are looking at when you had some degree of success with this problem. What did you do? How did you do it?** How can you build on what you already know and the resources, strengths, characteristics, skills etc you've got, to keep forward momentum? Using the rude and abrasive person example, you'd start asking yourself, "*When is this person not rude and abrasive? What is happening or not happening when he is good to be around?*".

Then the next step is to ask, "What small steps can you take to get moving forward on the scale?"

Solutions focus is about building a positive, optimistic, mindset - confident that you've have had success in the past and can build upon this to create success in the future.

Contrast this with the problem solving method, where the focus is mostly on what went wrong, looking at how they've failed, looking at how far they are from fixing this problem, looking at what we have to do to fix it.

I don't know about you, but the amount of times I've sat in meetings where the entire focus is on the problem, with limited acknowledgment of what is working. More often than not after repeated failure people end up feeling confused, frustrated and miserable.



From this standpoint do you think people who are focused on the problem are as productive and willing to do what it takes to succeed as someone who is focused on building on the momentum of what is going right and feeling drawn toward what they are trying to achieve?

Research has shown that people who are happy and positive are 30% more productive. It stands to reason really. Do you truly believe that someone who is feeling put down, beaten up, unsure of him or herself has the same solutions finding capability as someone who believes they have the ability to succeed?

Your choice. Get yourself and your people focused on problems and you'll probably get good at finding problems - and build a culture of negativity and slowness to react to the fast-paced world we live in.

Get yourself and your people focused on solutions and you'll probably get very good at creativity and innovation ... and build a culture of high performance, that is nimble and gratifying to be a part of.

Try it yourself over the next few days - when you're challenged by a problem - instead of focusing on the problem - start getting people focused on what they've done that's worked and how they can build on that to move toward the end goal. See how much more the energy and the creativity flow.

In a few days I'll give you access to the Solutions Focused Handbook, where you'll discover the entire range of skills involved in Solutions Focus mindset that will enable you to coach and lead yourself and your people this way. You'll be amazed at how quickly you can turn around seemingly difficult and challenging problems.

Which leads us to our third and final topic today. What do you do when you've got someone who is consistently under-performing?

The Fastest Way To Get A Team To Under-Perform

Every team has one or two of them. People who are under-performing ... whether it is they aren't as productive or capable as others in their team, are just plain lazy, are a wrong job/organization fit or have a personality style that puts others off.

The reality is, like dripping a couple of drops of coffee into a clear glass of water instantly discolors the water, these under-performers immediately discolor the performance of the team.

And, as their leader you need to quickly either coach that person up to an acceptable level of performance (using Solutions focused coaching skills is a great way to do this) or coach them out. If you try the easy route of hoping, that by some miracle or divine intervention, they'll improve ... you can rest assured they won't! And the longer you let the unacceptable performance of one or two individuals slide by, the more rapidly the entire performance of your team will begin to slide.

You and I both know that hours of potentially productive work time is spent in people complaining to each other about others in their team. I'm sure that you've done it yourself.

Well guess what ...

its your time to step up to the plate. You took on a leadership role, which means you took on the messy problem of dealing with under-performance. It is unavoidable. If you already know who the one or two are in your team that are either under-performing or not using their potential, it is time you either Coached Up or Coached Out.

My preference is always to coach up ... get someone to move into their potential. Generally, 95% of the population comes to work wanting to do a decent job. Sure there is probably 5-10% of the population that really are beyond hope (and they, you must coach out fast). But for that 90-95% who want to do a decent job, then you've got to find the leadership skills and coaching capability to help them get back up to speed.

If you are leader, letting under-performance go unremarked ... who is avoiding dealing with difficult employees (or doesn't know how to do it effectively) ... then **the uncomfortable truth for you is that your team will eventually perform to the level of the lowest performer.**

Savvy team leaders and engaged and empowered team members know this truth: they need to be good at dealing with difficult people and poor performers. They know that team member performance issues need to be addressed early, directly and frequently.

Sure, letting poor performance slide may seem easier and safer - particularly in the short-term, but it is team engagement and consequently team performance suicide if you do. You'll have poorer customer service, higher absenteeism, your high performers will leave in frustration and rather than coming to work with a spring in their step it will be a chore for everyone, you included, to come to work. And of course the impact to your personal business (Your Name Inc) will be disastrous.

Sure addressing low performance and dealing with difficult employees can be tough.

Many challenges are likely to come your way as you hold people to a higher standard.

But, what's your alternative? ... **A mediocre team, being led by a mediocre leader, delivering mediocre performance ... You are better than that!**

I have coached hundreds of leaders who were unsure of how to handle poor performers, afraid that they would make it worse, that they would end up with a very messy situation and wishing they hadn't prodded the snake with the stick! Truthfully, I've been there myself. I know how hard it is to go up and talk to somebody about his or her performance. I always have butterflies in my stomach before a performance improvement conversation ... and I teach this stuff. So I get it.

