



The great discovery

How to Achieve Breakthrough by Thinking about the Ordinary in an Extraordinary Way



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Abstract

In today's business environment, there are three imperatives that are crucial to success. First, business leaders, at all levels, must seek new and better ways to make their organization more innovative – in everything they do. Second, business leaders must continually strive to capture and deploy world-class practices that support the design and flawless execution of critical work processes. Third, business leaders must develop and retain a workforce of world-class leaders if the latter two objectives are to be fully realized.

The Great Discovery is about a time-tested way of thinking that can be rapidly deployed by an enterprise to better unify and focus the efforts of individuals and work teams to increase their odds of achieving breakthrough – in every thing they do. It is a proven way of thinking that empowers the ordinary to achieve the extraordinary. For over twenty years, this way of thinking has brought verifiable breakthroughs to many of the world's top corporations. These successes were carefully researched and studied by a team of renowned subject-matter-experts. Their first-hand experiences and research-based conclusions were then filtered to extract the key principles that under girds the realization of quantum change.

Built upon the foundation of successful Lean Six Sigma practices, this systematic way of reasoning reflects the pattern of demonstrated leadership beliefs, values and practices that guides individuals and work teams to breakthrough improvements – not just in their professional lives, but in their personal lives as well. In this sense, the Great Discovery is a universal way of thinking.

1.0 Program Introduction

1.4 Revealing the Discovery. *What is the Great Discovery and how can you benefit from it?*

Key Learning Objectives

Through this discussion, you will discover a time-tested way of thinking that will better enable you to reach out and experience breakthrough in your life. You will discover a proven path to your dreams – to a higher quality of life.

You will also discover how to focus your spirit to better envision your journey by leveraging the strong spirit that is already within you. In addition, you will learn how to overcome road blocks and conquer obstacles along the way by using a SMART system. To stay on track, you will discover how to employ a simple strategy that will help you better innovate solutions for your life and more effectively execute the remedies, yet done so in a highly focused and productive way.

Taken together, a mastery of these four objectives will greatly increase your odds of success – in everything you do – in your personal life, your home life and your work life. It is a unified way of looking at the world – its The Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

The Power of Science

If we were to travel back in time, we would find that many of the world's great discoveries were made possible through the power of science. It is through the power of science that we can gain a new and unique perspective of the world around us – points of view that will better enable you to discover how to close the gaps between your life experiences and your expectations of life. Through the power of science you can realize breakthrough to a higher quality of life – in everything you do, the Six Sigma Way.

Let's set the context of our discussion by considering the scientific path to breakthrough. We will begin our journey by examining the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*, or simply *SWOT* for short. The Six Sigma Way is a systematic process of reasoning. It is a proven way of thinking that empowers the ordinary, people like you and I, to reach out and achieve the extraordinary. It is a unified way to achieve and amplify the results you derive from the pursuit of your dreams – in your personal life,

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home life and work life. It's the path to a higher quality of life.

Understanding the Way

The *Six Sigma Way of Thinking* is a vital tool for building personal and professional relationships – the kind of relationships that are more focused, highly synergistic and mutually rewarding. It can help you manifest a stronger, more enriched way of life for your family. Furthermore, you will be able to create an environment that will foster greater unity, personal growth and satisfaction – within and between family members.

In terms of your work life, the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking* represents a powerful set of leadership skills that will better enable you to identify, assemble, train and guide high performance work teams. In other words, you will be able to engage a systematic method for more effectively unifying work teams and focusing their efforts, not to mention keeping all the team members on the same page.

In addition, this way of thinking provides you a proven system to innovate and execute high quality solutions that can resolve key business issues and problems. Through this time proven way of thinking, you will be able to realize breakthrough in all aspects of your home life, personal life and work life – and that's *The Six Sigma Way*.

1.5 Building the Foundation. *What are the big ideas underlying The Great Discovery?*

Elements of Success

Let us now turn our attention to the building blocks of a high quality life. That is, the four big ideas supporting the Six Sigma Way of Thinking. Essentially, the Proven Path is the driveway to your dreams. In turn, the Strong Spirit is the energy that empowers the tools of construction and the Smart System is the process that guides the skill of your hands, while the Simple Strategy defines the way in which you get the work done. These four big ideas form a strong foundation for supporting the Six Sigma Way of Thinking. And when you practice these big ideas in a purposeful and meaningful way, you will gain greater clarity of vision, expand your senses and sharpen your mind. In turn, as your pattern of thinking becomes more enriched, you will discover more

and better ways to increase your freedom of choice. As your freedom of choice increases, you will naturally gravitate toward a Six Sigma life.

However, when a person attempts to short-cut one or more of these ways, the result is often a house of cards. So, by following the *Proven Path* and leveraging a *Strong Spirit*, *Smart System* and *Simple Strategy*, you will develop the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*, which in turn, will provide you with greater *Freedom of Choice*; thereby empowering you to live a *Six Sigma Life*, regardless of whether it's your home life, personal life or work life. Figure 1 illustrates the hierarchy of concepts underpinning a Six Sigma life.

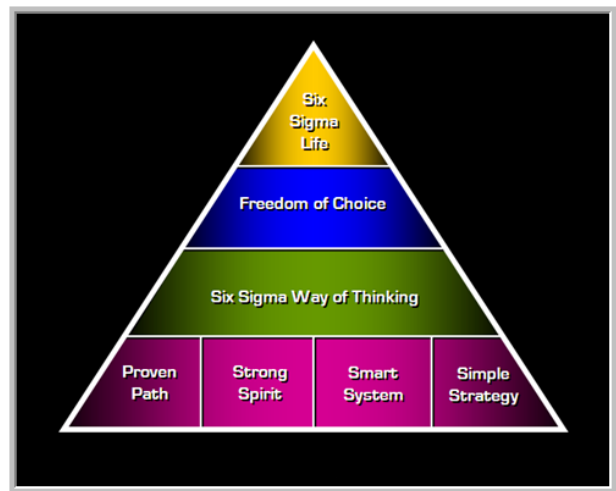


Figure 1. The Great Discovery Hierarchy of Concepts

1.6 Establishing the Terminology. *What questions are crucial to understanding The Great Discovery?*

Quality of Choice

We will now address several crucial questions related to the Six Sigma Way of Thinking and then explore the critical concepts that underpin each answer. In this way, we can establish some guiding terminology that will be freely used in subsequent discussions.

As a matter of priority, let's begin by asking: "What is quality of choice?" Simply stated, it's a choice that can be made without undue constraints. But what is meant by the phrase "without undue constraints"? Within the context of our discussion, we must recognize that a constraint is merely some type of limitation or restriction



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– you know, a roadblock in your path that prevents you from doing, thinking or otherwise experiencing something.

Of course, the word “undue” means that the presence of a constraint, whether intentional or unintentional, cannot be justified, or that its existence is somehow improper or otherwise unwarranted. Examples of this are clearly seen in certain legal, moral, ethical, or physical situations.

Freedom of Choice

Building on the “quality of choice” idea, let’s now ask the question: “*What is freedom of choice?*” In a strictly technical sense, freedom of choice is your ability to make quality choices from a set of possibilities. This means that you are free to select among two or more options without undue constraints.

For example, consider the case where someone takes the keys to your car and then locks all the doors, after which the keys are thrown into the river – never to be seen again! At that moment, one of your transportation options was suddenly constrained. Thus you were unduly forced to surrender freedom of choice – perhaps more so if your money and credit cards were in the car!

Certainly, your loss of freedom was not justified or warranted; therefore, the loss of your keys represented an “undue constraint” on your ability to select from among your normal list of transportation options.

Defects versus Constraints

To better illustrate this concept, consider the case when you purchase a car. Just imagine getting into your new car the next day, turning the key and the car won’t start. Well, the defect underlying that performance failure is a constraint on your freedom of choice. Why? The answer is simple: you can no longer choose to drive your new car that day. Hence, your freedom of choice was unduly constrained or otherwise restricted by virtue of the defect.

Thus, any kind of defect will, to some extent, constrain a customer (and even the provider) from realizing full value entitlement – in one or more ways. Simply stated, defects ultimately cost everyone – the car dealer, the manufacturer, your employer and many others that are within the defect’s line of sight.

But there are many other ways in which your freedom of choice can be constrained, even though a defect (per say) is not involved. For example, your car may be capable of traveling at over 100 miles per hour, but the speed limit is posted at 55 mph. Yes, the legal limit is constraining your freedom of choice, but not unduly so – there are justifiable reasons for enforcing the constraint – like traffic laws and safety considerations. Consequently, your freedom of choice might be somehow limited even though a defect was not involved. Thus, we may conclude that all defects are constraints, but not all constraints are defects.

Quality of Business

For just a moment, let’s consider a business. Do you think that a company or institution (regardless of its size or what it does) would want freedom of choice – you know, the ability to make quality choices among a set of desirable possibilities? Of course, the answer is a resounding “yes.” Freedom of choice is essential for a business.

For example, an enterprise could be constrained from achieving its organizational values for a host of reasons, like poor product or service quality, inadequate productivity, weak organizational culture, poor work habits, insufficient capital – even self-imposed constraints like unwarranted resistance to change – from customers, management and employees alike. If your business had greater freedom of choice, what would be different? So, if you had more freedom of choice, what might be different and better in your home life, personal life and work life? Such is the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

1.7 Linking the Concepts. *What are the crucial links between The Great Discovery and Six Sigma?*

Quality versus Grade

Let’s now discuss a very important, yet commonly misunderstood concept – the idea of quality versus grade. To better understand this distinction, as well as its implications for your life, consider a piece of fabric. Generally speaking, the grade of that fabric is determined by the number of threads per inch.

As one might expect, a higher grade of fabric has more threads per inch when compared to a lower grade. Naturally, you would expect to pay more for a higher

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grade, simply because it costs more to produce – owing to the greater density of threads. Now, let's consider "grade quality." This refers to the "goodness" of the threads, which is unrelated to the number of threads per inch. Interestingly, the quality can vary even though the number of threads per inch has not changed.

For example, you might select a high grade fabric (like a piece of silk), but the quality of the threads could be poor, owing to such things as variation in thread thickness, color distortions or excessive moisture content, just to mention a few sources of variation. Conversely, you can have a low grade fabric that is of high quality.

Owing to these distinctions, you should now better understand why it is possible to have a high grade product or service, yet experience low product or service quality. Given these combinations, one might be inclined to ask: "Do the ideas of grade and quality hold any implications for the fabric of my life?"

Cost of Quality

As yet another example, consider the case where you experience poor service quality in a 5 star hotel and then, the next day, received outstanding service at a 2 star hotel. So, should you pay more for a quality experience? Well, the answer is simple: "Grade, yes – Quality, no." Grade is an option, whereas quality is a basic expectation.

Well, your life is no different. You might be experiencing a high grade life (lots of possibilities to choose from), but the quality of your life is poor (because you have so many constraints on your choices). On the other hand, you could have a life with few possibilities to choose from (i.e., low grade), but have few constraints on your choices (i.e., high quality).

Naturally, a high quality life with lots of possibilities is ideal. This means living good and living large. Obviously, these factors must be carefully weighed when designing your own destiny! Of course, if you don't design your own destiny, it is likely that someone (or something) else will.

Six Sigma Life

Let us now ask the overarching question: "What is a Six Sigma life?" As a guiding definition, we could say that a

six sigma life is one in which you would have "freedom of choice among many world-class possibilities."

This means that you would be free to choose (without undue constraints) among the best, most desirable possibilities from all over the globe. Analogously speaking, you would be free to select the highest grade fabrics made from the highest quality threads. Thus, we conclude that a six sigma life is a life of both quality and quantity. In short, a six sigma life is living large and good.

Life Sigma Grid

To better grasp this big idea, consider the *Life Sigma Grid* illustrated in figure 2. From this graphic, you can see that freedom of choice is on the vertical scale and the number of world-class possibilities is on the horizontal scale. As freedom of choice goes up and, at the same time, the number of world-class possibilities is increased, the number of "life sigmas" also increases.

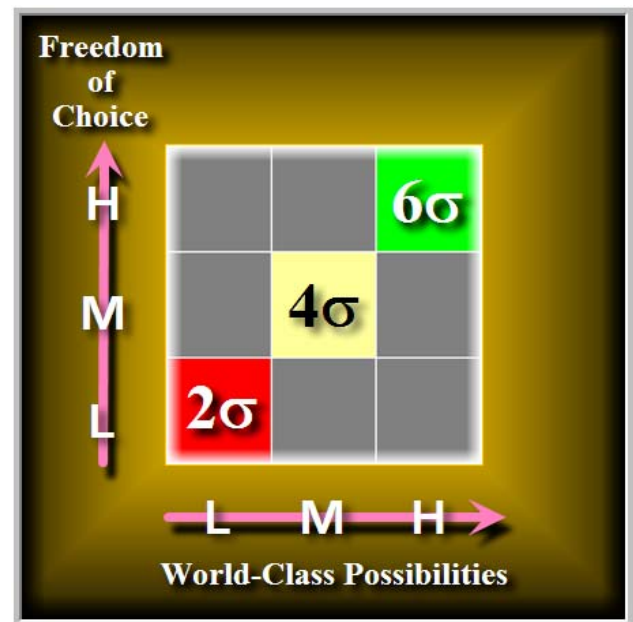


Figure 2. Life Sigma Grid

Given this, it can be said that a six sigma life is one in which a person experiences a great deal of freedom to choose among many world class possibilities. When you have a six sigma life, you have the "green light" to enjoy your life to its fullest; however, a two sigma life – well, that's the case

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where a person is burdened by many constraints and has very few options to select from.

Certainly, a two sigma life would be filled with many uncertainties, stress, anxiety and intolerable levels of risk, not to mention how these factors might trigger other constraints – like low self-esteem which, in turn, would tend to perpetuate the cycle of sadness and despair. Of course, in the middle of the grid is an average life – a four sigma way of living. Needless to say, the average life is likely punctuated by moments of five sigma experiences, and perhaps even three sigma experiences!

Benchmarks of Life

At this point in our discussion, you might be wondering where your life would benchmark on the *Life Sigma Grid*. In other words, you might be curious to know the sigma of your life. You might even wonder about the sigma of your business? Is it possible to have high freedom of choice, yet very few options to select from?

On the other end of things, is it possible to have a lot of options to select from, yet endure a low freedom of choice among those things? Thus, you might find that your true “life sigma” is somewhat “shifted” from the grid’s diagonal line (red, yellow and green).

Defining the Discovery

But regardless of your benchmark (or that of your business), it should now be apparent that a *Six Sigma Life* is one of high quality and quantity. This means living out your values in a grand way. Simply stated, six sigma means living large and good.

Building off our previous discussions, we are now positioned to reveal what the Great Discovery actually is. Essentially, it is “a proven way of thinking that can empower the ordinary to achieve freedom of choice and realize a six sigma life.” As should be apparent, *The Great Discovery* is not just for your home life and personal life, but your work life as well. This is the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

1.8 Exploring the Map. *How can The Great Discovery lead to breakthrough?*

The DNA of Dreams

At this point in our discussion, you might ask how a six sigma life can be achieved. Well, the mountain top answer is simple – follow the *Proven Path*. Essentially, this path will guide you from the innovation of your planning through the execution of your journey. Figure 3 displays the *Proven Path* and its basic components.

