

# Prologue & Introduction

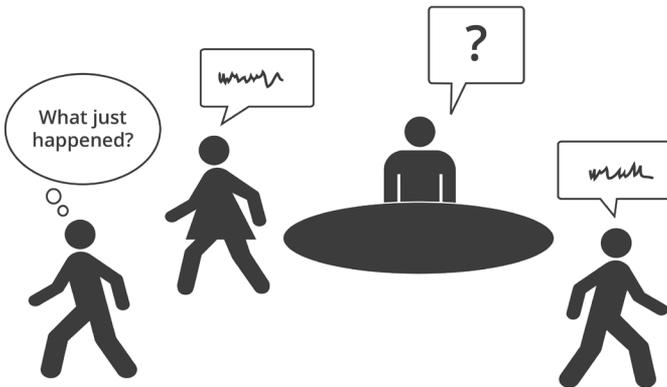
PROLOGUE:

# Defining One Team

## It Is Time To Act

Legendary Hall of Fame baseball manager Casey Stengel said, “Gettin’ good players is easy. Gettin’ ’em to play as a team is another story.”<sup>1</sup> Given that organizations everywhere are filled with loosely aligned groups of talented people falling painfully short of their collective potential, Stengel was right:

**Activating inspired teamwork is a distinct and essential skill.**



If you’ve ever walked out of a meeting and muttered, “This team could do so much more,” then searched for a mechanism to activate inspired teamwork, this book is for you. It’s a research-supported solution for any person who, like Stengel, passionately believes in the power of collective effort and is seeking ways to make it a daily reality.

We promise: During the first 10 minutes of your next meeting, you can inspire and develop a more productive team. And you don't even need to be the meeting leader. We're that confident. We've seen the results too many times not to be. (To the skeptics: There's a note for you near the end of this Prologue.)

Nearly all the professionals we've ever met, in every organization, want to be a part of something bigger than themselves. They want to contribute to a movement that achieves extraordinary things. But this book isn't for those who merely harbor this motivation. Evidence shows not all people have the skills to *act* in ways that are consistent with their values. The hard-hitting pages that follow are for those who are ready to *do*, who can see what their team can become – and want to develop greater skills to get there fast.

We don't care what role you have in the organization, whether or not you went to college, or what level of "status" you've achieved. The idea that any of us should wait for the "leader" of the team to create the dynamics essential for high performance is a costly and destructive belief. Organizations are filled with people who are waiting. It's time we all step up, speak out, and activate inspired teamwork.

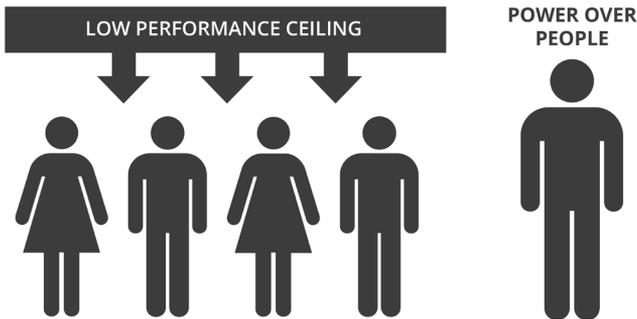
### **The Anti-Productivity Forces**

Every team has limits in what it can achieve. Why do some have ceilings of performance that are lower than others? The research, revealed in *ONE Team*, on why many teams consistently underperform, as well as what best predicts how well a team will achieve, may surprise you.

