

Behavior Capacity

It's hard to help people who don't think they have a problem. It's impossible to fix people who think someone else is the problem.

—Marshall Goldsmith

OUR PURPOSE, BOTH in writing this book and in our performance and leadership development efforts, is simple: We want to help people achieve a sense of meaning, value, and purpose in their work. That purpose is achieved when we help people create positive and lasting changes in their performance behavior for the benefit of themselves as leaders, the members of their organizations, and the communities their organizations exist to serve. We help leaders improve the quality of their own lives so they can help improve the quality of the lives of others.

At the end of the day, you will never be able to conquer your outside world until you first learn how to calm and conquer your inside world.

Effective leadership behaviors are based on the science of the human brain—how it functions and our ability to control those functions to produce high levels of performance outcomes. We

have revealed the cause-and-effect relationships between effective leadership, engagement, and performance. In this chapter, you will discover the key elements of behavior capacity, which is the primary driver of performance.

Behavioral neuroscience is the formal study of how the brain affects behavior. When we understand these effects, we can use that knowledge to drive performance. If you lack the understanding and the ability to manage your fundamental behavior patterns (how your behavior patterns compel you to respond positively or negatively to external stimuli), then you will not gain the benefit of leading with your upper brain.

BEHAVIOR CAPACITY

What if you used your brain to connect with your amazing ability to create and sustain optimal levels of technical skill, talent, intellect, emotional regulation, peace, and joy in your life? You already have the ability to gain control of your thoughts and emotions (Leaf 2013). If you knew how to use this ability, you could change and manage your brain's chemistry and programming, which would result in higher levels of performance behavior.

Behavior capacity is your observable, measurable level of effectiveness in controlling your behavior, both in a work environment and in your personal life. Why place a premium on behavior? For leaders, the operational environment is fraught with complexity, uncertainty, market volatility, and stress. All these factors affect your brain's chemistry and programming (how your brain works). The resulting brain functions affect your behavior response to these factors, and your behavior response affects performance.

Given the challenges in the operational environment, your behavior is the only part of job performance that is completely within your control. Behavior is what you do. Results are what you get done. Using key elements of brain science—focusing on leading with your upper brain—we can create individualized development

plans for leaders to consistently achieve effectiveness and sustain high-performing teams. Behavior capacity, then, becomes your strategy to drive performance, increasing the probability that you see the results you desire as a leader.

Science has made huge strides in understanding the human brain and how it functions. For example, we know that the frontal lobes are the centers for rational thinking and self-control. We have discovered that neurotransmitters, or brain chemicals, frame our general state of mind. Our behaviors result from the complex interplay of our genetic makeup, brain chemistry, and brain functions. Just as there is a complex relationship between the brain and behavior, there is also a complex relationship between behavior and performance.

We define *performance behavior* as a measurable connection between the results we desire and the behavior required to produce those results. Achieving the desired results is assured when team members throughout an organization align their work performance with the specific behaviors necessary to perform their work. Performance has two aspects—behavior (the means) and its consequences (the ends).

As Steven Pinker (1997) notes, behavior is the byproduct of thought and mental models. Behavior begins with our internal struggle between competing mental models, which are defined by the way we process external events, including the behavior of others. As we process those models—as we think—we change the physical nature of our brains. By consciously directing our thinking, we can create an internal program that rewires the brain for upper-brain performance—growth, achievement, harmony, development, critical thinking, decision-making, and constructive management of negative stress. In other words, what we perceive defines what we believe, and what we believe guides our behavior. That belief is strongly influenced by what we are thinking, what we know, and the environment at the time.

This relationship between thoughts and behavior explains why individual leader behavior is the single most important predictor

of a team's performance. When you mess with the brains of your people in such a way that they must focus on survival, the high-level performance that drives results cannot happen.

Our abilities to think and to choose are powerful forces. Our thoughts—and the behaviors they create—have ramifications that include how our genes are expressed, affecting our immune systems and other physical, mental, and emotional aspects of human performance and wellness.

Behavior capacity, then—which is another way of saying “being behaviorally capable”—is a combination of factors related to how the brain processes thought, perception, and emotion resulting from external stimuli including the behavior of other people. We call the relationship of thought, emotion, and behavior the *cognitive triangle*. Our behaviors, one element of the cognitive triangle, are based on and influenced by several factors: genetic makeup, culture, individual values, and attitudes.

Studies of human behavior reveal four fundamental human behavior patterns (Profiles International 2012, 13). These patterns greatly influence the direction of our efforts, particularly our professional efforts. Since performance is the result of all our efforts, these four behavior patterns explain the variations in how people try to achieve results. A systematic study of these four behavior patterns will explain why upper-brain behavior drives and improves performance and lower-brain behavior blocks performance.