However, coaching up is a skill-set and a mindset that is learnable and with practice can be done with grace and ease. And even though you'll never get rid of the butterflies you'll certainly get better results once you've got those skills and your mindset right.

Coaching up with grace and ease is learnable



Here's one small tip that can help you to get your mindset right before you hold a high stakes conversation.

Get Your Energy Right By Focusing On What YOU Want

Have you ever been in a situation where someone is giving you performance feedback and you get the sense that, even before the conversation started, they have judged, tried, hanged and quartered you? Even though the words coming out of their mouth might have been ok, you knew that you were never on a winning situation in that conversation, right from the get go. You come away from that feedback session feeling drained, or uncomfortable and certainly not feeling in the mood to do good work.

We've all had that right?

The truth is unspoken feelings influence any conversation, and all relationships. Not only do they send a vibration out into the universe so that you can only but attract to you what it is you are feeling - anger begets anger - they also change the tone of your voice, your body language, your facial expression, and the words that you choose to use.

Even though you may be well justified to feel cross, frustrated, hurt etc by another person's actions, if you step into a conversation with these emotions pulsing

through you - the other person is going to pick up on it (your vibe) and immediately become defensive.

Defensiveness certainly doesn't enable a conversation to progress toward a satisfactory outcome for both parties. So you need to get yourself to a place where you are more focused on where you are heading – the successful outcome that you want and how you and the other person are going to feel and behave - than the problems that you are faced with.

Don't ignore the problems – just give more focus toward where you are going than where you are. In other words be solutions-focused rather than problem-focused. When you do this you are able to put yourself (at worst case scenario) in an emotionally neutral place and best case scenario in an emotional state of hope, expectation and anticipation.

And don't dismiss this as airy fairy clap trap. Its not. Self-regulation is one of the cornerstones of Emotional Intelligence and this giving more attention to what you want, than don't want, is a tool that people who are high in self-regulation use to get them into the space where they can use all their energy to find solutions, rather than letting some of it leak away caught up in negative emotions that are never going to get you where you want to be. They understand the importance of the vibe they have going on in them when they step into high stakes conversations.



Giving your energy to focusing on what you want is a tool people high in Self-Regulation use regularly

Another tool to help you move out of defensiveness is to carefully examine the stories you've got going on in your head.

At MADL we call these Angel and Devil Stories.

Angel and Devil Stories

When someone else's behavior is having a negative impact on you, you start to create a story in your mind about why that person is doing that.

The Devil story is usually about another person.

Imagine someone lets you down and it's not the first time. Your devil story might go something like, "*It's because she is irresponsible and unreliable and she doesn't care about the success of this project.*"

Devil stories are usually underpinned by you thinking that the person has some sort of character flaw, which you label - e.g. Irresponsible, and/or you are making assumptions about that person's intent (they don't care) and/or you are blaming them.

Unfortunately Devil Stories tend to get you quite hot under the collar. And are generally not entirely factual. **Once you get a good Devil story going, you'll likely find it difficult to remain neutral and just look at facts.**



The other story, the Angel story, is a **self-serving story you create when you aren't taking responsibility for your actions or inactions**. A story that justifies your actions or inactions, and generally blames circumstances or finds causes for your behavior rather than admitting to any inherent character flaw in yourself.

Let's go back to the earlier scenario of someone letting you down, yet again.

As you are fussing and fuming about how irresponsible and unreliable the other person is, have you stopped to think how you might have contributed to the problem?

Maybe you hadn't addressed the issue the first or second time the person let you down. Maybe your Angel story gives you an out like, "You were so busy that you didn't make a fuss, you just got on and did it yourself." If your previous missed requests went unaddressed, maybe the other person doesn't feel you are serious about deadlines.

Or, maybe you contributed to the problem of the person not getting your priorities high on their priority list because you did address the missed deadlines, but in the process got snappy with this person for being irresponsible and unreliable (yep you used those words!) and it has put some barbs in the relationship. As we all know, if we aren't feeling the love toward someone, going out of our way to help them isn't high on our agenda.



Either way your action or inaction could be part of the problem of this person not delivering to you on time.

Unfortunately when people are laying blame, labelling and making assumptions about others or self-justifying their own behavior it becomes difficult to get to the truth of both sides of the story.

The worse your view of the person - the easier it is to justify not doing the right thing that supports a healthy productive relationship ... taking unproductive actions such as avoiding them or getting frustrated and cranky anytime you interact with them.

Your essential first step, is to understand that ... both your own and the other person's story and ... how each of you view the world are quite different. This is why preparation for a performance discussion is so important. Stopping and thinking about the view of the world that each of you hold, can help you to temper your emotions and get you thinking rationally - focusing on the outcome you truly want.

To step into the conversation with a clear mind - not coming in projecting all over someone else - you need to get the stories out of your head and get some clarity.