A primary reason, for example: One or more team members think they're using forms of power for the benefit of the team. In reality, though, the power is used over others, rather than for others and in service to the

team. (And misuse of power isn't reserved just for those at the head of the table.) Such teams suffer these and other symptoms:

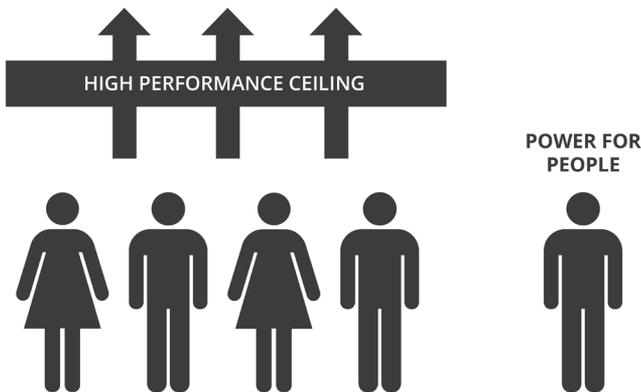
- A. An incessant need by a few to make the majority of decisions
- B. Daily discussions where participation is not equally distributed
- C. Information that is purposefully or systemically restricted
- D. Hidden agendas
- E. The “I have more time at this company than you” dynamic
- F. Teammates who rationalize a resistance to change
- G. Average to low levels of expressed empathy by some toward others



Incredibly, most team members are aware there are counterproductive forces restricting the growth and achievement of their team. Yet, they either believe they are powerless to do anything about it or they don't know how to overcome the behaviors and activate the greater potential within their team.

It's wrong for organizations to be denied productivity levels they could claim if the teams under their direction were more functional. More so, it's insulting to those who devote lives to careers only to retire with just a few memories of inspired and functional teamwork.

This book, with the tool it shares and the leaders and teams highlighted as evidence of its power, equips you to play a greater role in elevating the ceiling of performance for your team.



### ***ONE Team Is Different***

If you want a better machine, you buy one (or fix the one you have). If it's a leaner operation you desire, you study the data to reduce waste. But if you want to elevate team performance? Breakthrough solutions aren't found in the spreadsheets. Regardless of how often we hear it, we passionately reject the idea that people are "cogs in a machine." (No joke. Some people still make this claim.) People and teams are not instruments intended for cold manipulation; therefore, they shouldn't be treated as such.

Activating the full potential of a team isn't accomplished or sustained when people pontificate, reorganize, demand, cut, reward, punish, travel to the occasional ropes course, or cross their fingers. While some of those techniques influence one-team dynamics, to inspire any team to elevated performance requires one thing to happen: It must be the *team's idea* to come together as one.

The most effective method to ensure an individual or team owns anything is to ensure they are a part of its creation. Nothing achieves this like the powerful tool presented in *ONE Team*. It's a particular type of question research shows few are asking, despite the fact that when it's used, it has a dramatic effect on the quality of teamwork necessary to break any performance ceilings.

There are a lot of books on teamwork, as well as the topic of asking questions and their subsequent effectiveness in achieving improved performance. *ONE Team* is different. It's for those who want improved results faster. Rather than making the thrust of this book about the technique of asking questions, this book provides you with the template you need to put the skill into immediate action.

### **One Team Quickly**

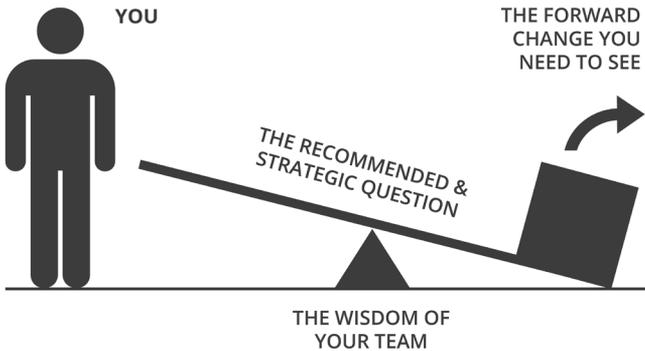
*ONE Team* quickly activates the wisdom and better actions within your team.

**Ten minutes into your next meeting you can create the dialogue research shows is necessary for your team to benefit from improved one-team performance.**

Your team's 10-minute discussions come in the form of Activation Points. These points focus on specific behavioral competencies essential to

improving teamwork. The competencies, selected from top organizations worldwide, are expressed in get-to-the-point-quick essays that will prompt your team to say, “It’s about time we talked about the real issues.”