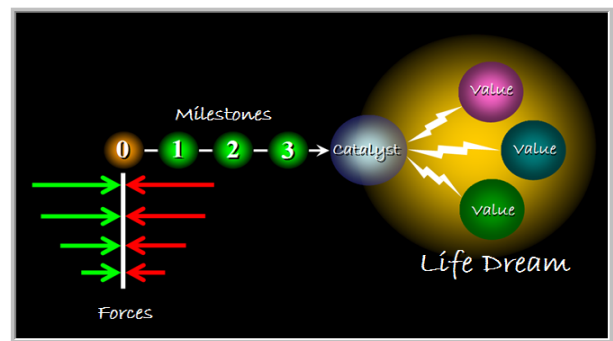


Figure 3. The Proven Path to Breakthrough

With this said, you might be wondering where the *Proven Path* leads to and what the final result will be? Well, the *Proven Path* will show you the way to the realization of your life dream. But have you ever stopped to consider what a dream really is? What the DNA of a dream might be? Interestingly, a life dream is comprised of two basic components; namely, the catalyst and the values.

The Role of Values

Let’s begin with your values. Owing to multiple meanings of the word “value,” the great discovery is built around the idea that a value is something of worth, utility or importance to your life – not to be confused with the idea that it is some kind of deep seated belief or favorable economic balance point.

So, something of Six Sigma value would have a world-class level of worth, utility or importance. This means that the value of something would be great, of the highest order, or ranking among the foremost in the world.

Nature of a Catalyst

Let’s now consider the nature of a *Catalyst*. While this word might seem somewhat illusive, it will take on



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greater meaning as we progress in our discussion. For right now, let's just recognize that a catalyst is comprised of two interdependent parts.

The first part is called the "Dream," while the second part is the "Power." In this context, it can be said that your *Catalyst Dream* creates the power you need to live out your top values. Thus, your life dream is defined by the values you want to live out, as well as the catalyst that will give you the Freedom of Choice to do so.

Eliminating the Constraints

However, in most cases, the realization of your *Catalyst Dream* is often blocked by one or more major constraints. For purposes of forward planning, such constraints are referred to as "milestones," but after successful corrective actions are taken, the milestones are then viewed as achievements.

In short, a milestone must be treated as a constraint going in, but viewed as an achievement coming out. In order to eliminate a constraint, you must apply your life forces. In this context, we can say that a life force is some factor in your life that can influence the realization of a milestone. That is to say, a force is something that can cause a change in the condition of a constraint.

If the force makes a positive change (i.e., serves to eliminate or minimize the constraint), then it is considered to be a "*Driving Force*." However, if the opposite is true, it is called a "*Restraining Force*." If the collective influence of all your life forces (drivers and restrainers) is positively biased in favor of forward momentum, you have a green light, so to speak.

In turn, this means you have sufficient power to progressively eliminate the constraints to your *Catalyst Dream* which, in turn, will generate the *Freedom of Choice* you need to live out your values; thereby, making your *Life Dream* a reality. And that's the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

2.0 Proven Path

2.2 Understanding the Essence. *How large is the gap between what is ordinary and that which is extraordinary?*

Focus of the Discussion

Let us now turn our attention to the *Proven Path*, which is the roadmap to breakthrough – The Six Sigma Way. As you will learn, the *Proven Path* was discovered after close and detailed examination of the many artifacts resulting from a wide array of successful Six Sigma applications from all over the globe. Therefore, we will launch this discussion by asking the question – "*What is Six Sigma?*"

Essence of Six Sigma

The high level answer to this question is that Six Sigma is a better way to improve – everything you do. At this point, you would logically ask: "*What is a Sigma?*" Well, it's a measure of the goodness in something. For example, we might ask: "*How many sigmas are good enough to ensure a high quality life?*" Generally speaking, a two or three sigma experience is considered to be poor. In other words, it would be considered a low quality experience. Figure 4 displays the sigma scale for benchmarking the quality of virtually anything.

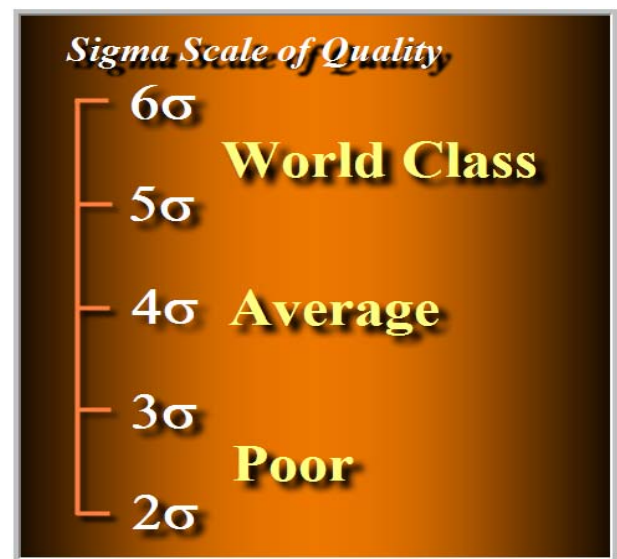


Figure 4. Sigma Scale for Benchmarking Quality



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Through extensive benchmarking data, we also know that a four sigma experience is average. Of course, an average experience is something that would be typical or common place. Interestingly, an experience that is five to six sigma would be considered exceptional – you know, world class in nature. In other words, Six Sigma is something that would be extraordinary (by the laws of nature).

Exemplifying the Extraordinary

In order to gain a deeper and more personal understanding of a *Sigma*, let's consider the quality of a commercial flight. Of course, passenger safety would be at the top of our list. The hard data has revealed that passenger safety is 6.40 sigma. This means that your odds of NOT safely arriving at your destination is incredibly small – only about one in two million. However, the loss of your bags – well, that's another story. Baggage handling quality is 4.04 sigma. This means that the odds of losing your bags are about 1 in 180.

Comparing these two services, we might ask a very practical question: “So, what does this difference really mean to you on a personal level? Simply stated, it means that the next time you travel on a commercial airplane; you are about 12,000 times more likely to get there than your bags. Without a doubt, that's an incredible difference.

Improving the Odds

Given the difference between the ordinary and that which is extraordinary, we would naturally want to know if the odds of closing the gap can be favorably biased or otherwise improved. Well, the answer to that question is a resounding “Yes.” You can bias the odds in your favor – by the way you play the game!

As previously stated, when you check your bags, the likelihood of seeing them at the other end is about 4 sigma, whereas putting those bags in an overhead bin near your seat would be about 6 sigma. Thus, the odds of your bags arriving would be the same as your body, which is a 12,000 times improvement over checking your bags! So, the way you play the game can dramatically improve your odds of success.

Catching the Fish

To better grasp the big idea of Six Sigma, let's consider fishing. When it comes to catching fish, a reasonable question would be: “How do you catch more fish?” Well, the ordinary way would be to get a faster boat, use different bait, or get better gear – maybe even hire a guide or get better training. After all, this would just be plain old common sense, right?

Well, to dramatically change the odds of success in your favor, you must abandon *common sense*. You must use *extraordinary sense* if you expect to catch significantly more fish. Why? Because common sense is just that, it's common – you know, ordinary. Common sense is always destined to produce common results! To get extraordinary results, you need extraordinary sense – you need the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking* to turbo-charge your mind. Rather than catching fish one at a time, why not catch the entire school of fish by using a net? Why catch a little dream when you can go for a big one! Do it faster, more confidently and with less effort – the Six Sigma Way.

2.3 Extending the History. *What is the proven source of power that can help you realize breakthrough?*

Evolution of Six Sigma

To expand our understanding of what Six Sigma is, let us quickly review its evolution over the last two decades. We will initiate this discussion by asking: “Where did Six Sigma come from?” Well, Six Sigma was originally created at Motorola in the early 80's as a corporate program designed to make quantum improvements in the quality of its products and services.

Then, in the mid 90's, General Electric ushered in the era of deploying Six Sigma as a business tool to reduce operating costs and enhance profitability. Evolving into the 2000's, DuPont Corporation inaugurated the third generation of Six Sigma by reshaping its focus into a stimulant for corporate growth and increased shareholder value.

Standard of Excellence

And now, after more than two decades of global success, Six Sigma has been recognized as one of the top 10 management innovations in the last 150 years! Owing to this, Six Sigma has become the new world standard of



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excellence – a standard that exemplifies what it means to be *extraordinary*.

Uncovering the Lessons

Across the 20 years of Six Sigma's successful practice within many fine corporations from around the world, representing many different industries, across many different experiences, we gained many priceless lessons. These lessons reflected what it takes to create and sustain breakthrough improvement.

Over several months of research, our team of world renowned subject-matter experts carefully filtered these vital lessons in order to extract the essential leadership practices that were required to create breakthrough. The results of this inspiring work revealed a pattern of thinking that was consistent across virtually all of the documented cases (where a positive, quantum change was achieved). We called this proven way of thinking *The Great Discovery*.

Discovering the Commonalities

By analyzing the research data, the team was able to uncover a proven path to the realization of quantum improvement. They also discovered that this path was characterized by 3 principles of success. Quickly, it became obvious that these elements were at the core of sustainable breakthroughs.

This advance in leadership thinking has since been defined as the fourth generation of Six Sigma, which is focused on the creation of breakthrough in your personal life, your home life and your work life – for everything you do. This great discovery has since been recognized as *The Six Sigma Way of Thinking*, or simply *SWOT* for short.

2.4 Grasping the Principles. *What principles will significantly increase your odds of achieving success?*

Nature of the Path

Let's now start to take a deeper look at The Six Sigma Way for your life. We'll begin our journey (into this way of thinking) by discussing The Proven Path. This path begins at your current state of reality. From this point of reference, you look out to the future and envision a dream. In this sense, breakthrough begins with divergent

thinking – exploring the world of what *could be* or *might be possible* if the right conditions were present.

This is to say that you must always stretch your thinking until you see a new horizon – a point that others might say is impossible to achieve. In other words, you must create a vision for your life that goes well beyond the walls of your current thinking. This means that you must decisively expand the scope of what you believe is probable and explore what might be possible (through your spirit). In other words, you must dream big and wide; and then stretch your mind and spirit to raise the bar of expectation even higher.

Once your dream has solidified and been made clear, you must converge your thinking to focus on the way in which your dream can be realized – you know, how you will get from point A to point B, so to speak.

Thus, by innovating your life through the process of divergence, and then executing your intentions through the process of convergence, you can significantly increase your odds of success. Essentially, this way of thinking involves four progressive stages of activity.

Creating Quantum Change

The first stage associated with the Proven Path is called *Do the Dreaming*, which is followed by the stage *Dream the Doing*. These two stages are based on the benefits associated with divergent thinking, but with the aim of revealing innovative solutions for your life; and done so in a cause and effect kind of way.

Stage three is called *Plan the Doing* and is all about mapping the journey and identifying the forces that you'll need to achieve your dream. The final stage of activity is focused on engaging your life forces, but done so in a highly effective and efficient manner; consequently, it is called *Do the Plan*.

Naturally, the latter two stages satisfy the need for decisive and timely execution. Such is the pathway to the creation of breakthrough in your personal life, your home life and your work life.

Three Principles of Success

Of particular interest, the Proven Path is supported by *Three Principles of Success*. Through a *Strong Spirit*, *Smart System* and *Simple Strategy* you can better implement the four stages of breakthrough.



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First, you need a Strong Spirit to *Do the Dreaming* and *Dream the Doing*. This will help you to better envision the journey. Second, you need a Smart System to *Dream the Doing* and *Plan the Doing*. This will help you clear the path along the way. Third, you need a Simple Strategy to *Plan the Doing* and *Do the Plan*. This will help you stay on track. And that's the Six Sigma Way, which is a proven way of thinking that empowers the ordinary to achieve the extraordinary.

2.5 Enabling the Mind. *What is the pattern of thinking that can empower your quest for breakthrough?*

Art and Science of Thinking

So as to further our understanding of The Six Sigma Way, we should discuss the art and science commonly associated with divergent and convergent thinking.

As you know, everyone thinks a little differently; however, regardless of such differences, we use two sides of our brain – the right-hand side and the left-hand side. To facilitate the practice of divergence, you must engage the right side of your brain. This side is predominantly characterized by creative thinking. Of course, you call upon your inner creativity to support both stages of divergence; namely, *Do the Dreaming* and *Dream the Doing*.

Naturally, these two stages of breakthrough require that you be both innovative and creative in your thinking. So as to facilitate the practice of convergence, you must engage the left side of your brain. Interestingly, this side is driven by logic. Of course, you'll need logic to *Plan the Doing* and *Do the Plan*. This means that the left side of your brain will play a dominant role during execution. Since each of us has a dominant side, it is usually prudent to involve others in the pursuit of your dream.

For example, if you are predominantly *left-brained*, you might want some help with the two stages of divergence – *Do the Dreaming* and *Dream the Doing*. However, if you are predominantly *right-brained*, you might want some help with the two stages of convergence – *Plan the Doing* and *Do the Plan*. Thus, by working in a complementary way with a friend, colleague, or teammate, you can increase your odds of success.

Riding the Bicycle

Make no mistake, becoming proficient in the Six Sigma Way of Thinking could prove a little difficult at first, like riding a bike. In the beginning, most all of us need some training wheels to keep us upright (i.e., we sometimes need a little study time and maybe even some coaching). But after a few times around the block, you'll ditch the training wheels and be riding your new bike like a pro, so to speak.

Let's face it, if this extraordinary way of thinking didn't require some study, coaching and practice, it would probably be quite ordinary. If it were ordinary (i.e., common), then most everyone would already have achieved their dreams! Like anything worth learning, the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking* will require your personal diligence to become fully capable.

2.6 Following the Path. *What are the key points and lessons learned associated with The Proven Path?*

Empowerment of Values

We will now summarize and synthesize the big ideas that define the *Proven Path*, but do so using the power of science as the foundation of our discussion. In this way, you will learn how to formulate the chemistry of breakthrough and achieve your dreams in a more effective and efficient way. To do this we will make use of several key concepts, starting with the *Proven Path*.

The key to successfully following this path is the idea of a catalyst dream. Just like a generator that powers the essentials of your life, a *Catalyst Dream* has the ability to generate the power you need to live out your values.

Well, you might ask: "What is a value?" Simply stated, a value is *something of worth, utility or importance to you*. Figure 5 displays the definition of a value set in the context of Six Sigma and the Proven Path.

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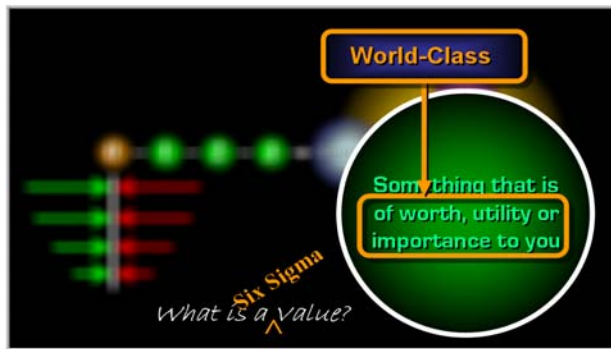


Figure 5. The Definition of a Six Sigma Value

Thus, a *Catalyst Dream* has the ability to generate the power you need to energize your values; just like a generator creates the power for a light bulb and the other essentials of your life. Of interest, the power you need to bring those values to life is called “*Freedom of Choice*.” Figure 6 illustrates the components of a catalyst.