PERFORMANCE BEHAVIOR VERSUS PERSONALITY TRAITS

There have been substantial changes in the workplace since the 1990s. These changes present operational challenges for leaders. For example, the proliferation of virtual teams results in continual variations in the cultural environment. Researchers have had to take these challenges into account while seeking an evidence-based

approach to behavior differences that influence leader effectiveness and drive performance.

As we mentioned in the introduction, trait theory—examining the relationship between personality traits and leader effectiveness—is making a comeback. In light of advances in neuroscience that are increasing our understanding of how the brain works, we find the emphasis on a “new and improved” trait theory misguided and lacking scientific merit. Performance and leader effectiveness are directly correlated to behavior, not personality. Behavior, not personality, is what drives performance. That is why your behavior capacity allows you to leverage your technical skills to drive performance.

This is a bold claim, given that human resource and industrial psychology professionals have been committed to personality assessments and trait identification for decades. But in addition to the substantial scientific issues related to associating personality with performance and leader effectiveness, personality assessments have practical issues, as well (Landy and Conte 2015). The most significant has to do with behavior itself—behavior is a function of many different influences (thoughts, emotions, experiences, environment), not just one (personality). Another practical issue is the inability to explain the similarities in outcomes and leader effectiveness between people with different personalities.

Robin Stuart-Kotze (2006) provided a definitive, science-based explanation of the difference between behavior and personality in *Performance: The Secrets of Successful Behaviour*. In the words of Annie Murphy Paul, “there is scant evidence that [personality test] results are useful in determining managerial effectiveness, helping to build teams, providing career counseling, or enhancing insight into self or others” (Stuart-Kotze 2006, 7).

Debating the merits of performance behavior versus personality is not merely an academic exercise. In healthcare specifically, where we lag in patient safety and quality outcomes, real people suffer real harm when performance suffers. If the fundamental premise of personality trait assessments is false, then we have an obligation

to alter the practices and models used to measure leader effectiveness and improve performance. We also have an obligation to alter current practices in performance development programs and performance management systems. Despite the claims of those who support personality as the basis of performance, personality assessment results will not help you assess leadership effectiveness, create high-performing teams, provide useful and substantive feedback that helps people grow and develop, or increase the real self-awareness and self-management required for leader effectiveness and job and performance.

Performance behavior is also a necessary element of adaptive leadership. Adaptive leadership is a way of thinking about and engaging in continuous performance improvement, encouraging and helping a team or organization as they make gradual, meaningful changes so they can thrive in challenging environments. Remember what we said about adaptive leadership in chapter 8: The elements of this leadership model enhance the functional capacity of the upper brain. The ability to adapt your leadership behavior to changing environments is the primary factor in creating effective performance. As you climb the ranks of your organization, the requirements of each position are different. Behaviors that made you successful in one job will not necessarily make you successful in your next. Your ability to adapt your behavior to contextual variables and challenging environments is critical to defining your leadership effectiveness and your level of performance.

In this debate between performance behavior and personality, behavior wins in both practical and scientific terms. “Performance behavior means that a measurable connection is made between the result and the behavior that is required to achieve the result” (Webers 2018, 10). When you clearly define the desired result and the behaviors necessary to achieve it, you achieve performance behavior. Think of it in terms of defining a task, establishing the performance standard to achieve the task, and identifying the conditions under which the task is to be performed; when all three are fulfilled, you get the planned result. Performance and behavior

are vital to change, adaptive leadership, and achieving improvement and innovation in an ever-changing work environment. By understanding and managing your specific performance behavior pattern, you can connect your performance behavior to key results.

PERFORMANCE BEHAVIOR PATTERNS

We each have a preferred way of engaging with our work, which is expressed through a particular behavior pattern. A behavior pattern is the visible manifestation of a person's significant behavioral indicators and preferred behaviors for performing their job. We can measure these indicators through the specific use of a science-based behavioral assessment, rather than a personality assessment. The value of focusing on performance behavior is that you get to choose your behavior. Every position or job duty incorporates a set of tasks that must be done to ensure success. In general, the completion of these tasks can be enhanced by the effective execution of certain related behaviors. While you do not necessarily choose your personality (who you are), you can choose your behavior (what you do). If you have a behavior that is not aligned with a set of tasks required for producing performance, you can change it.

Leadership is about the behaviors people choose to achieve results. Leadership in action is about getting people to do things differently to continuously improve performance in achieving results. Your leadership effectiveness must be judged by the results produced by your team, and your team members adjust their performance behaviors—either improving or hindering performance—based on what you say and do as a leader. Leadership behavior influences the behaviors—and thus the performance—of others.

Leadership behavior is predictable when you understand the four fundamental behavior patterns. These patterns are differentiated by two key characteristics—behavior focused on tasks and behavior focused on people. Neither of these characteristics is

more desirable than the other. Which is more effective depends on the context and operational environment. Ineffective leadership is the result of leaders choosing the wrong behaviors in the wrong contexts.