The collective awareness your team will establish in minutes then serves as the “fulcrum,” the pivot point of wisdom from which a subsequent, recommended, and strategic question will derive its strength. Here’s what it looks like:



In moments, you will be prepared to inspire the conversation your team has been waiting to have (with destructive impatience, in some cases) and which is needed to influence change. Want to quickly create greater collaboration among your peers? Need to have higher levels of trust in order for your team to realize its potential? Use the table of contents to find the one-team behavior you most desire, and use the fulcrum and tailored questions on the corresponding pages to facilitate and influence quicker change.

By systematizing the approach of infusing these 10-minute discussions into weekly practice, as our most successful clients do, we promise you’ll

see sustained and enduring momentum in discovering what your team can achieve – without having to spend an additional minute on other techniques.

## A Note To Skeptics

You might be thinking, “Ten minutes? The creation of ‘one team?’ That’s impossible.”

We welcome the skepticism. Frankly speaking, we don’t blame you for doubting the promise. Here’s why: There are no shortcuts to excellence. Additionally, using the tools and approach in this book doesn’t mean a team will find itself transformed in minutes, everyone holding hands and singing the same song. In fact, that’s not the definition of “one team.”

This is the definition of one team:

***Two or more people, who may have different responsibilities or find themselves separated by circumstances, yet are united in focus and purpose, and whose collective actions deliver different and greater performance than would otherwise be accomplished by individuals who only share common tasks, objectives, or other work.***

Members of this particular type of team function in a progressively inspired state as a result of the collaborative partnering with their peers. When optimized, members of the team associate so strongly with the identity of the whole that they willingly, and often unconditionally, contribute efforts beyond those expected or ordinary. Ultimately, the benefit of this approach is excellence in delivery on the purpose of the team, as well as extraordinary intrinsic value for its membership.

It would be irresponsible to believe that a group of individuals could form and then perform at this defined level within 10 minutes.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, equally negligent to belong to any team and not consistently make efforts

to develop and optimize the efforts of that team to this end. Ultimately, it's about a team's continuous improvement.

The have-to-go-faster world we all live in now is having a dangerous effect on employee and team development. Too many organizations claim they "don't have time" to improve team effectiveness. It doesn't take a genius to know the devastating effects such a philosophy has on business results.

The claims of the don't-have-time assembly and the can't-be-done-in-minutes group are appreciated, yet present opportunities for further discovery. Talent development – be it individual or collective – is much different today than it was just a few years ago. It is no longer adequate to rely on an event-based approach to team improvement (meaning the team participates in a one-day off-site training program and then goes back to work) for three specific reasons:

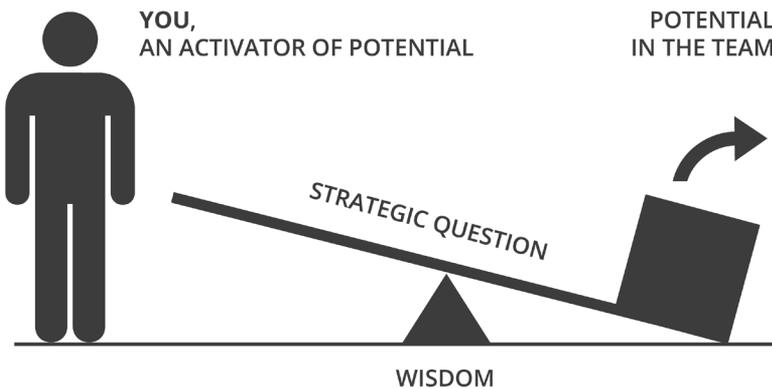
1. What a team must accomplish changes rapidly. Therefore, how a team functions together – or team competencies – must also change and develop with those needs. Teamwork is not static, nor should its development be so.
2. Time is in higher demand. Therefore, it is essential that an emphasis be placed on leveraging daily interactions as the mechanism for development.
3. "Team" is defined differently than it was before. Gone are the days when you spent your time with the same people, sitting in the same room, building, or even on the same continent. Now, members of teams, and their locations, interchange rapidly. As well, employees find themselves on several teams at once, based upon multiple responsibilities – yet all these employees are a part of one grander team.