Figure 6. Components of a Catalyst Dream

The Business Perspective

To better understand this point, let’s consider a business example. At Motorola, we used Six Sigma in the 80’s to drive breakthroughs in quality. By doing so, we reduced process cycle time and total operating costs. At the same time we significantly improved customer satisfaction.

Thus, by freeing ourselves from the bonds of poor quality, we regained our *Freedom of Choice* to live out our true corporate values. In other words, we were no longer forced to select a few survival options. Freedom of choice gave us the ability to engage better growth strategies, hire more world-class employees, and heighten our commitment to community service, just to mention a few of the many benefits.

The Personal Perspective

On a more personal level, let’s consider how a higher education can serve as a catalyst for your life. It is well known that a good education can reduce the constraints on a person’s way of living. Through education, you can increase your *Freedom of Choice* and gain more power in the determination of your rewards and recognition, have greater influence in your social life, and increase your ability to select among many other benefits.

In this sense, your new found *Freedom of Choice* can trigger a chain reaction of life events that will lead you to the realization of what you value most in life. By focusing on a *Catalyst Dream* that generates *Freedom of Choice*, you can better leverage your efforts and resources. In this way, your odds of success will be greatly increased – in your home life, personal life and work life.

Utilizing a Catalyst

To discover your *Catalyst Dream*, first identify and prioritize your values, that is, those things that are most important to a high quality life. Then, select the top ones and ask yourself: “*If I can achieve X, will my freedom to live out these values be greatly increased?*” Of course, defining X will likely require some judicious thought and careful analysis. It’s not an activity you should take lightly.

Perhaps we can now better understand why a *Catalyst Dream* is central to successfully practicing the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*, as well as the realizing your core values – in your personal life, your home life and your work life.

At this point in our conversation, you might be wondering what it takes to fulfill your *Catalyst Dream*. Well, the answer to that question begins the very moment you commit to the journey. After identifying and prioritizing the barriers to your dream, you must then define and optimize the critical forces that tend to sustain those barriers, as well as the forces that can topple the barriers. In doing so, you’ll build momentum into your plans.

Naturally, this momentum is what will move you from milestone to milestone in a highly confident and accountable way. And once your catalyst dream has been fulfilled, you will then have the power needed to manifest your core values; thereby, achieving a Six



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Sigma way of life. This process is called the “*Proven Path*” and calls upon the four vital stages of successful innovation and execution.

Stages of Breakthrough

The first stage of breakthrough is concerned with identifying the core values and then linking those values to your catalyst dream. This means that you must “*Do the Dreaming*.”

The second stage is concerned with identifying and prioritizing the milestones that will lead you to your catalyst dream. This means that you must “*Dream the Doing*.” In order to successfully realize the innovative intents of stages 1 and 2, you must rely on the *Strong Spirit* that is within you – the first principle of success.

Once the milestones are in place and you have dreamed the doing, you must then execute the third stage of breakthrough, which is called “*Plan the Doing*.” This means that you must identify and prioritize the key forces that will help you knock down barriers and achieve your milestones. To facilitate the objectives of stages 2 and 3, you must engage the *Smart System* to harness the forces – the second principle of success.

Once the vital forces have been sufficiently planned and translated into a set of actions, you must then execute the fourth stage of breakthrough, which is called “*Do the Plan*.” Naturally, this means that you must execute the actions that will enable the *Smart System* and critical forces. To assure the aims of stages 3 and 4, you must employ the *Simple Strategy* – the third principle of success.

Thus, we call upon the process of innovation to help us better envision the journey and then practice the skills of execution to successfully make the journey. This is the *Proven Path* to a six sigma life and clearly illustrates how ordinary people can reach out and achieve the extraordinary. Such is the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

2.7 Chartering the Project. *How do you initialize and execute a discovery project?*

As many would testify, the ability to put knowledge into practice is the cornerstone of success. As the old saying goes: “We learn by doing”. In support of this wisdom, *The Great Discovery* program is project based. This

means that the principles, practices and processes associated with *The Great Discovery* are empowered through the chartering and execution of value-centric projects.

Through *The Great Discovery* you can apply the proven path by leveraging a strong spirit, smart system and simple strategy, but done so in a systematic and disciplined way – the Six Sigma Way. Thus, you are able to reinforce your knowledge about the *The Great Discovery* while concurrently achieving your dreams. In short, discovery projects represent the winning strategy.

In light of this, the purpose of discovery projects is to achieve breakthrough in your Personal life, Home life, and your Work life. But what is breakthrough? What does this word really mean? Well, breakthrough is a sudden and dramatic change in the value of something. So, what is the aim of discovery projects? Simple, achieve breakthrough in the value proposition of your life.

In other words, realize breakthrough in your ability to create value in your personal life, home life and work life. This means that discovery projects are focused on creating a sudden and dramatic change in the worth, utility or importance of some dimension of your life. And if you want a Six Sigma life, then you must strive to achieve a world-class level of worth, utility or importance.

Defining a Project

So, what is a *discovery project*? A discovery project is a value driven mission that is undertaken by an individual or team in order to dramatically increase the odds of successfully realizing a dream. The planning and execution of such a mission is systematically guided by the *Breakthrough Charter*, which is a structured and disciplined way to apply *The Great Discovery* principles and practices. But what benefits are commonly associated with a discovery project? Well, there are many, but at the top of the list, you will find that a discovery project can systematically help you realize a value-based dream. Of course, to realize your dream, you must exercise the breakthrough process, also known as the proven path. This means that you must progressively Do the Dreaming, Dream the Doing, Plan the Doing and Do the Plan.



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By way of this path, you will naturally apply *The Great Discovery* principles and practices that are associated with the strong spirit, smart system and simple strategy. Thus, you are able to practice the six sigma way of thinking which, in turn, helps you develop highly effective innovation and execution skills. In short, executing a discovery project will expand your leadership capability. This means that, through a discovery project, you will gain the capability to lead yourself and others to breakthrough – like your children, friends, co-workers, even work teams. To the bottom line, this capability increases your inherent value in terms of your personal life, home life, and work life. So, what is the context of discovery projects?

Developing the Plan

As previously stated, *The Great Discovery* practices and principles are leveraged in the real world through discovery projects. Of course, such projects are designed to produce breakthrough and bring about real gains and tangible benefits to an individual or organization. In this sense, discovery projects are where the work to achieve the gains is done. To increase the odds of success, each project is organized around a value-based dream, guided by a charter, planned through a set of progressive templates and executed in a highly structured and disciplined way. Thus, the tools of discovery lead to breakthrough performance – for anyone or any organization, regardless of background or experience.

Let's now consider a few tools for the mind. Specifically, the Breakthrough Charter Templates. Essentially, the templates provide a standardized cookbook for each of the 16 steps associated with the proven path. By applying the templates to your discovery project, you make your journey more effective and efficient, not to mention making it easier. Such is the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

2.8 Introducing the Case. *What types of circumstances would justify chartering a discovery project?*

This case study will examine how a hospital CEO was able to establish an improvement path for significantly increasing the retention rate of the organization's nursing staff. To proceed, we'll first introduce the case, then consider some key background information followed by a presentation of the case facts. We will then look at the results of an internal survey among the hospital's nurses, as well as an on-site study that was

undertaken to better understand the retention problem. Following this, we will step back and look at the big picture from the project team's perspective. In particular, this case will consider how the great discovery can be used to create breakthrough in the overall value proposition of a hospital.

Of course, the nurse retention case study will clearly illustrate the principles, practices and processes of the great discovery. In support of this, our discussion will rely on live information and research-based data. In this way, we can better understand how breakthroughs in performance can be realized by any organization, regardless of its size.

Setting the Stage

At this point, let's consider some background information. Naturally, this information will help us better appreciate the scope and depth of the nursing retention problem. Every year, people die as a result of overworked nurses. Because of high nurse vacancy rates, far too many hospital patients are at risk during surgery. Of course, this problem is not new. However, the context of this problem has changed over time. For example, hospitals are currently faced with an aging workforce of nurses with fewer entering the field each year. And for those that do have a professional interest in nursing, there are more career options to select from.

It is also known that the new generation of nurses have different job expectations when compared to the previous generation. Simply stated, the nursing profession is faced with expanding healthcare needs, yet at the same time, unable to provide enough qualified nurses to satisfy the demand. So, what is the state-of-affairs at our case hospital?

Experiencing several patient deaths over a 45 day period, increased rate of failure-to-rescue, they saw a rise in pneumonia and infections, and nurses providing surveillance and increased production pressures. Simply stated, a hospital must be able to retain a sufficient staff of quality nurses in order to assure high standards of healthcare. In support of this, an internal survey among the hospital's nursing staff revealed that nurses suffer from high levels of stress due primarily to excessive workloads and poor working environments. On top of this, the hospital's nurses do not feel empowered to make decisions, thereby resulting in personal frustration and feelings of insufficient respect, not to mention the



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dissatisfaction resulting from the perception of inadequate salaries and benefits and less than optimal relationships among the hospital's medical staff.

In further support of this dilemma, an internal nursing leadership study found that the hospital's leaders are not meeting the staff's basic on-the-job needs. It was also discovered that the leadership is more transactional in nature rather than transformational. Of course, the dominance of a bureaucratic environment and the lack of formal education among the hospital's leadership further contributed to the dilemma of a poor nurse retention rate. Looking at the big picture, the hospital expects the need for nurses to increase over time, as well as the overall cost structure of providing quality healthcare.

Call to Action

Compelled by the case data, the CEO issued a call to action. This was done by chartering a discovery project and forming a project team. The project team's conclusion was simple and eloquent. Develop and retain a workforce of world-class nurses within the next two years. So, what was the catalyst for this dream? Well, the project team determined that the hospital needed to quickly achieve magnetic status; and the CEO agreed with this recommendation. But what is magnetic status? Essentially, the Magnet Recognition Program® was developed by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and was designed to recognize health care organizations that provide nursing excellence. In short, magnet status provides consumers with the ultimate benchmark they need to measure the quality of care that they can expect and deserve to receive.

To realize this dream the team followed the proven path to breakthrough. The project team started their journey by completing a breakthrough charter which provided a structured and disciplined way to plan a course of action leading to the fulfillment of their dream. The project charter is based on the building blocks associated with *The Great Discovery* architecture. The design of this architecture can be further broken down into 16 progressive steps, each of which is supported by an application template.

Furthermore, each template has been specifically designed to capitalize on the principles of a Proven Path, Strong Spirit, Smart System and Simple Strategy. By judiciously applying the templates, the project team enjoyed a higher level of innovation through divergent thinking techniques and then better leveraged their

existing execution skills by building on the idea of convergence. Thus, the project charter focused the team on the 4 phases of breakthrough: first, Do the Dreaming second, Dream the Doing third, Plan the Doing and fourth, Do the Plan. In this way, the project team was enabled to practice the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking* and increase their odds of success.

2.9 Creating the Vision. *How do you develop a dream and establish an initial direction?*

Unlike a daydream, creating a life dream is not an easy task. It requires close consideration and judicious reflection to ensure that your dream and core values are aligned. Remember, when your life dreams naturally flow from your core values, your odds of success are higher than would otherwise be possible. Returning to our case study, we will now illustrate how each step of the Breakthrough Charter relates to the proven path. Let's begin by considering what it takes to "Do the Dreaming."

Identifying the Values

Step 1 is about identifying your life values, or core values as some would say. While this may seem like a straightforward task, you will likely discover it takes more effort than you think. To manifest a life dream and enjoy the benefits, you must be able to live out the core values that underpin the dream. In this context, core values are at the center of a dream, regardless of whether that dream is related to your personal life, your home life, or your work life. Remember, your behaviors are largely shaped by your values which, in turn, underpin your dream. Consequently, your core values are what connect your behaviors to the dream. To help you better focus the process of dreaming, you should direct your thinking to a specific dimension of life – like your personal life, home life, or work life, and then narrow that focus as much as possible.

In the case of our hospital, the breakthrough charter guided the team to focus their thinking on the work dimension of their life. They also recognized that their efforts would be focused on making a business level improvement. At this point, the discovery project continued by identifying their core values. More specifically, the project team identified the top five Six Sigma values that would drive the realization of their business dream. Remember a Six Sigma value is something of world-class worth, utility or importance.



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Step 2 is about defining who will benefit from the realization of your dream. Almost without saying, a beneficiary is a person or organization that will receive some type of meaningful benefit from the realization of your dream or during the pursuit of that dream – like a family member, co-worker, friend or organization. Such individuals and organizations may, or may not, be a part of your advisory team. In the case of our project team, the primary beneficiaries were carefully identified. In many respects, the beneficiaries represent the customer base of the dream. Of interest, you can greatly increase your odds of success by aligning your dream to the needs of others. In other words, you can often get others to help you achieve your dream by linking the fulfillment of their needs to the realization of one or more of your milestones. Now that's a win-win strategy – everybody wins when the game is played in that way!

Step 3 is concerned with defining your life dream in an accurate, yet very concise way. To better understand why this is so important, just ask yourself the question: “If had the freedom of choice to live out my core values, what would the net effect (i.e., result) likely be?” An accurate and concise description of the answer to this question will help focus your thinking and guide your subsequent planning. Remember, there are many potential interactions between your top values and your life. So, you should explore those possibilities and only then settle on what is best for you. In the case of our hospital, the team explored the possibilities and determined that the net effect of realizing their dream would be a workforce of world-class nurses.

Step 4 focuses on describing how living out your core values could positively impact each dimension of your life – your home life, personal life, and work life. In doing so, you will likely discover a chain-of-causation that delivers some cross-dimensional benefits. In this case study; the project team described how developing a workforce of world-class nurses could positively impact the hospital's overall business. On a side-bar note, remember that the doorway to any dream is always present and the keys to that door are always in your hand. So go ahead and just imagine the many ways in which your dream could positively impact yourself and others. After all, the project team did!

Defining the Catalyst

Step 5 is about defining your catalyst dream. Remember, the fulfillment of your catalyst dream will

provide you with the freedom of choice you need to live out your core values. In other words, your catalyst will energize your values; and as those values become empowered, your behaviors will change which, in turn, will serve to manifest the dream – and well beyond the dream. In our case study, the project team determined that achieving magnet status would trigger a chain reaction of experiences leading to the fulfillment of the organization's core values. Consequently, identifying the catalyst dream is crucial to the realization of values.

To discover your catalyst, look among your top values. It's likely that one of those values might serve as a trigger to manifest the others. In the instance of our case study, achieving magnet status would mean higher nurse retention, implementation of best practices, fewer errors and so on. Thus, achieving magnet status would “trigger” a chain reaction of beneficial experiences for the hospital. In this context, the project team believed that magnet status would empower the hospital to operate in such a way that the patients, staff, stakeholders, community, doctors, nurses, and others, would consistently realize a high grade, high quality experience each and every day – the Six Sigma way.

