# RESET

BOOK CLUB GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

1. "Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets." What was your reaction to this quote from Paul Batalden?

2. Heath describes the Northwestern Memorial Hospital receiving area team as being stuck in a "bad equilibrium": not an emergency, but rather a subpar kind of performance that seemed to perpetuate itself. Diagnose what was dysfunctional about the receiving area: What were the forces that kept the receiving area stuck in a bad place?

3. Has the "progress principle"—the notion that visible progress is the single most powerful motivator of employees—been true for you personally? What's a recent example for you where the sense of tangible progress on a particular project kept you enthusiastic and committed?

4. What was your initial reaction to the book's core framework: Find Leverage Points and Restack Resources?

5. What is the "boulder" in your life or work? Is there an area where you feel stuck? If so, did you take any initial inspiration from the first chapter about how to start making progress?
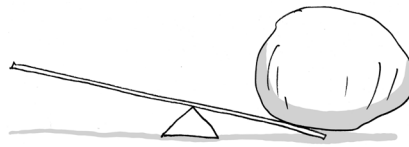
FIND LEVERAGE POINTS

CHAPTER 1: GO AND SEE THE WORK

1. Why do you think something that seems relatively obvious—the value of "going and seeing the work"—happens so infrequently in organizations?

2. "If you aren't embarrassed by what you find, you probably aren't looking closely enough." Where, in your organization, do you think a careful observer might spot some of those embarrassing issues?

3. Recall Tom Chi's point about decisions usually being made in favor of the best debater or the most powerful person in the room. Discuss any examples of this kind that you've experienced. AND consider the opposite: Was there a time when a team you were part of consciously elevated evidence and experience over seniority and debating prowess?

4. Do you think you would have completed the bicycle drawing correctly? What did the "illusion of explanatory depth" spark for you? Have you experienced this phenomenon at home or work? (Perhaps there was a situation where you thought you understood something ... until it broke.)

5. If a turnaround consultant parachuted into your organization, what do you think are some of the first moves they'd make?

CHAPTER 2: CONSIDER THE GOAL OF THE GOAL

1. Have you ever experienced a "survey shakedown" like Ryan Davidsen did? If so, talk about what happened.

2. A footnote in the chapter mentions Goodhart's Law: "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to become a good measure." What does that mean to you?

Have you experienced that phenomenon at work? (It's closely related to the idea of "gaming," the tendency for people to start doing all kinds of questionable things to hit The Number.)

3. Did the story of Marisa Lavars (the woman who'd initially set the New Year's Resolution to "get fitter") spark anything for you personally? Are there goals you're chasing where you might not have considered carefully "the goal of the goal"?

4. Try applying the Miracle Question to a problem you're facing at work or at home. What are those first visible signs of the miracle that you'd see? Can you imagine ways to bring those signs to life without the benefit of a miracle?

5. Consider the story of how the Department of Education and Veterans Affairs started proactively forgiving veterans' loans. Isn't it interesting how the easiest/best way to handle things (just forgiving the loans outright) wasn't intuitive or natural within the government? It took a ton of work to achieve that "easy" solution. Why do you think that is? By extension, do you see opportunities in your work to leapfrog to a better/easier solution?

CHAPTER 3: STUDY THE BRIGHT SPOTS

1. Studying bright spots can be such a simple and powerful way to improve your efforts. You start by identifying a goal (in Gartner's case, it was improving customer retention) and then pinpoint your best performance in the context of that goal (i.e., the client partners who had the best retention rates). Finally, you study those positive outliers (people / clients / projects / moments) to learn how they succeeded. Take a few minutes to run this game plan with a real-life challenge in your group, whether personal or professional. What's the goal? What are the bright spots? And how could you study those bright spots to unlock useful Leverage Points?

2. "There's no such thing as an average pilot." What did you think of the story about the air force pilots? Are there similar situations in society where you think we are trying to serve an "average" person who doesn't actually exist?

3. In the story of how animal shelters were transformed, a critical moment comes when the new shelter overseer (Gujjarlapudi) has an idea that only would have

occurred to an outsider ignorant of the domain. Why do you think that happens so often—that transformative ideas come from people who aren't immersed in the particular situation?