As we've supported organizations of all sizes while they effectively address these dynamics (as this book does), we consistently see remarkable results.

### **One Team Begins**

If an organization has employees grouped together who are not mentoring, teaching, directing, facilitating, or coaching – in other words, consistently activating the potential around them – as they move through the workday, the company is already at a considerable disadvantage. They can't hire and retain talent fast enough to keep pace: Talented people grouped together, but not equipped to activate the potential within each other, suddenly become quite average (at best) in their performance.

**In order to succeed, today's organizations must have systems that strengthen individuals and teams as they do their work.**



From thousands of hours of experience, we know this for certain: Within 10 minutes your team can have the discussions it needs to have to elevate its performance effectiveness. Regardless of whether it's transformative or incremental steps that are made, it's the direction that is most important. For if a team is not working on improving itself, what is it becoming?

With each turn of the page, *ONE Team* will activate an inspired power that is unique to the team of which you are a part. And with this comes the achievement of your team's immense potential.

For videos and resources that compliment *ONE Team*,  
and to support your team, visit  
**<http://oneteambook.com/team>**

## INTRODUCTION:

# Why Inspired Teamwork Matters

### **Inspire Others To Act Differently**

From your position on the team, how do you bring people together to function as one inspired team – in minutes – so they can achieve what has never been done before?

On January 20, 1961, newly elected United States President John F. Kennedy inspired millions of people to think and act differently. In his inaugural address he stated, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”

With those words Kennedy planted a question that grew into a movement. It was a question that set a focus, brought a majority of Americans together, and energized people to perform at levels previously unachieved. Consequently, Kennedy prompted some of the most transformative changes in history – among them, important civil rights would be expanded, a generation of young Americans were inspired to join the Peace Corps Kennedy created, and man stepped onto the moon.

Can you imagine if Kennedy had scrapped his script and stated, “Here’s what you have to do to make our world better.” Such a statement would have only created more of the same: the world as it was before he was elected.

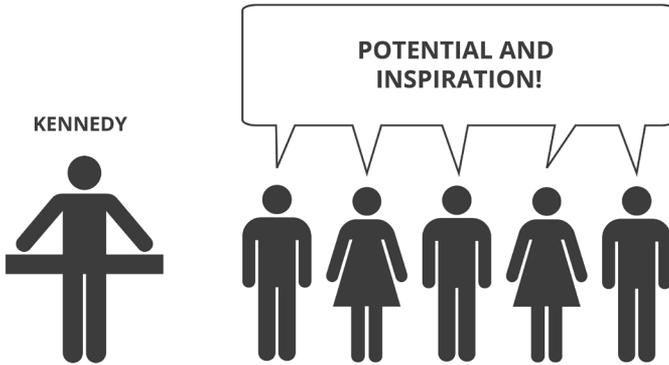
President Kennedy shifted the focus from “me” to “we.” He knew what all great leaders of change know:



**Deep inside every person is a fundamental desire to do good things – and not just for him- or herself, but for collective well-being.**

Leaders quickly differentiate themselves when they act on this wisdom, because too few in the world of business remember to do so. Or, they don't know how.

Instead of business as usual, Kennedy elevated thinking. Rather than lecturing about potential, he activated it by planting a question that inspired a change of focus. What will you do for your country? This opened minds to new possibilities that were previously unimagined.