2.10 Mapping the Journey. *How do you develop and sustain steady progress to your catalyst dream?*

Establishing a Support Team

Step 6 advocates that you should get a coach to help you along the path to breakthrough. If the Olympics is your life dream, can you imagine undertaking that journey on your own? Without a coach? What are your odds of winning a gold medal, or any medal for that matter? Consequently, selecting the right coach will be vital to your success. Let's face it, it this extraordinary way of thinking did not require some coaching, it would probably be quite ordinary. Even the hospital's project team recognized the need for a coach. Furthermore, the team recognized that a coach could champion their cause and help them knock down barriers along the path, as well as provide them with a sounding board and objective guidance.

In short, coaching is a way to help others change direction, improve, develop, learn new skills, find personal success, achieve aims, and manage life, change, and personal challenges. Coaching draws out rather than puts in. It develops rather than imposes. It reflects



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rather than directs. Effective coaching is a form of change facilitation - it enables people, rather than trains them. Coaching is reactive and flexible - it allows for personal transition on an individual basis. Coaching makes no assumptions - it's not judgmental, nor is it prescriptive or instructional. Empathy is central to the coaching process. Good coaching is about helping other people to understand themselves, where they want to be, and helping them to get there – and that's the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

Step 7 guides you in the assembly of your dream team. Much like a sports team, each player on your dream team contributes in an independent but synergistic way at critical junctures during the course of your journey. More specifically, your dream team can help you with innovation as well as execution. In other words, your dream team can help you think more innovatively and guide you to more effective and efficient ways to execute your plans. In the case of our project team, their skill sets were diverse, yet synergistic and complementary.

In our case study, the team members were identified and selected based on several criteria, among which was their pattern of thinking. Since each of us have a dominant side to our brain, it is usually prudent to involve others in the pursuit of your dream. While you want to be creative, you must also be logical. So, a balanced team of 6 to 8 members is often considered ideal. Remember, at the end of the day, it's a team play, and that's the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*!

Defining the Criteria

Step 8 helps you define your success criteria. In other words, it helps answer the question: "How do you know when you have arrived at your catalyst dream, or even a milestone for that matter?" If your criteria are measurable, then you would definitely know when you have arrived. Remember, you don't know what you don't know, and you won't know until you measure it. Having a score board (so to speak) is essential for developing your strategies and selecting the right tactics for moving forward and analyzing your progress. How can you call the shots without knowing the score? In the instance of our hospital case study, the project team established measurable success criteria so as to keep the target in clear sight and better manage their journey, not to mention making that journey more accountable and the resulting success fully verifiable. And that's the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

Visualizing the Details

Step 9 is about envisioning the details of your catalyst dream. The more you envision specific images, sounds and feelings, the more "real" your dreams become. Envisioning the details will increase your odds of success. In other words, as the details emerge, you begin to see yourself "in the picture," so to speak. Of course, as a dream becomes more believable, it becomes more achievable, and as the dream becomes more achievable, the chances of success increase.

In our hospital case study, the project team provided a lengthy accounting of all the details they envisioned related to the realization of their catalyst dream. Recall the age old phrase: "You bring about what you think about." The more you think about the details of a dream, the more you consume your conscious and subconscious mind with the need to make the dream real – to bring it into reality. If your catalyst dream is "fuzzy," your actions will be uncertain and often misdirected, but if your dream is sharp and clear, your chances of manifesting that dream increase. And that's the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

Establishing Target Goals

Step 10 is concerned with establishing the milestones along the path to your catalyst dream. Milestones answer the question: "How are we doing?" Naturally, the answer to this question would indicate whether a discovery project is on track and is expected to finish as planned. Remember, a milestone must be viewed as a constraint going in and an achievement coming out. In this sense, milestones represent "what" will be achieved as a discovery project advances.

Of course, specific milestones will vary by project (in terms of character and scope). Furthermore, project milestones can be defined as a series of progressive accomplishments. In short, project milestones are a time-proven way to better manage your way to success. In our hospital case study, each milestone was carefully described and assigned a completion date, as well as the reward for success. The project team also recognized that the success criteria for each milestone should be made fully measurable. In this way, the milestones were made accountable and time bounded. Thus, the use of project milestones can increase your odds of success. And that's the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.



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2.11 Focusing the Power. *How do you identify and optimize your critical driving and restraining forces?*

Step 11 is about identifying the critical milestones that will likely prove difficult during the course of your journey. When executing this step, it is essential to follow the 80/20 rule. This time-proven rule says that 80% of your milestones will likely prove easy, but 20% of those milestones will prove difficult, or seemingly insurmountable. Owing to this rule of thumb, we call an easy milestone a JDIT, which stands for Just-Do-It. Remember, the JDIT milestones are usually among the 80%, or Trivial Many as some would say. For the more difficult or ambiguous milestones (you know, those among the 20% or the Vital Few), you need SWOT.

Identifying the Vital Few

Again, for the more difficult milestones, you need to apply the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*, simply because a difficult milestone is more likely to cause a breakdown during the course of project execution. In line with this way of reasoning, the case study project team identified their project milestones and then selected the ones that would be difficult. Thus, the team was able to declare their JDIT's and SWOT's; thereby, practicing the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

Step 12 is concerned with identifying and analyzing the forces that will push you to, or hold you back from achieving your target SWOT milestone. Forces are naturally at work in everyone's life. There are physical, intellectual, social, economic, legal, spiritual, and emotional forces, just to mention a few. However, not all forces have the same influence – some are more powerful and influential than others.

So, to increase their odds of success, the hospital project team decided to employ the 80/20 rule and focus on the Vital Few forces and ignore the Trivial Many. In this way, the team could plan their actions in an effective, yet efficient manner. Of course, this practice allowed the team to work smarter, not harder. And that's the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

Determine the Influence

Step 13 is about rating the power of each force identified during the execution of step 12. Let's now look at the power index table. Interestingly, the power

of a force can be defined by three highly interactive factors – strength, span and sustainability. The first factor is strength of force, which is fairly self-explanatory. That's how strong a force is. To simplify analysis, you simply rate the strength of each force as low, medium or high. A low rating would be to say that the force in question is weak. In other words, the force does not have much influence in determining the target outcome. On the other hand, a high rating would be to say that the given force is strong. This means the force has a great deal of influence in determining the outcome. The second factor is span of control. This is the extent to which you can turn a force on and off (at will). Here again, you would assign a low, medium or high rating. A low rating would be to say that, at will, you can not activate or deactivate the force in question. In other words, a low rating says that you do not have the ability to “turn the influence of that force on or off” any time you want to. On the other hand, a high rating would be to say that you have full control over whether or not that particular force can be brought into play – whenever you want to.

The third component of power is the extent to which you can sustain a force. In other words, it's the duration of time you can keep a force turned on or off, regardless of its strength or your span of control over that force. Here again, you would assign a low, medium or high rating. A low rating would mean that you can not sustain the force's strength over time. On the other hand, a high rating would be to say that you can sustain the force's strength over time. Thus, for each of the forces you identified in step 12, you must rate how strong the force is, positive or negative, how much control you have to turn the force's influence on or off and how long you can sustain that force's strength.

Now, let's take a look at how the case study project team used the power index table. Recall that during step 12, the team identified all of the driving and restraining forces related to the SWOT milestone defined in step 11. Of course to achieve this milestone, the driving and restraining forces must be positively biased to achieve forward momentum. This means that the driving forces must have a net effect that is greater than the net effect of all the restraining forces.

To this end, the project team selected the first force and then rated it on each of the 3 dimensions of power – strength, span and sustainability. In this case, each dimension was given a high rating, which translated to a



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power index of 10. Given such a high rating, this particular force was subsequently classified as one of the Vital Few. This process was repeated for each force.

Thus, the team was able to identify their Vital Few drivers and Vital Few Restrainers. Consequently, by selecting the Vital Few forces then optimizing the strength, span and sustainability of those key forces, you can greatly increase your odds of success. And that's *The Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

2.12 Launching the Plan. *How do you evaluate and improve your confidence of success?*

Step 14 is focused on translating the Vital Few forces into executable actions. This is the point where the proverbial rubber meets the road, so to speak – where the power of your engine is transmitted to the road to create forward momentum toward the SWOT milestone in question. This means you must translate each force into an action that can be executed or otherwise carried out by you or someone else. So, to increase your odds of success, first identify the Vital Few forces and then translate those forces into action items. In this way, the hospital's project team was able to put the energy of their Vital Few forces into series of actionable tasks. Of course, such tasks can be laid out on a "to do" list or shaped into an action plan. This means that, for each SWOT milestone, you must identify, prioritize, select, sequence and ultimately activate the Vital Few forces in a systematic and timely way.

Developing the Action Plan

Well, the project team used this process to establish a project plan for achieving the SWOT milestone defined in step 11. First, the team identified the forces in step 12 and then prioritized the Vital Few in step 13. At this point, the team translated each critical force into an action item so as to make its execution more accountable and manageable. As a result, the project team was able to put energy into their plans and do so through the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

Step 15 is about checking up on how well a discovery project is moving along. Of course, monitoring the progress of a project is certainly not new idea; however, this fact does not diminish its importance. In terms of our hospital case study, monitoring means that the team must regularly assess if things are getting done, how well their project is tracking to the schedule and whether

or not it's within budget. To move from one project milestone to the next, you must first think about the forces that are needed to generate positive momentum. Following this, you must plan the actions that will enable those forces. After this, you must execute the plan and then check (i.e., monitor) the results of your actions.

When working toward a SWOT milestone, carry your to do list with you at all times. Also remember that "you bring about what you think about," so frequently look at your to do list. You might even want to go one step further and carry a "to think" list. As a final note, every morning, you should ask yourself if that day's scheduled activities are going to lead you closer to, or farther from, your immediate SWOT milestone. In terms of monitoring, look to where you have been and then look to where you are going. So, to increase your odds of success, measure performance and time. That's the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

Monitoring the Progress

Step 16 is concerned with making improvements to the way in which you achieve each of your milestones, regardless of whether those milestones are JDIT's or SWOT's. After the achievement of each milestone, you should look at your process and consider ways to improve that system so that the next milestone efforts you make are more effective and efficient. Once you have improved the key elements of your system, you can experience greater momentum toward the achievement of your next milestone. You will then be able to accomplish more in less time – with fewer resources.

In our hospital case study, this is just what the project team did. But how do you get from one milestone to the next in a systematic and disciplined way. Well, it's called the "*Breakthrough Cycle of Execution*" and consists of four basic steps – Think, Plan, Do and Check, or TPDC in short. To implement this cycle of change, you must Think about your system in a cause-and-effect way, then Plan the forces that will provide you forward momentum. After this, you must Do the actions that are necessary to empower the key forces and then Check the results of your efforts to ensure you are making adequate headway. Once you have arrived at your target milestone, repeat steps 12 through 16 for your remaining SWOT milestones. And that's *The Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.



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3.0 Strong Spirit

3.2 Uncovering the Possibilities. *How can you look beyond your current horizon to envision a new way of achieving?*

Context for Exploration

In this session, we will explore how a *Strong Spirit* can be used to build a solid foundation for achieving breakthrough. This segment of our discussion will require that you think with the right-side of your brain (i.e., the creative side). So, if you are left-brain dominant, you might want some help from a right-brain friend or colleague!

Perhaps the best place to begin our discussion is by asking the question: “*What is the Six Sigma Spirit?*” Simply stated, it’s a *Strong Spirit*. Remember, dreams are borne from your spirit. Your spirit is the energy that will drive you to undertake the journey to breakthrough – for your personal life, your home life or your work life. While it takes a spirit to *Do the Dreaming*, it requires a *Strong Spirit* to *Dream the Doing*.

Keeping the Dream Alive

So what does all this really mean? Well, *Do the Dreaming* is all about envisioning the destination, while *Dream the Doing*, (as you have probably already guessed), is all about envisioning the journey – how you will get there! Unfortunately, the latter stage is where most dreams are abandoned.

Consider top athletes. While these winners dream about the gold medal, they also dream about what it will take to get it. In other words, most of us can formulate a vision for our lives, but few can envision the path to that dream. After all, it’s usually more fun thinking about what *could be* rather than *how to*.

Making the Choice

Related to this, many people don’t realize that the doorway to any dream is always present and the keys to that door are always in your hand. Your natural capacity to explore the possibilities for life is virtually endless. In other words, there are many *doors of opportunity* that you can unlock, open and explore. It is just a matter of choice – it’s your choice and yours alone. And remember, you can choose that door at any point!

For example, consider the door called *Quality of Life*. Naturally, we all dream about experiencing a high quality life, but sometimes we impose limits on our dream. However, at all times, we must recognize that there are no limits on dreaming. If so, they’re highly artificial and fully self-imposed.

Expanding the Box

In order to envision a better way of life, you must ignore what you think is probable (that is, what you believe is likely). You must expand your box and allow your inner spirit to explore what is possible.

To better illustrate these points, let’s consider the dream of a higher education (such as, an under graduate or graduate degree). Many of us have such a dream. Of course, we naturally recognize the many benefits that are tied to a higher education, not only to ourselves, but to all of those around us – in our personal life, our home life and our work life.

Raising the Bar

Well, remember that you always have a green light to explore what’s possible, regardless of whether you (or others) think it is probable. You are always free to raise the bar at anytime you want. So go ahead and seize the moment – dream bigger, dream wider and dream farther. Unbridle your inner spirit and dare to explore the possibilities for any or all aspects of your life.

3.3 Linking the Needs. *How can you get others to help you achieve your dream of breakthrough?*

Increasing the Influence

You can greatly enhance your chances of success by aligning your dream to the needs of others. To better understand the power of this point, let’s consider the quest to realize a college education. Once you have the vision, you can increase your odds of achievement and concurrently expand your sphere of influence by aligning your dream to the needs of others.

But why would someone want to reach out and help you achieve your dream? Well, because it satisfies the WIIFM rule – *What’s In It For Me?* This is saying that another person can satisfy their needs by helping you realize one of your milestones. Now that’s a win-win strategy – everybody wins when the game is played in that way!

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Applying the Psychology

Of course, linking your dream to the needs of others is an incredibly powerful form of human psychology – because people naturally look for ways to fulfill their needs. As a consequence, they will migrate some of their energies (and perhaps resources) to help you realize your dream, but only if it satisfies one or more of their needs at the same time.

It should now be easy to see why others might want to reach out and help you realize your dream. But what kind of needs are we talking about? What kind of needs would motivate someone else to help you realize your dream? While it may sound a little rhetorical, you already know the answer. Just ask yourself a simple question: “What kind of needs motivate me?” Essentially, your basic needs are likely to be very similar to most others you commonly interact with.

Levels of Human Need

We will now explore how the fulfillment of needs can motivate people to action. Of interest, this model is formally referred to as *Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Need*. Figure 7 graphically illustrates this concept



Figure 7. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Need.

Let’s begin our discussion at the lowest level (and arguably the most important), which is all about survival needs – like basic food, shelter and clothing. Once this set of needs has been largely satisfied, you will naturally begin to turn your attention to fulfilling the next higher

order set of needs, like safety needs; i.e., the inner call for a safe living environment and workplace.