4. Think about a personal relationship that's important to you. What are some recent bright spots in that relationship? Think carefully about what allowed those moments to happen. Some aspects of the moment may not be reproducible (i.e., maybe it was that person's birthday). But chances are you could identify some aspects of the moment that could be recreated: What time of day was it? What did you do? Where were you? What were you doing before that moment? When we understand what allows us to succeed, it gives us the hope of reproducing those victories.

CHAPTER 4: TARGET THE CONSTRAINT

1. What dazzled Heath about the Chick-fil-A drive-thru was that its flow was dramatically better than other chains' drive-thrus. Can you think of another example where there's a competitive market in which one player is dramatically more effective than the others? What's your explanation for that gap in performance?

2. Ponder this: What is the constraint on you being more effective in your current job? What's the #1 thing holding you back? And how might you take a small but effective step toward whittling down that constraint?

3. One paradox about the Chick-fil-A story is that, as a customer, you are likely to wait longer in its drive-thru line than at any other comparable chain. So why are customers so happy to visit there? Are there any broader lessons here that go beyond the world of fast food?

CHAPTER 5: MAP THE SYSTEM

1. Recall the overhaul of the radiology clinic that was discussed in the chapter. It was accomplished by a cross-functional team working together for only 5 days! If you were able to conjure a similar project at your office—a broad team with a week to focus on a revamp—what do you think you could accomplish? Where would you start?

2. The chapter discusses the dangers of silos—in particular, how people come to prize their piece of the puzzle over the whole. Are there examples in your organization where you see some groups/teams that can "win" even as the whole enterprise might lose? (An example for clarity's sake: Maybe the marketing team attracted a huge number of leads with a new campaign—thus making heroes of themselves—but the leads were poor quality, which ended up wasting a lot of salespeople's time and did not ultimately attract many new customers.)

3. What was your take on the high-dosage career counseling story? From one perspective, it's astonishing that a micro-dose of effort—30 hours of coaching—would have any impact at all, given the huge forces involved (educational institutions, families, poverty, personal networks, etc.). Explain why you think the "micro-dose" worked in this situation, despite those long odds.
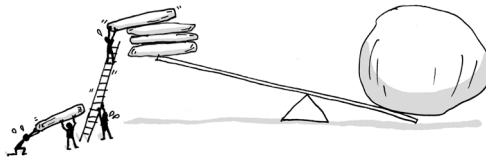
RESTACK RESOURCES

CHAPTER 6: START WITH A BURST

1. Brigid Schulte said that her life was full of "time confetti." Do you share this feeling? When does your time seem most scattered/splintered?

2. One of the themes in the chapter is the idea of "working to completion": i.e., that getting from 80% complete to 100% complete is a huge and important jump, and that making that jump warrants doing things that may seem inefficient. What's an example from your life or work where you've *failed* to do that—where a project has strung out indefinitely even though it might have been easily completed given the right time and focus?

3. Ayelet Fishbach said, "The only time we don't throw a party is in the middle." What was your reaction to that? Can you think of any way to "shrink the middle" in the change efforts that you're part of right now?

4. One footnote discusses a reader's "Life Crap" month, in which a bunch of necessary but annoying tasks were brought to completion. If you had a Life Crap month, what would be on your list of tasks?

CHAPTER 7: RECYCLE WASTE

1. Heath talks about his efforts to cut waste from the "getting ready for school" time in the morning. Think about your own morning routine: Do you see any pockets of waste? (And be careful not to assume that idleness is synonymous with waste—if sitting quietly with a cup of coffee helps you get ready for the day, then it's a value-adding activity.)

2. Think about some particular activity that happens regularly in your organization through the lens of DOWNTIME. Go through each of the eight elements and see if you can identify any waste that could be cut.

3. What was your take on the tension between shifting right as a good thing for employees (as with the underwriters) and shifting right as a bad thing (as with factory medicine)? Which parts of your current portfolio of work would you be happy to see "shifted right," and which parts would you never want to lose?