## Rearrange Thinking

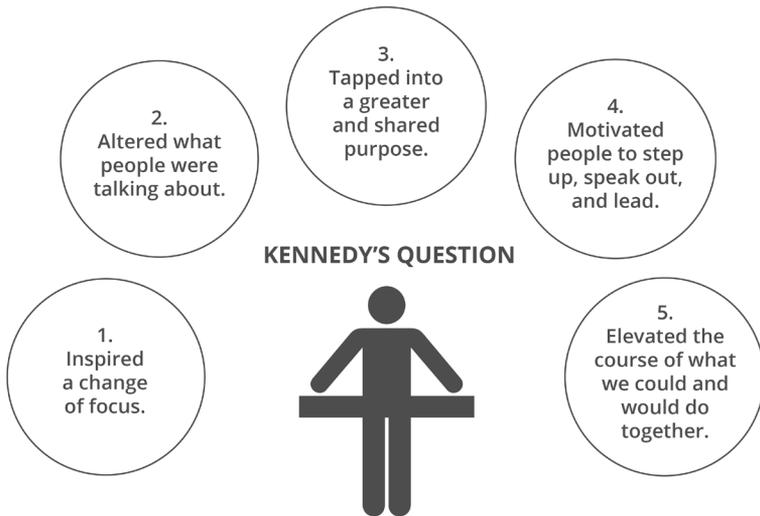
Try this experiment: Ask someone next to you a question, and then watch what happens to that person's focus. Observe any shifts exhibited in the person's energy.

You can safely predict that your unsuspecting bystander at least briefly shifted his or her focus. The reason: Questions trigger the mind. They activate new or different thinking. And it works nearly every time! Our gray matter can't resist it: Ask any question and – bammmmm! – human beings seek the answer. Depending on what type of question you asked, you may have even noticed a sustained change in the person's thoughts and energy. This wisdom is profoundly important, and profoundly underutilized in influencing others: The right question changes behaviors.

It's likely you already knew the effectiveness of good questions long before you began reading this. What's not as likely is that you've observed leaders around you asking effective questions so you can talk about what needs to be addressed in your business. Now, we promise you that within the first 10 minutes in any meeting or interaction, regardless of your position on the team, you can use your wisdom to rearrange thinking and inspire high-performance teamwork.

To accomplish dramatic changes, Kennedy didn't tell citizens what to do for their country. He certainly didn't demand that they simply work harder. What he *did* do was rearrange thinking. He moved the view of our world. Asking the right question opens and lifts the mind from what is – to what can be. The more the question taps into a greater and common purpose, the more leverage it has. This develops the capacity your team has for excellence *together*.

By prompting a particular question at the right time, President Kennedy caused predictable outcomes to occur, all of which are identical to what organizations are in desperate need of today. The question:



Kennedy did what leadership expert Warren Bennis said a good leader must do if the team is to succeed: Make people feel that they're at the very heart of things, not at the periphery.<sup>3</sup> This is the core of activating one-team performance. When people are at the "heart of things," it enables team members to perform with levels of inspired, collaborative determination.

## **Okay, You're Not Kennedy**

Few of us will ever be in a position of grand influence like Kennedy's. Yet, just because you may not possess the power of presidents, CEOs, and other organizational executives, does that require you to submit your team to a fate untouched by you? We emphatically argue no. The number of boxes under your name on an organizational personnel chart is not related to the level of responsibility you have to bring your best effort to the team.

What are the consequences if your team fails? What would be the significance if every team in the organization only maintained its current level of productivity? Such questions can be useful, as they get teams past the focus on corporate performance targets – to a conversation about home foreclosures, college tuitions unpaid, families pulled apart, and personal health problems.

Inspired teamwork matters. It matters to children, marriages, communities, and our own fulfillment. There is urgency in developing the skill of functioning as one team that eclipses the needs of the boss or the desire to score well on the next performance review. To embrace the responsibility we each have to contributing to the success of the team is an act of immeasurable service.

Consider Kim, in her 20s and new to a team within the health care industry. With no one reporting to her, and several she's responsible to, she found herself in a project meeting where tension was rising. She had an idea, but who was she – a newcomer! – to speak up? Plus, she hadn't learned the cultural norms of what was acceptable and what was off limits for new employees. But she did know this: Her responsibility was to deliver value.