As before, when this level of need has been mostly satisfied, you then begin to focus on fulfilling your social necessities; i.e., developing friendships, professional relationships and a general sense of community.

Continuing up the ladder, we find the level of status; (i.e., how you think about yourself and how you feel about what others think of you). At the top of the ladder is the pinnacle of needs. This rung is called *self-actualization*, which is about the need to realize your full potential as a human being. You know, *be all you can be*.

But remember, if life suddenly throws you a wild card, you could find your needs quickly changing – like suddenly scrambling for shelter during a tornado. At that moment, it is doubtful you’ll be thinking about what’s on your social calendar next week! This is to say that going down the ladder can happen a lot faster than going up.

Climbing the Ladder

Thus, you can better understand why the fulfillment of one’s needs is a strong motivator in life. Hence, it can be said that people continually look for others who can help them: a) go up the ladder; b) hold their current position on the ladder; or c) prevent them from slipping back. Also remember that it is unlikely that you will achieve your dream in a vacuum – it’s a team play virtually all the time – in your personal life, your home life and your work life.

Just as you have needs, so do work teams and families. So get on board and increase your odds of success by linking the vital elements of your dream to the needs of others. In doing so, you will develop a far greater base of influence. In turn, this will give you more power to transform your dream into reality.

3.4 Envisioning the Details. *How can your imagination be extended to better envision a new and better reality?*

Detailing the Vision

In this session, you will learn how to bring clarity to your dream. By clarifying your dream, you will greatly increase your odds of success. To do this, you must



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envision the details of your dream. You must make your dream *pop*, or come alive as some would say.

Within your mind (and perhaps in the mind of others), you must strive to make your dream as real as possible. Not only does this practice bring clarity to your dream, it will also help others see how their unique knowledge, skills and assets can be leveraged to help you along the way.

To better illustrate what is meant by this, let us return to our education example and just imagine some of the details associated with the pursuit of a higher education. For example, consider some of the experiences that would be a part of graduation.

Focusing the Mind's Eye

By envisioning the details of your dream, you can begin to see yourself in the picture, so to speak – but in a vivid and detailed kind of way. This means that you must seek a sharper; more focused vision of your dream (rather than continually dwelling on a set of fuzzy mental images or feelings).

You can then look through your mind's eye and begin to see yourself in the movie. You can clearly see yourself throwing the graduation cap into the air. You can see the color of the hat and feel the tassel, as well as hear the shouts of celebration from your classmates.

You can envision the details on your graduation cake and imagine how it will taste. Within your mind, you can feel the texture of the diploma paper and run your fingers across the official gold seal that validates your experience. These are some ways you can increase the odds of realizing your dream – by envisioning the details, which is a Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

3.5 Developing the Commitment. *How can you establish a self-fulfilling prophecy that will lead you to breakthrough?*

Proclaiming the Journey

To further increase your odds of success, you must declare the quest. This means you must elevate your vision to the status of a *life-dream*, which must not be confused with a short-lived day-dream or pipe-dream (as some would say). A life dream (per say) is a vision of your life that you fully intend to realize.

To elevate your wishful thinking to the level of a life dream means that you must continuously and seriously think about it. For example, you might want to create a *dream board* that displays a collage of pictures depicting the key elements of your dream. In creating a life dream, you are making a soft commitment to bring that vision into reality. In other words, you're saying "some day I'll make that dream come true." Well this is all fine and well, but you have yet to declare the quest. You're still using the words "some day."

Committing to the Dream

When you have declared the quest, you can confidently say when *some day* really is and when the first step will be taken. To reach this level of personal commitment, you must write about it. By transforming your dream into words, you can better reflect on the details and develop a deeper belief in the quest.

The more you write about your dream, the more details you will include. As you include more details in your script (like dates and times), you will move closer to a hard commitment and internal belief that you can actually achieve that dream. In short, this will make your dream become an *imperative* in your life, versus another option that *just might happen someday*.

Once you feel a deep sense of commitment to yourself, then start talking about your dream to a friend. Don't hold back, share the details. Tell your friend what you plan to achieve; when you'll achieve the dream; and what it will be like once you have *arrived*. After this, openly share your dream with others (perhaps in a more public kind of way). In this way, you become increasingly committed to making the journey.

Activating the Autopilot

Naturally, when you begin to communicate your dream to others, you will consciously (and subconsciously) be creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. You will make yourself accountable for the realization of your dream. As a side-bar benefit of these actions, you will reap the invaluable input of others; and uncover ideas that will add greater value to your vision – things you might never have thought of – things that will increase your odds of success.

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Sealing the Deal

Through communication, you can seal the deal with yourself and commit to the journey in a high quality way. First write about it, then talk about it and finally, share it with others while seeking their ideas. That's the Six Sigma Way.

3.6 Pointing the Way. *What is the first critical step that you must take toward the realization of a dream?*

Importance of Roadmaps

Once you're fully committed to the journey, you must then create a map that shows the way to your dream – a set of markers that points to the dream – a roadmap, so to speak. Remember that the pursuit of a big dream is often characterized by many ambiguities – like the types of uncertainties commonly associated with traveling through unfamiliar lands. Arguably, this is perhaps the biggest reason for failed dreams – the lack of a good map to point the way.

Without a map, how can you expect anyone to make a journey through unfamiliar territory, not to mention doing it in a confident and accountable kind of way? Yes, it's certainly possible, but the probability is a lot greater when you have a map. So, increase your odds of success by mapping your journey; and do so well before the first step is ever taken.

Establishing the Milestones

To begin making your *dream map*, you must first establish a starting point. You know, a *You are Here* marker. Following this, you must set the destination (i.e., your dream). To help guide the way, you must establish some milestones.

Of course, milestones are like checkpoints – verifiable accomplishments along the way. In this context, milestones are a way to keep your journey on track and provide you (and others supporting you) with a level of confidence that you're making steady progress (as scheduled). Figure 8 displays the two perspectives of a milestone.



Figure 8. The Two Perspectives of a Milestone

Almost without saying, such milestones must be carefully chosen and then meaningfully aligned to your dream. In this sense, milestones are like the key markers along an interstate highway. When you establish clear indicators of progress, then all you have to do is follow the path – one step at a time.

3.7 Marking the Course. *How can you make your quest for breakthrough more effective and efficient?*

Size Does Matter

Consider looking out to the future and foreseeing the realization of your dream – like a college education. If you believe you can jump directly to the dream, then your dream should be bigger. Why? Because your existing capabilities can get you there. Little dreams are safe! With a little dream, you don't have to learn new ways or improve some dimension of yourself. You don't have to stretch your thinking! You just crank-up your existing set of mental gears and then set about peddling to your dream.

Stretching the Fabric

If you've got a big dream, and you really believe your current way of thinking can get you there, then that's the first indication your dream should be bigger! Why? Because if you're current way of thinking was sufficient to get you there, then guess what, you'd probably have already arrived!

So stretch yourself to the limits by making your dream bigger. In this way, you force yourself to reexamine the way in which you get work done, not simply tweak-up your existing ways. In the process, you will learn new ways – better ways – more powerful ways of thinking.



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Don't forget, *how you think* usually governs *what you'll get*.

Divide and Conquer

Once you have a big dream in mind (like a college education) then you would naturally ask yourself: "How can I get there?" The answer to this question lies embedded within a proven concept commonly referred to as: *Divide and Conquer*!

To illustrate how this concept can be applied to increase your odds of success, consider the dream of getting a college degree. Getting a degree is usually considered to be a long-term aspiration. It's not something you do overnight. Trying to get your arms around this kind of vision (at least as an adult) can be like trying to get a drink from a fire hose or like trying to eat an entire cake in one bite.

Eating the Cake

So, don't overwhelm your mind. Once you see a cake you like, cut it up into bite-sized pieces – Divide and Conquer. This means you've got to divide your journey into milestones – intermediate goals along the path. In this sense, milestones are bite-sized accomplishments that serve to reinforce your journey.

Thus, you're continually moving toward the dream in a more confident and accountable way. For example, successfully completing a college application can be viewed as a milestone. While the vision of getting a four year college degree can seem a little overwhelming, completing the application is a *piece of cake* by comparison, so to speak.

Celebrate the Victory

Once you've completed a milestone, celebrate your victory and meaningfully reward yourself. This will keep your spirits high and reinforce your efforts. It will remind you of why you have undertaken the journey. At this point, you might ask how you can get from one milestone to the next. The answer to this question should be fairly obvious – one step at a time – the Six Sigma Way!

3.8 Avoiding the Breakdowns. *How can you avoid breakdowns when executing your roadmap to breakthrough?*

Picking the Vital Few

As you might have guessed, there is a lot to consider when getting yourself prepared to take the first step, like defining your milestones. What is not so obvious is the fact that the 80/20 rule should be considered during your planning process. This time-proven rule says that 80% of your milestones will likely prove easy (just like eating a piece of cake), but 20% of those milestones will prove difficult, or seemingly insurmountable.

This natural distribution of difficulty is often called the *80/20 Rule*. Owing to this rule of thumb, we call an easy milestone a *JDIT*, which stands for Just-Do-It. Remember, the JDIT milestones are usually among the 80%, or *Trivial Many* as some would say.

Meeting the Challenge

Essentially, the JDITs are the *no brainers*. These are the kind of milestones that don't require a lot of thought. This means you can achieve *mission success* by applying your existing knowledge and ways (i.e., the forces you currently call upon to make things happen).

For the more difficult or ambiguous milestones (you know, those among the 20%), you need SWOT. You need to apply The Six Sigma Way of Thinking because this kind of milestone is more likely to cause a breakdown during execution (due to such things as unanticipated roadblocks and delays).

Staying in the Game

When you experience a breakdown in one or more of your critical driving and restraining forces, the odds of a major setback rises dramatically. So, to avoid breakdowns on your journey, you must avoid the four sigma way of thinking (i.e., thinking about your forces in an ordinary way).

You can greatly increase your odds of success by tackling the more difficult milestones with the Six Sigma Way of Thinking. By taking this approach, you are ensuring that the issues will be worked through in an accountable, systematic and time-tested way – in an extraordinary way that has a proven track record for delivering breakthrough. And that's the Six Sigma Way.



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3.9 Igniting the Spirit. *What are the key points and lessons learned associated with The Strong Spirit?*

Increasing the Odds

During this discussion, we will summarize how a strong spirit can increase your odds of success. You will recall that a strong spirit is needed to flush out your core values and define a catalyst dream that can empower those values.

You also learned that your odds of success can be dramatically improved by the way you play the game, so to speak. In other words, by following the proven path, you can improve almost anything you set your mind to (and then be able to teach others how to do the same).

Furthermore, you learned that by setting high expectations, you indirectly force yourself to explore the possibilities and reexamine the way you get things done, not simply tweak your existing system. Thus, by raising the bar of expectation, you are challenged to find new and better ways to assure success.

Finding the Leverage

Another key idea is to link your dream to the needs of others. In this way, others will want to contribute to the realization of your dreams so as to satisfy one or more of their own driving needs. Of course, when this happens, you're working smarter, not harder.

We also discussed the idea of visualization as a way to enhance the development of your dream while concurrently increasing your odds of success. By putting your dream on paper and sharing the details with others, you naturally become more committed to the dream, as well as the journey.

In the spirit of proper planning, we learned that you must set progressive milestones along the path to your dream. In this way, you are able to "divide and conquer;" thereby, increasing your odds of success even further. We also learned that each milestone represents a critical constraint to your catalyst dream and, once eliminated, becomes an achievement that should be rewarded. Finally, we learned about the 80/20 rule – the idea that 80% of your milestones will be relatively easy while 20% will likely prove difficult; thereby, requiring the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

4.0 Smart System

4.2 Creating the Effects. *How can you develop additional momentum in a highly confident and accountable way?*

Cause and Effect

In a very engaging way, this segment of our discussion will require some activity from the left-side of your brain (i.e., the logical side). So, let's open this session with a big question: "What is the Six Sigma System?" Well, it's a Smart System. Whenever you accomplish your work through a proven system, you can achieve success in a more consistent, reliable and repeatable way. If you want to increase your odds of success, achieve with a system and not your intuition.

The Six Sigma Way of Thinking relies on a proven system that is based on the Law of Determinism, which is a belief that every effect in the universe has a root cause. This should be very familiar because you experience cause-and-effect relationships every day of your life, in everything you do.

For example, consider the common light bulb. You simply throw the switch and stop the flow of electricity to the bulb. Unsurprisingly, the room goes dark. Conversely, reverse the switch and the room is filled with light. This is clearly a case of cause-and-effect.

Elements of the System

We can symbolize the idea of determinism by using three letters from the alphabet. This allows us to create a visual icon that symbolizes what happens when a cause is engaged to create an effect.

Let's use the letter "Y" to represent the effect, also known as the *outcome*, or *result* as some would say. Next, we will assign the letter "F" and "X" to jointly signify the cause. Thus, "Y" is the result of "F" and "X." In this sense, the letter "F" represents the way electricity (i.e., X or the force) is delivered to the bulb so as to create light (i.e., Y). Figure 9 provides a graphical summary of determinism.

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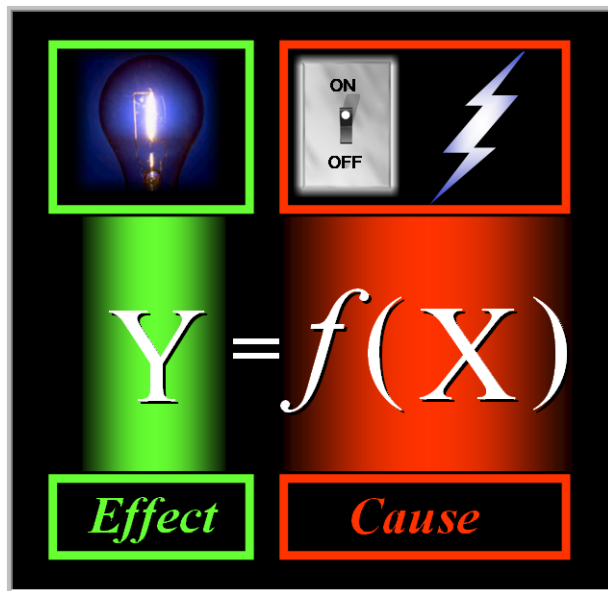


Figure 9. Graphical Summary of Determinism

In other words, the *result* is a function of the *way* in which *forces* are conditioned (i.e., processed). Inversely stated, *forces* are conditioned in a certain *way* to create the *result*. Expressed differently, the way you choose to activate the selected forces in your life will determine the quality and quantity of your life experience.

Owing to this fact, the bottom line conclusion is that you're in direct charge of a great many cause-and-effect experiences that can influence your life (barring things like unavoidable accidents and natural disasters). However, it can be rationally argued that you even have some control over these things, at least to one extent or the other.