There are a whole raft of **exercises you can do to sort out your Angel and Devil Stories**, but here are a few questions that will help you:

- What are the labels I most commonly use to describe this person (either to myself or others)?
- When have I seen this person act in ways that are the complete opposite of the labels I have been using?
- From this person's perspective, what might be the reasons/causes for him/her to act this way?
- What have I been doing/not doing that is making this situation worse?
- What are the facts, just the plain observable facts in this situation - not my labels, assumptions, and other negative thinking?
- What do I really want here?

Write your answers out to these questions. When you've got stories swirling around in your head, they take on bigger proportions. When you write them down on paper, when you start to sift story out from fact, it will give you greater clarity.

It will enable you to choose the energy and vibe you want to go in to the meeting with and the result you're working toward. It doesn't mean that you won't address any issues. It just means that **you are going to do so with the right energy, the right attention to what you want.**

Certainly, there is a lot more to preparing for and handling a high stakes conversation than we have covered here today, but even taking the time to ask and answer those Angel and Devil questions will get you going in the right direction.

Take Action

Ok, so just like in the last module, now it is time to move into action. Grab your diary right now and look for at least four places over the coming two days where you can take action on what you've discovered. Again, just start taking some baby steps.

Don't feel you have to implement everything and be experts in what I've shared with you over this training and with the rest I've got coming your way. Even the remarkable leaders I coach pick and choose which ideas, tools and strategies I share with them to use.

Its your mindset that is most important, and whilst I'll continue to share with you mindset tips to help you strengthen where you are going and most importantly how you are going to get there, the actual how will be up to you. You take those ideas and tips that resonate for you, for where you are right now.

So **if you are ready to join with me in making a positive dent in the universe, in a few days time I'm going to open up to you access to the members restricted area of the Make A Dent Leadership website ... at a hugely discounted rate,** and I would absolutely love it if you decided to be a part of the great group of leaders who are already using the tools.

The way it works is that I'll give you access to a coupon that you can use to get up to 50% off the normal prices of the MADL site. This is my way of saying thanks for signing up to the MADL list and participating in this training. However, that

discount is only open for a couple of days and then that coupon is closed down and you won't be able to access the discount again.

I reward people who take action fast. You'll reward yourself when you take action fast and work on using the skills and mindset, the tools and training that I share with you.

Once you've signed up, you'll have access to the various handbooks I've mentioned in this training series:

- Thinking Like A Business Owner
- Strategies for Flourishing In Your New Role
- Get It Done, Done Well, Done On Time

Along with hundreds of others resources like,

- Ebooks
- Audios
- Checklists and Templates

I'd love to be a part of your support team, helping you to grow into the remarkable leader you can be, to help you make the dent in the universe you desire. I look forward to having you as part of the group of great leaders who are members at the MADL website.

In the meantime I'd love to hear about what's next for you. Now that we've looked at the 7 Ways Leaders Unwittingly Steal from Their Organization, how are you taking action? What successes have you had so far? What are you looking forward to implementing?

[Please leave a comment](#), and of course if you like what you've discovered today and found it useful, please click the like button and pay it forward by sharing with the people you care about.

Look out for the email from me tomorrow, as it has details on how to access the discount. As a business owner responsible for the success of your business you'll want to get your hands on these resources so you can take charge of your life, so you can live, love and lead at a remarkable level.

About Shelley Holmes

Shelley inspires leaders to be inspiring ... by being bigger than the people and personal problems they face each day. Using tools, tips, ideas and strategies that help them to be really clear about what is 'success critical' and how to get there fast, **Shelley guides leaders to flourish as they lead, live and love at a remarkable level** ... making the dent in the universe they are destined to.

For several years, Shelley was a key leader in a High Performance Organization (that had national and international recognition). It is this real world experience that underpins and brings to life the theory and insights gained, from her deep study of high performance leadership.

Around the globe, she has worked with organizations (with total revenues in excess of \$116 billion) and supports thousands of individual leaders through, coaching, consulting, workshops, webinars, audio programs and the Make A Dent Leadership website (which has over 5,000 visitors per day).

Shelley's Philosophy...

Whether you like it or not, to a great extent, the work that you do defines you as a human being.

On grand and small scales, the way you interact with others, the products and services you are a part of delivering, all roll together to become a part of the legacy that you leave behind. The way you deal with others, the things you teach them, that cause them to grow, and become a better version of themselves as individuals, work colleagues, leaders, and parents ... now that defines who you are!

If you are ready to be the best possible version of yourself, to lead with more energy and passion than you thought possible... if you are ready to make a dent in the universe ... then:

There are hundreds of resources like this article at [Make A Dent Leadership](#) where you can join our tribe of leaders who are focusing on being inspired and inspiring and making their dent in the universe.

You can connect with Shelley

Website: MakeADentLeadership.com

Contact: Email

Twitter: twitter.com/MakeADentLeader

Facebook: facebook.com/MakeADentLeadership

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/shelleyholmes