Kim cleared her throat and said, "I don't know what you guys know, and I'm eager to learn, so I can't help wondering: When we've been in similar situations with customers in the past, what have we learned the customer

must see from us – that is also directly aligned with our value promise?” The results of the meeting were immediately enhanced. “This type of question,” Kim reported later, “immediately expanded the vigorous debate – but now with a focus on the discovery of solutions. I certainly didn’t come up with the action steps we outlined. But I feel good about the win I helped inspire.”

## **The Duty Of Each Team Member**

Whatever our position on the team we should never relinquish our role – our duty – to activate the greatness in others. **As a member of any team we only realize our individual potential when we successfully contribute to the effectiveness of the whole.** An aligned, coordinated team with a common focus will always outperform a group of unallied individuals. Develop a team that regularly functions with this wisdom and you achieve the extraordinary.

It’s staggering how few organizations make developing inspired teamwork a priority. Consequently, they suffer not only poor results, but harbor workplaces where individuals feel marginalized.

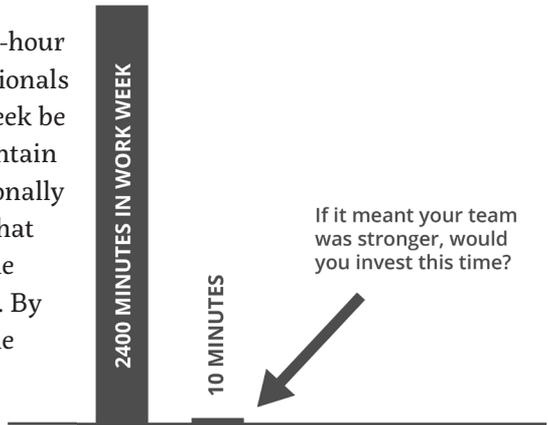
In your next meeting you can start, transform, or accelerate the quality of teamwork. The proven wisdom and practices in this book will equip you to better deliver your responsibilities as a team member – as well as get you closer to any job you want to have on the team. By using the principles in *ONE Team*, you will also be able to answer these questions: How do I more effectively lead those who lead me? and How do I create a more satisfying experience while being a member of this team?

There is urgency in this matter. Team achievement – indeed, personal fulfillment – is at stake. Activate your team’s potential by inspiring others to think and act differently. Do so with a particular type of question that moves their world.

## Two Questions Your Team Must Ask

**If you had 2,400 minutes to spend, would you be willing to invest a mere 10 of those minutes if it meant your team was healthier, stronger, and further equipped to deliver excellence?**

The sum 2,400 is how many minutes your team has in a 40-hour workweek. While most professionals find it laughable that a workweek be expressed in 40 hours, we maintain the number so as to be intentionally conservative regarding both what is required of you, as well as the benefits your team will receive. By investing a small fraction of the time you have, you can build something great.



The 52 Activation Points in *ONE Team* provide you and your team with a yearlong framework to activate inspired teamwork. If your team chooses to move through the points sequentially, we encourage your team to ask these two questions and share responses prior to beginning:

- 1. Why is it important to each of us that we develop inspired teamwork?**
- 2. As we move through the next 12 months, how will we know we're successful in developing a one-team approach?**

As you move through the year, rather than a “check the box” exercise, we suggest you regularly assess your progress against the answers your team provides to these two questions. We know from experience that you will see your team make the important progress you envision.

To assist in your team’s journey, we’ve broken the Activation Points into five chapters – four through eight. At the conclusion of each chapter we’ll provide:

1. A summary of the “Big Ideas” covered in the preceding chapter.
2. A team assessment you can use to measure your progress against the answers formulated to the above two questions.
3. Periodic “Successes from the Field,” which show additional real-life examples of what the tools look like in action.
4. Instructional segments that equip your team with the “how to” so they can further activate improved performance based upon the content in *ONE Team*.