The most effective leaders are those who can adapt their leadership behavior to changing environments and respond to the legitimate needs of their team members. The alignment of effective leadership behavior with the elements of a value-based culture produces engagement. Engagement, in turn, creates an emotional climate that allows team members to connect and ignite their upper brains for performance (critical reasoning, judgment, creativity, planning, innovative thinking).

Some leaders will be naturally compatible with some employees while requiring slight adaptations to their behavior to bring out the best performance in others. For example, a leader who has a task-focused behavior preference will naturally align with a team member who also has a task-focused behavior preference. Leaders who fail to exhibit adaptive leadership skills may trigger employee behavior that is less than engaged, disconnected from the business and its results, and lacking in effort. The root cause of the employee behavior is the performance behavior clash between the leader and the team member. When this incompatibility is present, both the leader and the team member must adapt their behaviors to increase compatibility and performance results. The research is clear; our performance behavior is significantly affected by whether we view others in a positive and supportive context (upper brain) or as negative or threatening (lower brain) (Cloud 2013).

By virtue of their position, the leader has the responsibility of adapting first. Remember that both leaders and team members have primary behavioral indicators that identify their preferred way of performing their jobs. Knowing these behavior preferences provides a degree of reliability and predictability in how both leaders and team members approach their work and the results they will produce. None of these patterns is more beneficial or more appropriate than another. No one person can exhibit behaviors

that are suitable to every situation in changing and challenging environments. Leaders, leading with their upper brains, achieve performance by leading people as they want to be and should be led.

Ultimately, an organization is most effectively led by a team of leaders working in an adaptive and shared leadership model, matching the most effective leadership behaviors and decisions to the most challenging aspects of every situation. The difference between behavior patterns is not “better” or “worse” but rather how each pattern works given the same context. Effective performance in a specific job role results from doing the right behavior at the right time. You cannot alter your personality to match the situation, but you can learn to alter your behavior in changing contexts to maximize your performance effectiveness.

We will now turn to the four behavior patterns and their application to effective leadership and team performance. As a certified user of the Profiles Performance Indicator, we will share how these assessment results map into their four behavior group patterns (Profiles International 2012).

Pattern 1: Assertive and Task Focused

People who display tendencies associated with this behavior pattern are easily recognized by their assertive, direct, and forceful behavior. These people are competitive, self-starters, and action oriented. They are all about getting things done. People using pattern 1 work quickly and are task focused. They also have a power-based mind set; they confront others easily and will not shy away from a great debate opportunity—behavior that can come across as argumentative.

Behavior pattern 1 aligns with defining the objective, staying goal oriented, and producing results. In communicating with others, people using this pattern may struggle with listening to understand. Someone operating in behavior pattern 1 tends to be highly

effective at managing processes and less effective at managing the essential elements of interpersonal relationships.

In their upper brains, people using this behavior pattern are very adaptable to changing situations and challenging environments. They will work best with minimal supervision and may struggle to be a fully integrated member of a team. This behavior pattern's key value to a team is the ability to take risks and take initiative. Pattern 1's focus on taking action and bottom-line results will make sure the team gets things done.

In their lower brains, people using this behavior pattern will attempt to dominate conversations, can interrupt others, and may give orders rather than solicit support when working toward a goal. The biggest threat in this mode is being challenged by another pattern 1 leader. Consequently, fear of failure is also prevalent in this behavior pattern. People working in pattern 1 will use the power associated with their position to maintain control of a situation. When working with people using behavior pattern 1, it is important to avoid challenging their control. Offer suggestions in a way that provides them leeway to make their own decisions.

Pattern 2: Assertive and People Focused

People who display tendencies associated with behavior pattern 2 are also easily recognized by their assertive behavior; however, these people are assertive and people focused—genuinely optimistic and enthusiastic. People using this behavior pattern will lead others by inspiring and motivating them.

Behavior pattern 2 works best when people have a great deal of freedom in their work responsibilities. People using pattern 2 will resist being micromanaged and thrive on the social dynamics of work. The pattern 2 upper brain works best when allowed to express high energy, get other people excited about accomplishing a goal, and see everyone enjoy winning as a team. People using this behavior pattern must balance their natural attention to

building relationships with maintaining adequate focus on producing results.

In their upper brains, pattern 2 leaders are emotional, creative, approachable, and compassionate, with a genuine regard for the welfare of others. They enjoy the interactions provided by meetings and include their team members' thoughts and ideas. Pattern 2 leaders are generally affable, persuasive, and extremely self-confident. Leaders who use this pattern bring value to a team through a natural affinity for continuous improvement by focusing on change initiatives and influencing others to find better ways of doing things.