Becoming More Proactive

Consider taking preventative actions in the face of risk. This is much better than later trying to explain the calamity as *fate* or *the inevitable*, or worse yet, saying it was *in the stars and destined to be*; *otherwise, it would never have happened*. Well guess what, you do have control over most things in your life – the natural Law of Determinism says so. Consider the old saying: “When it comes to apples on a tree, Newton will win every time.” This means that gravity will eventually prevail and cause every apple to fall from the tree (i.e., gravity will always win). Such is the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

4.3 Filtering the Causes. *What pattern of reasoning can reshape the way in which you look at the world?*

Creating Mental Filters

At this point in our discussion, you should take pause and reflect on the idea of cause-and-effect. Owing to this request, you are kindly asked to focus your attention on the icon “ $Y=f(X)$.” Why? Because of its *filtering power*. In other words, you can use the icon like a mental filter to look at the world within and around you.

For example, you can start with several hypothetical forces and then forecast the potential effects those forces could have on your life. Conversely, you can start with an effect and then reason your way back to the potential set of forces that would be required to bring about that kind of effect.

Owing to this, the filter is a very practical, confident and accountable way to isolate *situational leverage*. Almost without saying, your ability to do this can give you a distinct advantage in life. In short, when you make this *way of reasoning a way of life*, you can greatly increase your odds of success.

Adopting the Filters

By incorporating the deterministic filter into your current pattern of reasoning, you will be better enabled to resolve difficult problems and manage complex issues in a more effective and efficient manner. As this happens, you will naturally gain greater insight into how things work; thereby, allowing you to exercise greater control over the forces that are needed to reshape your life. Essentially, the filter can help you more effectively lead yourself (and others) to a position of greater success, especially when that position is wrapped in the fog of uncertainty.

Asking the Questions

By internalizing the idea of determinism, you'll begin to automatically ask yourself three vital questions every time you get into a demanding situation (like a difficult milestone on the path to your dream).

First, ask yourself: “What is the expected result (Y)?” Then ask yourself: “What critical forces (X's) are needed to create the expected result (Y)?” And finally, ask



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yourself: “What is the best way to transform the critical forces (X’s) into the expected result (Y)?”

As you might surmise, this is how you can think about the ordinary in an extra-ordinary kind of way. And when this happens, you’re going to develop new insights which, in turn, will drive fresh ideas on how to create breakthrough – in everything you do.

4.4 Manifesting the Opportunity. *How can you design opportunities that will align to your quest for breakthrough?*

Designing the Opportunity

We all want to have *opportunities* in our life. But far too many people associate the word *opportunity* with the word *luck*, which can be defined as the intersection of chance circumstances. However, when we look at the idea of an *opportunity* through the lens of determinism, we come to realize that an opportunity is nothing more than a set of forces (i.e., X’s) that are favorably conditioned (through f) to create some result (i.e., Y).

Given this, an opportunity (i.e., Y) can be intentionally created by designing and manifesting the prerequisite conditions (i.e., X’s). When you do this, you create the opportunity rather than simply waiting on chance circumstances to create it for you – which might otherwise never happen!

Leverage the Determinism

By leveraging the Law of Determinism, you can design your own destiny – for your personal life, home life and work life. So, how does the Law of Determinism affect your daily life? Stated differently, you might ask: “What is the chain of cause-and-effect relationships that determines my life experiences?” Well, the answer to either form of this question is really very generic and quite simple.

According to the Law of Determinism, every outcome in your life is the direct result of taking action (i.e., engaging forces), regardless of whether you or someone else (or something else) initiates those actions. In turn, the Law of Determinism would further declare that every human action first begins as a conscious or subconscious thought. Wow, let’s dwell on that idea for just a minute!

Thinking about Action

It is very interesting to ponder the idea that humankind has never accomplished anything that did not first begin as a thought (such as an idea, question or concept). Now that’s something to really think about!

So, the conclusion to all this should be fairly self-evident – every outcome begins with a thought. In other words, it can be said that *what you think about, you bring about* – and that’s a big idea indeed! As a matter of fact, that’s a profound idea that can change the course of your life and allow you to breakthrough to a new level of benefits for yourself and your family, as well as those you work for and those you work with.

4.5 Reinforcing the Chain. *How can you direct a chain of events to produce the results you want?*

Understanding the Process

Let’s now extend our understanding of determinism by considering the domino effect. You know, where the falling of one domino is the result of another that falls. In this case, the chain of cause-and-effect events continues until the last domino topples.

Like falling dominos, the Law of Determinism would say that your life is no different – it is a series of cause-and-effect events, where one event is the cause of the next until the final result comes to pass, which may (or may not) align to your expectations – unless you’ve taken the time to carefully design the chain-of-causation that will produce the result you want, need or expect.

Changing the Destiny

Well, here’s the great news – it’s never too late to alter your life! All you have to do is break the existing chain-of-causation by altering your life forces and/or the way in which you engage those forces.

Once you begin to think this way and look at the world through the window of determinism, you will naturally begin to define a new path for your life – a new destiny – a destiny in which you control the forces (i.e., events) that are manifested into your life – a destiny in which you control how those forces are bundled and interconnected to create a desired result.



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Making the Odds

Interestingly, the process of breakthrough can be summarized into three domino-like stages. Let's begin with the first stage. When you commit to continuously think about the actions that are needed to achieve a certain result, you will consciously and/or subconsciously work to bring about those actions if, and only if, you are as committed to engaging the forces as you are the result.

Now, let's move on to the second stage. As you bring about the essential actions (i.e., as you engage the prerequisite forces), you'll bring about the results you expect or otherwise anticipate. Let's now consider the third and final stage. As you bring about results, you will assuredly increase the odds of manifesting your dream. That's the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

4.6 Designing the System. *What kind of a system will make your journey more effective and efficient?*

Getting It Right

We all know that the pursuit of a dream requires a significant commitment of personal resources, such as time and effort. In order to increase your odds of success, you must leverage the Law of Determinism by using a system. In this way, you can get it right the first time—especially when you use a SMART system, which is an acronym for simple, manageable, actionable, repeatable and teachable.

Working Smarter

The criteria for a SMART system are essential if you are going to create a system that will work for you (more often, more reliably and more predictably). Almost without saying, the use of a SMART system translates to *working smarter, not harder*. When you accomplish your work through a SMART system, that system will multiply the net effect of your efforts and better synchronize those efforts toward the creation of a high quality outcome – time and time again. So make your journey easy, effective, efficient and more economical, choose the Six Sigma Way – it's the SMART way to go.

Defining the System

So what is a system anyway? Well, consider your life. You start with certain driving and restraining forces in your life – you know, the X's you combine and engage

(in various ways) to make things happen. Naturally, these X's are the *inputs* to your life (i.e., the forces that drive your life experiences).

When you process those inputs (i.e., forces) in a certain way “f,” you get a certain result “Y” (i.e., output). In other words, the quality (and perhaps quantity) of your life is a function of how well you process inputs – how well you can transform inputs into outputs.

If you keep processing the same inputs in the same way, guess what, you're going to keep getting the same results. In other words, *do what you did and you'll get what you got*. So it goes according to the laws of nature! Of course, the net effect of all such outputs (i.e., experiences) is called your *life*.

4.7 Improving the System. *How can you design a repeatable system that will work long and hard for you?*

Following the Footprints

As you experience life, you leave behind traces of those experiences, much like footprints in the sand. While some of those footprints are physical in nature (like letters or holiday cards), others are more emotional or spiritual in nature (like good memories and inner feelings). Of course, you can look back on those footprints to evaluate the quality of your life's journey. In other words, you should periodically check the output of your life to see if it meets your expectations. In other words, you should periodically stop and ask yourself: “Is my life headed where I want it to go?” If the answer is yes, then don't worry, be happy – keep your life moving in the same direction – keep doing the same thing. As the old saying goes: “If ain't broke, don't fix it!”

Options for Improvement

But on the other hand, if life does not meet your expectations, the answer would likely be “No.” In this case, you have a limited number of options to improve your situation. In short, you'll have to make some modifications in your life if you want things to get better.

Based on the natural Law of Determinism, there are only three things that can be modified to create improvement – the output, the process, and/or the inputs – that is, Y, f, and/or X, respectively.

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First, you might choose to enhance your aim by raising your bar of expectation (i.e., increase Y). But, at no time should you consider lowering your expectations, standards or aspirations – that’s simply out of the question.

Second, you can improve the way you do things – you know, improve the process (i.e., the way you bundle and engage the driving and restraining forces in your life). This means you must improve “f.” Third, you can increase the influence of those forces that create positive momentum in your life (i.e., improve the X’s).

This would also include extending your span of control over any of those forces, as well as improving the extent to which you can sustain those forces over time. At this point, your improvements would be complete. Thus, you have now been exposed to a full cycle of the deterministic system.

Improving the System

To increase your odds of *getting it right the first time*, you might need to improve the “execute-ability” of your system or simply innovate an entirely new system. Figure 10 illustrates the direction of reasoning when attempting to improve a deterministic system.

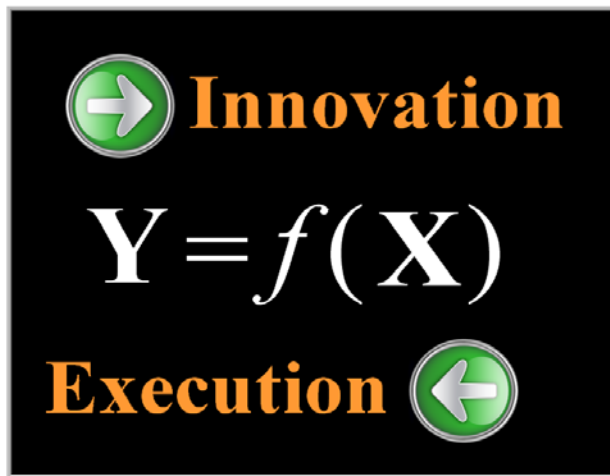


Figure 10. Improving a Deterministic System

Let’s first consider how to improve a system through innovation. In this case, you would likely want to start with the results that the system is expected to produce (i.e., Y) and then progressively reason your way to the X’s (i.e. the forces).

This means you would first reexamine the performance expectations you have for Y (such as the nature, scale or timing of your dream). That is, you might want to consider upping the ante by requiring a better result – a higher level of output (i.e., stretching your goals). In turn, this would force you to reexamine the way in which you go about getting work done and, as a consequence, cause you to look for a better way to turn forces into results.

Finally, you might want to consider introducing a new set (or subset) of forces into the mix of things. In summary, you can bring about a higher quality life in one of three ways; a) introduce entirely new elements into the system – fully or partially; b) modify certain elements of the existing system – fully or partially; or c) some combination thereof.

Well, that’s how a deterministic system works and how it can be improved. Remember, you can improve the deterministic system through innovation (by reasoning from Y to X; and then introducing new elements) or through better execution (by reasoning from X to Y; and then improving the existing elements).

Regardless of your approach to improvement, you must always rely on the power of a deterministic system to help you realize your dreams. That’s the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

4.8 Avoiding the Symptoms. *How can you reduce the odds of abandoning your dream of breakthrough?*

Facing the Result

To better grasp the powerful nature of a deterministic system, let’s do a breakdown of its individual elements. In this way, you can develop a much deeper and richer understanding of how to create breakthrough – in any aspect of your life.

We will begin by focusing on Y – the result. Of course, “Y” is what must be achieved. Some call it an *outcome*. It is also called a *consequence*, or *effect*. A result can also be the *answer* to some question, or a *conclusion* about something. You can also think of it as an *output*.

Recognizing the Problem

Regardless of how you might label Y, it must always be remembered that you cannot take any kind of direct

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action on Y. In other words, you cannot take direct action on an outcome. This is because any outcome is always the result of something else. In this sense, you can say that Y is always the symptomatic result of X – just like sneezing is a symptomatic reaction to the presence of certain pollen.

In this case, Y is the sneezing effect and X is pollen (i.e., the cause). Eliminate the pollen and you eliminate the sneezing, but a symptomatic elimination of the sneezing (like using a nose spray) does not eliminate the pollen that causes the sneezing. The nose spray treats the symptom (Y), not the problem (X).

Levels of Focus

You should recognize that a result can be categorized into one of three relative levels. In the Six Sigma Way of Thinking, the highest level of Y is often referred to as a large Y or “big Y” as some would call it. In the context of our discussion, a big Y would be a *dream*. Of course, the realization of a dream is generally considered to be a long-term result. At the second level, we have *milestones*, which are normally thought of as mid-term results. At the third level of the hierarchy we have the small Y’s, like the completion of a *step*, which is usually considered to be a short-term result. Figure 11 illustrates the primary levels of a result.



Figure 11. Primary Levels of a Result

Owing to the domino-like nature of this hierarchy, we must always try to develop our plans in a top-down kind of way. This is to say that you must take your dream and break it down into milestones which, in turn, would be

broken into steps. However, when it comes time to make the rubber meet the road, you would execute from the bottom-up.

In this sense, steps give way to milestones and milestones give way to the dream. In an effort to further increase your odds of successful planning and execution, you should always strive to ensure that each milestone is within line-of-sight of the next. In this way, you keep your confidence of success high by always having the next target within your sights.

Targets of Opportunity

As a caveat, you should always watch out for any enticing *targets of opportunity* that will likely appear along your line-of-sight. The urge to pursue these little *quick wins* along the path to your dream can easily sidetrack your efforts and pull you off the main course – to such an extent, you might find yourself holding a collection of *little wins* that is worth less than the value of having stayed on track and achieved the next milestone. You might even find yourself right back where you started. So, keep a clear line-of-sight all the way to your dream with the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

4.9 Generating the Power. *How can you generate the power that is necessary to create breakthrough?*

Focusing on Forces

Let’s now do a breakdown of the deterministic system in terms of X (i.e., forces). As one might expect, there are many labels for X other than the word *force*. Some of these descriptors are inclusive of, but not limited to things like *habit, action, factor, reason, condition, and circumstance*, just to mention a few. But regardless of labeling, you should be aware there are several basic types of forces that can drive or restrain your efforts in this world.

Defining the Forces

Forces are at work in nearly everyone’s life, there are physical, intellectual, social, economic, legal, spiritual, and emotional forces, as well as several other key types. Of interest, your span of control over a given force might be internal to you. This means you have full control over that force. Such internal forces can be habitual or periodic in nature. For example, consider the force called *power of positive thinking*. This is a driving force



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that can reside within you (i.e., internal to you). It's a force that can also be external to you (i.e., reside within someone else).

Regardless of whether a force is internal or external to you, it can be applied in a habitual or periodic way. Obviously, this would mean that there are many different types of forces and many ways to implement those forces. By learning how to increase and decrease the power of such forces, you will greatly improve your odds of success on the path to breakthrough.

4.10 Intensifying the Forces. *What kind of forces are needed to help you sustain success?*

Influence of Forces

Let's now consider the influence of forces. More specifically, you'll now learn how to increase your odds of success through the Law of Force, which is based on the principle of attracting and repelling forces (i.e., driving and restraining forces).

Components of Power

As you might already know, the power of a force is defined by three highly interactive factors. The first factor is *strength of force*, which is fairly self-explanatory. That's how strong a force is. The second factor is *span of control*. This is the extent to which you can turn a force on and off (at will). The third component of power is *sustainability of the force*. In other words, the duration of time you can keep a force *turned on or off*.