4. Think about Jeff Bezos' distinction between Type 1 decisions (big and nearly irreversible) and Type 2 decisions (readily reversible). Do you think, in retrospect, that your organization has made some Type 2 decisions using a Type 1 process? What about in your personal life? Do you think there might be areas where you're deliberating too much on a decision that, if it failed, would be reversible?

CHAPTER 8: DO LESS *AND* MORE

1. If you're doing the book club with your work team, try to carve out time to do the STOP/START/LESS/MORE activity. How might you shift your resources to push in a new direction? If you're not doing the book club with your work team, ponder what YOU think would fit into those four categories.

2. At Strategex, they find that businesses' best customers are often undercoddled and their worst ones are often overcoddled. In your organization, which customers / donors / stakeholders do you believe are overcoddled and undercoddled? How might you change your work practices to better align your resources with your most important constituents or goals?

3. The chapter proposes a thought experiment about ranking the relationships in our lives and assessing who is over- and under-coddled. What do you think that ranking would look like for you? Who is claiming too much of your time and energy, and if you were able to reclaim that time and energy, with whom would you invest it?

CHAPTER 9: TAP MOTIVATION

1. Over the past few years, what was the period when you felt most motivated to do the work in front of you? And what was the period when you felt least motivated? What would you guess was the difference in your personal effectiveness between those two periods? (I.e., twice as effective? 10 times?)

2. What do you think would happen if you ran a "genius swap" with your team at work? Would there be any barriers to making it happen?

3. In your career, have you had a boss or mentor who was especially good at recognizing other people? What were they like? What effect did that recognition have on you?

4. "Progress is the spark that makes believers of skeptics." Have you ever witnessed that statement in action? Can you recall a time when change was greeted reluctantly, at first, and then people saw, "Hey, this really works!" and got on board?

CHAPTER 10: LET PEOPLE DRIVE

1. Thinking about the Spotify 2x2 grid (high/low alignment on one axis, high/low autonomy on the other), where do you think your organization fits?

2. What's your own personal preference with respect to autonomy? Is it "the more, the better" for you? Or are there times when you've felt too much autonomy (and perhaps not enough support / guidance)?

3. The T-Mobile TEX story provides an example of a big, systemic "reset." It was expensive and difficult but proved effective, despite the initial skepticism inside T-Mobile. What do you think were the crucial elements of the TEX system that made it succeed? Is there anything in the design of TEX that would be useful for your team or organization?

4. Guy Krueger, the archery coach, went through a major transition as he learned to ease off the reins when working with athletes. If you manage others, has there been a time when you realized you were micromanaging too much? If so, how did you figure it out, and what did you do to change your approach?

CHAPTER 11: ACCELERATE LEARNING

1. Recall the story of the 49ers and the HappyOrNot terminals they used. Does your organization have any way to collect quick samples of feedback (from customers or employees) in this way? In your judgment, has that data proved useful?

2. Do you have any experience with "waterfall-style" planning cycles, even if it's outside the software industry? Would you agree with Heath's assessment of the disadvantages of such a model?

3. What did you think of Eric Nuzum's metaphor of the futility of "trying to pick the best tomato seed"? Does your organization get caught in that trap sometimes (i.e., trying to predict things that might have been easier to test)?

4. Has there been a time in your career (or personal life) when the speed or quality of the feedback you received unlocked a higher level of performance? (i.e., by learning faster, you succeeded faster)

CONCLUSION

1. What was your take on the story of Baia's work at Hospital Sirio Libanes? Heath suggests that the reader "steal this game plan!" Do you think it could work in your organization?

2. After having read the whole book, how did your impressions of the core framework change from when you first encountered it in the Introduction? What will linger with you about the idea of Finding Leverage Points and Restacking Resources?

3. What did you think of Heath's point that, while emergencies are effective in sparking a response, change doesn't require a crisis—that it can be chosen? Can you think of a recent time when you (or your team) made that choice?

4. What are the top few things you will take away from *Reset*? A year from now, what do you think will still be sticking with you?