## **Putting This Book To Work**

The sequence of the Activation Points, while deliberate and proven to accomplish the results you desire, is not arranged or weighted in relation to importance. (Otherwise the topic of “trust” would not be the last Activation Point.) That said, the order of the Activation Points is of less consequence than the development needs of your team. Therefore, it might be best for your team to consider these alternative methods for using *ONE Team*:

- A. What do organizational surveys tell you are the greatest behavioral development needs of your team? Use this data to design the course your team will take through the Activation Points. If surveys indicate you need greater trust among team members, for example, then begin with those related Activation Points.

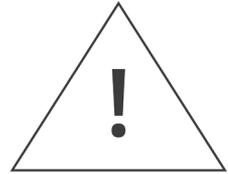
- B. If formal surveys are not available to you, create your own assessment. (These can be even more powerful than the formal.) Ask your team to answer the following questions, either individually or collectively, anonymously or publicly, then use their answers to chart your course through the Activation Points:
- a. As it relates to behavioral competencies, what are our greatest strengths as a team?
  - b. In terms of our interactions with one another, what behaviors should we target for future development opportunities?
  - c. What are specific reasons why we should invest in developing more effective, inspired teamwork?
- C. Individual accountability to developing the strength of the team is a powerful dynamic. You can foster this by rotating responsibility among team members: Each week it's a different person's obligation to bring to the team the Activation Point of his or her choosing and share the rationale of that choice in advance of any discussion.

### **An Important Caution**

Over the past 20 years our organization has taken on the audacious task of equipping teams to *sustain* extraordinary levels of achievement. We climb high peaks (and enter a few toxic arenas), stumble sleep-deprived through airports on six continents, endure knee-crushing seats on crowded planes, and get home long after our loved ones have gone to bed. And we do it for one reason: We are obsessed with our mission of equipping contributors at all levels of an organization to better put individual and organizational values into action. When people do so, they realize their brilliant potential.

No surprise, we've observed teams in dire straits, and then had the thrill of celebrating with them when they've delivered results greater than they thought they could. *ONE Team* brings you the insights and wisdom these leaders and teams have revealed to us in their journey.

Before we begin, though, three points of caution:



1. The topics covered in the Activation Points are rich in content, making it tempting to devour all of them in one sitting. However, the unique questions that follow each point provide the how to activate one-team performance. We encourage you to do the same thing we have leaders in the field do: *Ask the questions and allow your team to answer.* Be purposeful: Your objective is not to show how smart you are; what you're after is one aligned, focused, high-performing team. A question is only as valuable as the level of ability demonstrated in effectively listening and hearing the response.
2. Asking questions requires people to think. This is an exercise many teams, indeed entire work cultures, have been trained for generations to not do. The human brain, if not self-aware, seeks the path of least resistance. Translation: Too many people are waiting to be told what to do. On the surface, such an approach appears easier. But one day into executing any project and it becomes painfully evident: Your team's success depends on people thinking, anticipating, and acting on their own in a manner that's accountable to the whole. In other words, when you ask the unique questions in this book, don't be surprised if initially there's silence in the room or on the phone. Your patience, your determination to hold to the belief that the team is stronger than any individual, will pay off. With increased frequency, the team will respond: They will think, which means you will have begun to activate more effective actions.

3. Thousands of years of conditioning have taught all of us that leadership is a function of the position a person holds. Yet, there's enough research now to confirm what most of us intuitively know: Successful teams are composed of individuals who embrace and lead their area of responsibility. Each employee is a leader: All are leaders of self; some are leaders of teams and projects; a few are leaders of the business. Regardless of the role, everyone influences the effectiveness of the team. Indeed, everyone *should* and must if the team is to succeed. We've observed leaders everywhere in all types of roles and situations who use the wisdom in this book to activate their team's potential. As you read, you'll often see the word "leader." Know that we're addressing everyone, and leaving it to you to determine the unique application of the content as it relates to your role.

## Get ready. This book is an accelerant.

You're about to use a proven approach to strengthen your influence – and activate the potential with those whom you are teamed. The result will be the discovery of what only one team can achieve.