Thus, we can say that the practical influence of a force (i.e., power) is a function of strength, span and sustainability – the 3 S's of influence. Of course, you can analyze the 3 S's through a Force Field Analysis, which is a simple graphical technique to help you organize and diagnose your improvement efforts.

Leveraging the Forces

In terms of influence, forces will normally break down into two categories – the *Vital Few* forces and the *Trivial Many*. In most situations, the Vital Few will normally constitute about 20% of the total number of forces. Consequently, 80% of forces will be among the Trivial Many.

So what does this mean? Well, it means that 20% of the forces will usually account for about 80% of the total power you need to make something happen (in a quality way). In other words, about 80% of any effect (i.e., result) can be explained by 20% of the causes (i.e., the forces that bring about that effect). Recall the *80/20 Rule*, also known as the *Pareto Principle*?

In this sense, the *80/20 Rule* is commonly associated with the *Law of Leverage*, which we'll examine later on in our discussion. Essentially, the 80/20 rule holds that 80% of your success in this world can be explained by 20% of the things you accomplish day-to-day. That's a very powerful way to look at life.

4.11 Linking the Forces. *How can you isolate and harness the critical forces that drive breakthrough?*

Understanding the Goal

To better illustrate this idea, let's consider sailing. For example, you might ask: "What forces would influence your success in sailing to some checkpoint?" Well, there are a lot of them, such as wind speed, wind direction, size of the sails, type of sails, knowledge of the crew, even the design of the boat, and the list goes on and on. If your goal is to sail from point A to point B, then the 80/20 rule would hold that, during the course of your journey, only a few of the total forces (about 20%) will prove to be *highly important* to your success.

Thus, we recognize that any given force can bias the odds of success, to some extent. Of course, some forces can heavily influence your journey in a positive way or negative way, depending on the circumstances.

For example, if you're sailing a boat from point A to point B, then wind speed would likely be among the Vital Few forces. However, depending on the wind direction, this particular force could be a Vital Few driving force or a Vital Few restraining force. Even this could change several times across the course of your journey – which means your ability to improvise and adapt to changing circumstances is paramount to increasing your odds of success.

Capitalizing on Change

You must be able to capitalize on changing circumstances and always be leveraging the Vital Few

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forces, regardless of their direction of effect (positive or negative). But when the forces of sailing (i.e., your life forces) are balanced to a net effect of zero, there will be no change in your current position. This means that the power of the driving forces equals the opposing power of the restraining forces. Under this circumstance your *life boat* would be dead in the water, so to speak.

By the same token, if you believe that your life is going nowhere, it's probably because you don't have any momentum – the critical driving and restraining forces of your life are counterbalancing each other. In order to create forward motion and begin sailing towards your dream, you've got to leverage the 80/20 rule and engage the Vital Few forces while ignoring the Trivial Many. Figure 12 reinforces the 80/20 rule.



Figure 12. The 80/20 Way of Reasoning

Remember the catch phrase: *What you think about, you bring about.* So start thinking the 80/20 way – the Six Sigma Way. Start thinking about the Vital Few forces in your life and stop dealing with the Trivial Many. Make yourself become more flexible to changing circumstances.

Increasing the Momentum

Learn to adapt and improvise. Do this and you will naturally bias the odds of success in your favor. So always focus on leveraging the Vital Few and ignore the Trivial Many. In turn, this will allow you to pick up momentum and sail the boat of your life to the harbor of your dreams.

To better grasp the profound nature of forces, we will recall our education example. Remember that you looked out from some point in your life and spotted a dream called *getting a college degree*. You then asked how you were going to get there. At this point, you concluded that you could increase your odds of success through a powerful strategy called *Divide and Conquer*.

Achieving a Milestone

To implement the *Divide and Conquer* strategy you must establish some milestones (i.e., deliverables) to mark the way. In doing so, you recognized that the use of milestones would make the journey more accountable and sustainable. For the sake of our discussion, we'll say that you decided that *submitting a college application* should be the first milestone and the second milestone should be *receiving a letter of acceptance* (from the university you applied to).

Well, at this point, you now pop the big question: "What steps must be taken to get to my next milestone?" More precisely, "What are the Vital Few forces that must be enabled and/or disabled to achieve my next milestone?" By answering this question, you will come to understand that a *step* is really nothing more than an actionable force.

A step (per say) is a concise description of what you must do to engage the power of a force. In other words, how you will turn that force *on* or *off* – just like a light bulb. Thus, the forces are translated into *steps*. Of course, some forces must be engaged before others – which would suggest a natural or logical ordering of the steps.

Playing the Game

Let's now look at how you can engage the forces. To accomplish this we will look at how you can close the gap between Milestone 1 and Milestone 2. First, we identify all of our driving and restraining forces and then prioritize those forces, after which we select the Vital Few.

Next, we must determine which Restraining Forces will be decreased in power and which Driving Forces will be increased. Once you know which forces must be activated (or deactivated); and the general order in which they must be done, you are ready to commit your plan to paper – perhaps in the form of a sequenced list of actions

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(i.e., like a To Do list). You might even want to put a completion date beside each step of your plan.

Not only will these suggestions make your plan more accountable (to yourself and perhaps others), it will also help to ensure an optimal pace-of-execution. At this point, you are ready to execute the plan. And that's how you get from one milestone to the next while rewarding yourself for each success. That's the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

4.12 Synergizing the Forces. *How can you get more out of a system than you put in?*

Examining the Way

Let's further dissect the deterministic system by taking a deeper look at the function (i.e., the letter "f"). Recall that this letter signifies *the way* in which you engage the X's (i.e., the way you leverage your life forces or otherwise implement those forces). To better understand all of this, we must first learn about the Principle of Synergy and the Principle of Leverage, as well as how these two principles can be combined to greatly increase your odds of success.

Synergizing the Forces

The Principle of Synergy holds that you can amplify the collective effect of two or more forces if those forces can *play* together. In other words, their collective effect will be more powerful when implemented concurrently (i.e., at the same time). This is to say that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Through the Principle of Synergy, you can experience a bigger result.

To further illustrate this idea, consider two common types of forces that might come into play when submitting a college application. We'll say that the first force (X1) is *committing the time to do something*. We will now say the second force (X2) is *thinking positively about getting the work done*.

Naturally, it is easy to see how each force could independently increase your odds of success. However, when you commit the time to do a task (X1) and, at the same time, you think positively about getting that task done (X2), the net effect would likely be far greater than deploying these two forces at different points in time. Thus, you can amplify your applied power through the Principle of Synergy.

4.13 Leveraging the Forces. *How can you decrease your effort while increasing your chances of breakthrough?*

Understanding the Tactics

Let's now consider the Principle of Leverage. This principle holds that you can amplify your efforts by the way in which you engage the forces. For example, consider a high-jumper. Such a jumper uses a sequence of certain carefully orchestrated body motions to maximize the height of a jump. Well, to leverage your efforts, you must carefully orchestrate certain life forces in a predefined sequence. Doing so will maximize your odds of success. Figure 13 illustrates the principle of leverage.

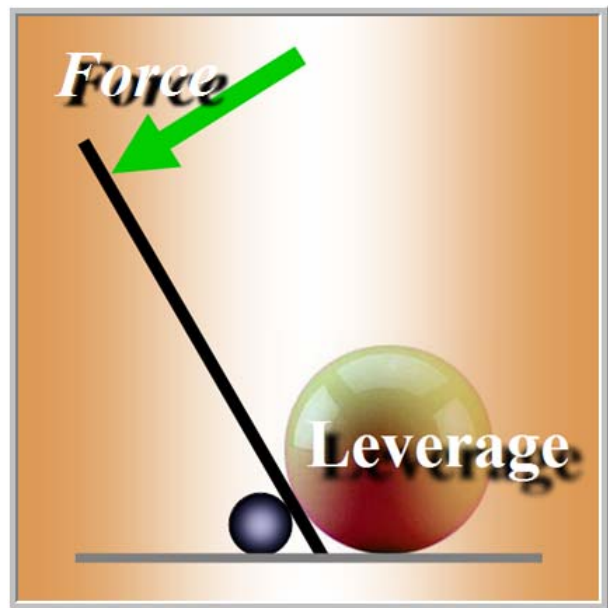


Figure 13. Principle of Leverage

Identifying the Forces

To implement *The Six Sigma Way*, you must first identify the forces you need to activate or deactivate. Remember, the forces you select will be the ones that become accountable for generating the power you need to reach your target milestone. Of course, there are a number of ways to effectively identify the forces (like using brainstorming techniques or asking others who have successfully negotiated the same type of milestone).



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Prioritizing the Forces

After identifying the forces, you must prioritize them from strongest to weakest. This is usually accomplished by establishing a numerical score for each force, where that score characterizes the strength, span-of-control and sustainability of that force.

Selecting the Forces

Once you have prioritized the forces by way of your ratings, you must then select the *Vital Few*. This is most often accomplished by peeling off the top forces that you believe will account for at least 80% of the power that is needed to achieve the target milestone.

Sequencing the Forces

With the Vital Few forces in hand, you must then sequence those forces in accordance to the order in which they are to be engaged. In other words, you must determine which forces should be brought *on-line* first, second, third and so on.

As the old saying goes, *timing is everything*. So assign an *activation date* to each force, as this will make you more accountable and help you better coordinate supporting efforts. To promote synergistic effects, you should *parallel schedule* those forces that are potentially interactive (i.e., ensure that those types of forces are implemented at the same time).

Activating the Forces

After sequencing the forces, you must determine how each of the selected forces can be activated or deactivated, as the case may be. In other words you must decide how you will “*turn'em on*” and/or “*turn'em off*” as needed. When you do this, you will have successfully defined the *steps* of your action plan – you will have leveraged their full potential through solid planning. Such is the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

4.14 Activating the System. *What are the key points and lessons learned associated with The SMART System?*

Reviewing the Elements

We will now review the big ideas that are associated with activating the Smart System. Of course, it is the Smart System that will launch you to the realization of

your catalyst dream. Through our discussions, you have learned that the Smart System is a simple, manageable, actionable, repeatable and teachable way of systematically getting things done.

Naturally, the real power behind the Smart System is the infallible logic of deterministic reasoning, which advocates that your achievements in life are a function of the things you do in life and the way you do them – plain and simple. For example, your ability to live out your core values is a function of realizing your catalyst dream which, in turn, is a function of achieving your milestones through the improvement of forces.

On another level, it can be said that your self-esteem is a function of things like how much support you get from your friends and family, as well as things like your weight. Thus, to improve your current condition, you must identify, prioritize and enable the vital few forces that govern your self-esteem.

We also learned that when a system is built upon the foundation of deterministic reasoning, that system can then be described as a series of inputs that are subsequently processed or otherwise conditioned to produce a desired output, after which that output must be evaluated for conformance to expectations and then modified if necessary. In short, you get out what you put in – garbage in, garbage out.

Patterns of Thought

Another principle that is closely tied to this way of reasoning is the idea that “you bring about what you think about,” often called the “Law of Attraction.” When you continually think about the forces that supports your movement to a milestone, you greatly increase your odds of manifesting those forces – either consciously, subconsciously or both.

However, when you are not thinking of such things, it is most doubtful that they will ever be brought into play, unless by chance circumstance. But, to simply focus your thoughts on the result (i.e., the symptom), you will likely produce little or nothing.

Therefore, you must do more than continually think about WHAT you want, you must obsessively think about HOW you will get it. In other words, you must continually be thinking about the forces and tactical actions that will bring about your desired outcome. This



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means you must think deterministically in terms of cause-and-effect.

Thus, as you purposefully think about the driving and restraining forces in an ongoing manner, you become focused on enabling the power of those forces which, in turn, will catapult you from milestone to milestone; thereby, delivering your catalyst dream. And once that dream has been realized, you then have the freedom of choice to live out your core values.

Saturating the Mind

Through this domino-like process, you can manifest virtually anything, and do so in a repeatable and teachable way. Of course, you can increase your odds of success even more when you saturate your mind with the 80/20 way of thinking, which says that 80% of your success will be dependent on only 20% of the forces. Therefore, you should always seek to improve the “Vital Few” and ignore the “Trivial Many.”

This means, you must systematically plan your engagement of the Vital Few forces and not waste any time or resources dealing with the Trivial Many. Such is the proven way that that empowers the ordinary to achieve the extraordinary in your personal life, your home life and your work life. That’s the *Six Sigma Way of Thinking*.

5.0 Simple Strategy

5.2 Applying the Cycle. *How can you better plan and manage your actions on the path to breakthrough?*

Cycles of Execution

As many already know, you must have a solid, proven strategy to consistently win a chess game. By the same token, it’s very important to follow a proven strategy when pursuing a milestone. So, let’s open this session with a key question: “What is the Six Sigma Strategy?” Well, it’s a simple strategy, for sure.

We’ve all heard the old, but wise saying: “A journey is never made until the first step is taken.” This morsel of wisdom is so simple, yet so profound. For every milestone along your path, you must continually exercise the Breakthrough Cycle of Execution. This means you must Think – Plan – Do – Check.

Principle of Simplicity

When compared to a more sophisticated approach, the Breakthrough Cycle of Execution has few steps. However, this will increase your odds of success for achieving each milestone. Why? Because a simpler strategy means there are fewer things that can go wrong! Owing to the Principle of Simplicity, you have more time to focus on each element of your plan; therein, enabling you to devote more *quality time* to each detail of your planning process, as well as during the course of implementation. In turn, this provides you greater confidence of *total mission success*.

Description of a Cycle

So, how do you get from one milestone to the next using this strategy? Well, the first step is to continually think about how the deterministic system can leverage and synergize your efforts. The second step is to plan the forces that will enable you to gain positive momentum.

The third step is to do the plan in an accountable and coordinated way, which means you will stay on track and accomplish the right things at the right time and place – in the right way. Of course, this works to ensure that you get it done right – the first time.

The fourth step is to check the results of what you just did and look at where you’re going, as well as reducing the *noises* that distract you. So, for each milestone along the path to your dream, you must complete the Breakthrough Cycle of Execution: Think – Plan – Do – Check. Doing so will increase your odds of success– the Six Sigma Way.

5.3 Harnessing the System. *How can you employ systematic thinking to make your journey more repeatable?*

Thinking Systematically

During this segment of our discussion, we will focus on the idea of a system and its importance to achieving each of the milestones on the way to your dream. Essentially, a system is a method or procedure for doing something. In this context, you should think about achieving a target milestone from a systems point-of-view.

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Blueprints for Thinking

So, what does the phrase *Think System* really mean? Simply stated, it's just another way of saying *Systematic Thinking*. By thinking systematically about how you will achieve a target milestone, you can better plan how to get there in a more reliable, repeatable and confident way. Such a systematic way of thinking can be characterized by the IPOEM model, as illustrated in Figure 14.

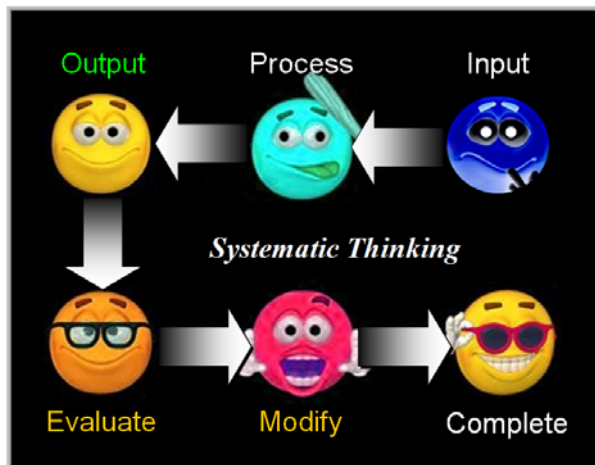


Figure 14. IPOEM System of Thinking

In this sense, IPOEM is a way of looking at the world and thinking about how it operates. Expressed differently, IPOEM is a way of reasoning that will help you better manage the causes that create the effects you want. This means you must continually ask yourself two vital questions: First, you must ask: “What must be achieved?” What effect (i.e., output) must be realized?

From this perspective, the latter question implies that you must think about your deliverables (i.e., milestones) in terms of expectations, such as quality, cost and timing considerations, but done so from the eyes of the beneficiary, regardless of who that may be (i.e., you or someone else – like a family member, team member, employer, customer and so on).

Second, you must ask: “How can those results be achieved?” This question suggests you must always be thinking about the best way to engage and manage the forces that will create momentum for you. In other words, you must define a process that has the capability and capacity to convert the inputs into an output, but done so in an easy, effective and efficient manner.

So, when you think systematically, you are reasoning through the critical cause-and-effect relationships that must be activated (in a domino like way) to deliver a high quality, on-time, low cost solution – yet done so in a verifiable and accountable manner.

Getting the Results

When you begin to think systematically about your dream, you will get better results from each segment of your journey. Hence, the first step of the Breakthrough Cycle of Execution is to *Think System*. Naturally, to gain the associated benefits, you will need to dedicate some quality time to the planning process.

Of the total time you spend thinking about your journey, focus on the result 20% of the time. This means you should not spend a lot of time thinking about the effect (i.e., output). In other words, don't spend a lot of time thinking about the benefits that are tied to the milestone in front of you.

Prioritizing the Time

Remember, benefits are purely symptomatic of what you do to successfully engage the forces. Consequently, you must focus on the forces 80% of the time. This means thinking about the causes – the way in which you engage forces (i.e., the inputs and process). This means you must spend the vast majority of your time thinking about the actions you must take to build momentum.

So why take such a disciplined approach to the realization of your milestones? Because, you want a Six Sigma level of confidence that every milestone will be achieved. Just like airline passenger safety – when your life is on the line, you want maximum confidence of getting to your destination. You want the highest odds that all things will go *right*. That's the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

5.4 Translating the Forces. *How can you convert natural forces into executable steps?*

Nature of a Plan

The second step of the Breakthrough Cycle of Execution is called: *Plan Forces*. This means you must design the potential cause-and-effect relationships that will leverage you to your next milestone. Of course, this means planning the forces that will provide you positive momentum.



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At all times, you must remember that a plan is just that, it's a plan, not a rat maze that will guarantee a hard path to the cheese, so to speak. This means your plan must be *robust*. This is to say that your plan must be resilient or otherwise impervious to the types of ever-changing conditions that can be reasonably anticipated in advance of execution.

Guard Banding the Plan

Frequently, you might not be able to engage some of the forces as you initially expected. In such cases, you should always have one or more *substitute forces* ready to go. These *bullpen* forces can be used to pick up the slack and keep things on track. Thus, your plan would be robust to changing conditions and circumstances.

Addressing the Issues

Let's now consider the key planning questions that you should be able to answer prior to the execution of a milestone. In this sense, the planning questions are like a set of guidelines that will better steer your preparatory activities. The first question is: What forces must be engaged? This question aims at the Vital Few drivers and restrainers that will transport you to the next milestone.

The second question is: Who must engage the forces? Remember the old Beatles song: "We all get by with a little help from our friends". In some situations, you may not be the only one that is engaging your forces – others might need to activate one or more of the forces for you. In such cases, they too should be a part of the planning process.

The third question is: "*When must the forces be engaged?*" As the old saying goes: "Timing is Everything." You must always remember that when the right forces are applied at the wrong time, it is likely that you will produce less than expected, or maybe even nothing (or something you don't want). So, the moral to this story is simple – carefully think about the timing of your forces – when each force should be activated (or deactivated).

The fourth question is: *Where must the forces be engaged?* As any good real estate agent will tell you – *location, location, location*. Apply the right forces at the right time from the wrong location and you will likely produce little or nothing (or perhaps the wrong thing).

So, you should give due consideration to the location from which a force should be activated.

The fifth and final question is: *How should the forces be activated?* For example, some forces might be best introduced in a serial kind of way – one at a time. However, other forces should be introduced in parallel (i.e., at the same time). In this way, you can maximize their synergistic potential. Hence, the way you combine and integrate the forces can make a huge difference in your results.

Illustrating the Guidelines

To better illustrate the planning guidelines, let's return to our education example and explore a milestone. Consider the submission of a college application. In order to submit a college application in a way that increases the odds of success, you must translate the Vital Few driving and restraining forces into action items.

For example, *having ready access to key documents* could be a driving force when submitting a college application – like getting an official copy of your high school transcript. Naturally, you would want to translate this force into a step.

When you make a force actionable, it becomes a required step in your milestone plan – like *get a certified copy of my high school transcript*. Of course, each action item should appear on your milestone *To Do* list; and be displayed in the proper order of execution. That's the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

5.5 Engaging the Forces. *How can you execute your breakthrough plans in a more reliable and repeatable way?*

Executing the Plan

The third step of the Breakthrough Cycle of Execution is called: *Do Plan*. As the title of this step would infer, you must now take action – you must now execute your plans and way of thinking.

At this point in the game, you must set aside any thoughts about the dream and focus on action. In fact, you should become *obsessive-compulsive* about executing your plan. Execution must now become a part of your daily routine. As you begin to execute your plan,



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you should keep one thought at the forefront of your mind – a daily thought!

Everyday when you wake up, you should ask yourself: “Will today’s activities lead me farther from or closer to my goals [i.e., target milestone].” Be sure to keep your *To Do* list close at hand – like putting the actions on a 3x5 card you carry around in your pocket or purse. Maybe even keep it as a screen saver on your computer. Then, throughout the day, review the list and think about execution.

Enabling the Power

During the execution of any portion of your plan, you should always remember: “What you think about, you bring about.” Of course, this motto is made real by the way you engage forces. The power of this statement cannot be over emphasized.

For example, as you continually think about getting your high-school transcript, your related thoughts will consciously and subconsciously urge you to get this task accomplished and out of the way. Your inner values will naturally engage what’s prioritized in your mind. In this sense, those types of thoughts and inner feelings spur your mind to bring about action. Hence, “what you think about, you bring about”.

This way of thinking will help you develop natural momentum. After all, it is momentum that will carry you to victory. So, continuously think about the forces you need to create action. In other words, always be thinking about the forces you must engage to sustain your momentum. Do this and you will significantly increase your odds of success – The Six Sigma Way.

5.6 Validating the Results. *How can you confirm that your actions are leading to the expected results?*

Tracking the Wake

The last step of the Breakthrough Cycle of Execution is called: *Check Results*. Essentially, this step advocates that, every now and then, you must stop what you’re doing and check where you’ve been. Like looking at the wake of a boat, a review of your accomplishments will give you a clear idea of the course you’ve been on and the general direction you’re headed. So, always look over your shoulder at the wake of your efforts – consider where you’ve been.

Pinging the Future

Periodically, you should check on where you are going – use your intuition and power of observation like radar. As you look at the facts of where you’ve been, also be mindful to what your gut is telling you about where you’re going. In this way, you’ll have a fairly good idea about whether or not you’re on track.

Minimizing the Noise

As a general rule, you must always consider the level of noise you’re encountering along the path. For example, you will likely have people you know (i.e., friends, coworkers, colleagues or family members) trying to *rain on your parade*, so to speak. In other words, you will have some that continually say (or otherwise infer) that your journey is a *pipe dream*, is *impossible*, or “*you’re in way over your head*.” Some may even say “*you’re crazy*.”

Keeping a Steady Hand

As you probably already know, background noises can induce self doubts, muffle your inner voice or blur your vision of the road ahead. So, keep a clear view of the road in front of you. Always try to dismiss what naysayer’s might be saying – and quit hanging around those that offer negative advice or belittle your efforts. Hold firm to your dream and keep a steady hand on the wheel. Use the Breakthrough Cycle of Execution and increase your odds of success! And that’s the Six Sigma Way of Thinking.

5.7 Empowering the Strategy. *What are the key points and lessons learned associated with The Simple Strategy?*

Cycle of Breakthrough

We’ll now turn our attention to a summary of how you can empower the Simple Strategy to create and sustain positive momentum toward the achievement of each critical milestone. As you have learned, this can be accomplished by applying the Think-Plan-Do-Check cycle of improvement. Recall that we use the Simple Strategy to initiate and assure steady progress from one milestone to the next. By using the Simple Strategy, our journey can be made easier and more effective, with less inefficiency along the way. In this way, you increase your odds of success. Figure 15 displays the TPDC cycle of breakthrough that defines the Simple Strategy.

The great discovery

How to Achieve Breakthrough by Thinking about the Ordinary in an Extraordinary Way

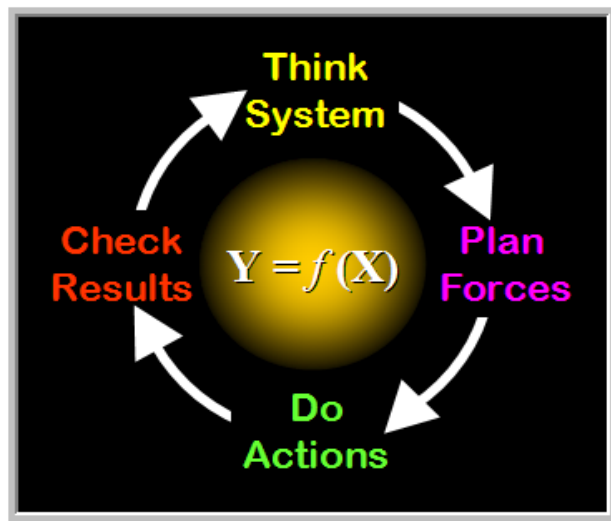


Figure 15. TPDC Cycle of Breakthrough

Implementing the Steps

To implement the Simple Strategy, you must execute the first step, which is called: “Think System,” which means you must think systematically about what you must do and how you must do it. It also means that you must think about how to best leverage your “Vital Few” forces in a progressive and deterministic way. This means using the IPOEM model to guide your reasoning. By thinking about things in a systematic and deterministic manner, you will significantly increase your odds of successfully engaging the key forces and sustaining forward momentum.

To progress forward, you must execute the second step of the Simple Strategy, which is called: “Plan Forces.” This means that you must: a) carefully and thoughtfully identify all of your potential forces; b) establish which of the potential forces are among the Vital Few; c) determine how to get the most out of each critical force; d) synergize your critical forces to get a “bigger bang” for the same effort; and e) determine how your critical forces can be brought “online” in an easy, effective and efficient manner.

At this point, you are now ready to execute the third step, which is called: “Do Plan.” This means that you must engage the forces through your planned actions. To accomplish this, you must first translate each of the “Vital Few” forces into a set of action items like a “to do” list. Naturally, such a list is just a simple chronology of what must be done to bring each of the forces into play.

Of course, your action items must be made accountable by the assignment of expected completion dates. In support of this, you must also perform periodic monitoring of your progress. Thus, you are able to engage your critical forces; therein, creating positive momentum toward the target milestone.

Your final step is called “Check Results.” This means that you must look at your past performance (and accomplishments) in a critical, yet constructive way. By looking over your shoulder and analyzing where you’ve been, you will likely note some “lessons learned.” As would be expected, such lessons can help you on the road ahead, thereby increasing your odds of success.

You must also look out at where you’re going so as to ensure your train is still on the tracks, so to speak. At the same time, you must strive to eliminate the “Vital Few” sources of noise in your life. This means that you must remove yourself from the presence of people who seek to amplify your short-comings or discourage your progress.

By sidestepping the naysayers, you will improve your vision of things, increase your self-confidence, strengthen your resolve, become more decisive, render better judgments, and be more innovative, not to mention being more motivated. Remember, the last thing you need is someone trying to “rain on your parade.” Stick to your guns and hold the course – that’s the Six Sigma Way.

6.0 Program Summary

6.1 Reviewing the Highlights. *What kind of dream is often bigger than realizing your own dream of breakthrough?*

Recounting the Way

Let’s now take a quick look at where we’ve been. Through the Six Sigma Way of Thinking you have discovered how the ordinary can achieve the extraordinary. We have explored a proven way to achieve breakthrough in your personal life, your home life and your work life. We have also learned how this extraordinary, time-tested way of thinking can deliver you the results you want and increase your odds of success – in anything you choose to do.



The great discovery

How to Achieve Breakthrough by Thinking about the Ordinary in an Extraordinary Way

Recall that the Six Sigma Way uses a four stage process called the *Proven Path* to create breakthrough. First, you *Do the Dreaming*, then you *Dream the Doing*, followed by *Plan the Doing* and finish with *Do the Plan*. When you *Do the Dreaming*, your goal is to explore the possibilities around you. In other words, you must look out to the horizon, increase your vision, dream big and dream wide. Following this, you must *Dream the Doing*, which means that you must define milestones to mark the journey in front of you.

Applying the Principles

To increase the odds of success, you must make every effort to align your dream to the needs of others, after which you seek to envision the details of that dream. This is followed by your personal declaration of the quest, after which you create a roadmap to your dream that is marked by milestones.

As you have learned, the implementation of these guidelines requires a *Strong Spirit*. In order to *Plan the Doing*, you must systematically think about your quest in a deterministic way – a way that structures and guide your efforts. In this way, your thinking is better aligned to the laws of nature, especially when you plan how your critical forces will be engaged to realize each milestone along the way. For these reasons, you employ a *Smart System*. Then, to help you *Do the Plan* for each milestone, you must engage the forces in accordance to a simple checklist of action items.

After this, you must periodically check on the results of your efforts by looking at where you've been. You must also look out and see where you're going, as well eliminating any sources of noise that can blur your vision of the road ahead. After achieving a milestone, you then reward yourself in a meaningful way. That's the *Simple Strategy*.

Pledging the Gift

We have now explored a proven way of thinking that empowers the ordinary, people like you and I, to achieve the extraordinary. That's a Great Discovery for your personal life, your home life and your work life. In this sense, your new knowledge is like a gift that can keep on giving because, once you achieve your dream, you will have exercised the Six Sigma Way of Thinking to such an extent it becomes a way of life for you.

Of course, the proven ability to realize dreams is worth far more than any one dream – simply because you now know how to manifest as many dreams as you want! Perhaps even more importantly, you will have become experienced with a time-tested system that is repeatable and teachable, which means you can show others the path to breakthrough. After all is said and done, what could be a more valuable gift?

The ability to show others how to increase their odds of success is undoubtedly an extraordinary gift! And that's a dream in itself. It's an incredible gift that others can receive from you. It's the gift of breakthrough – to a higher quality of life.