In their lower brains, leaders using pattern 2 will hesitate to make difficult, unpopular decisions when under stress. The biggest threat in this mode is rejection, and this behavior pattern may try to avoid that by focusing more on pleasing people than on getting things done. Consequently, the pattern 2 leader struggles to make decisions that have a negative impact on team members and seeks to avoid confrontation and conflict. When working with a leader using pattern 2 behaviors, it is important to ensure they do not lose face in public. They need private coaching and correction to calm their lower-brain fear triggers.

Pattern 3: Cooperative and People Focused

People who display tendencies associated with behavior pattern 3 are easily recognized by their even-tempered, friendly, and team-oriented behavior. Consummate team players, pattern 3 leaders are approachable and people focused. Leaders using this behavior pattern never use their authority to dominate others and tend toward shared leadership. They are constantly looking out for the needs of their team members—sometimes to the point of neglecting their own legitimate needs.

Leaders using behavior pattern 3 prefer predictable and stable work environments, and will struggle with abrupt changes. Unlike rapid-paced and task-focused pattern 1 behaviors, pattern 3 involves

a more moderate work pace and a people-focused approach; as a result, these two behavior patterns lack compatibility. People using pattern 3 also tend to avoid confrontation and conflict, which makes it difficult for them to hold people accountable for ineffective work performance. A leader using this behavior pattern often has a high regard for quality and tends to be compliant—a rule follower. They will also display a high degree of humility.

In their upper brains, people using pattern 3 exhibit predictability and patience, and will work best with predictable work schedules. They will be loyal, dependable, agreeable, and effective listeners. They will avoid interpersonal aggression, preferring to accommodate the needs of others. People using pattern 3 will think things through before responding and are rarely impulsive, even under stress. A pattern 3 leader brings value to the team through their highly developed listening skills and by creating close, highly developed, long-term relationships.

In their lower brains, people using pattern 3 will oppose change and seek to maintain the status quo. They will resist impulsive decisions that they believe will disrupt known practices and established performance standards. Their desire for safety and security makes it difficult for them to take prudent risks they fear might threaten the welfare of their team members. When working with people using behavior pattern 3, it is helpful to coax them out of their comfort zone and pursue realistic stretch goals. Their biggest fear is sudden and disruptive change. These people need direct, objective, and candid feedback that is focused on their performance, not their person, as they often take feedback personally, but the humility that characterizes this behavior pattern makes them coachable and teachable.

Pattern 4: Analytical and Task Focused

People who display tendencies associated with behavior pattern 4 are easily recognized by their task-focused behavior and their drive

for precision, accuracy, and perfection. People using pattern 4 have a high regard for rules, regulations, guidelines, and protocols. They are extremely conscientious and are strict about timeliness and rule following. Pattern 4 leaders are firm in their beliefs about right and wrong and will not compromise their core values. They value relationships built on trust and integrity. You get to be dishonest with someone using behavior pattern 4 once. If you are deceitful with them a second time, they will deny you any effective connection or relationship with them.

People using this behavior pattern often ask many questions in meetings—usually, very detailed questions focused on the specific topic and objective of the meeting. They do little socializing and can conflict with pattern 2 people, viewing the social needs of pattern 2 as a waste of time. Pattern 4's overall demeanor is careful and reserved, and people in this pattern tend to make decisions slowly and only after weighing all the facts and alternatives.

In their upper brains, people using pattern 4 have an eye for detail and approach their work in a systematic, organized, and logical way. They are excellent problems solvers and view most work objectives as puzzles to solve. Pattern 4 uses facts and logical arguments to overcome objections. People in pattern 4 think before responding and need time to process information because they check facts, weigh pros and cons, and look for trade-offs in every situation. They maintain their composure and rarely overreact. They bring value to the team through their attention to detail and their moral compass.

In their lower brains, people in pattern 4 are overly sensitive to any criticism of their work. Their biggest fear is not being perfect, which makes it difficult for them to receive coaching feedback on their performance. They will display perfectionistic tendencies and struggle to admit when they are wrong and have made a mistake. Their drive for consistency will make it a challenge for them to try something new. Someone in pattern 4 and their lower brain will rarely change a process or accept a new idea without substantial data to support the rationale for change. Under prolonged stress,

this behavior pattern becomes withdrawn and distant, disrupting team members' ability to maintain sustained efforts toward outcomes. In this state, a pattern 4 leader will overthink and over-analyze a problem, delaying the decision-making process, and fear taking decisive action.

PERFORMANCE BEHAVIOR TEAMS

The performance behaviors described in the four behavior groups have tremendous impact on the outcomes that teams produce. A high-performing team has a strong sense of balance, drawing on the preferences of a diverse group of individuals who are joined together by a common purpose and direction. Creating teams with a balance of the four behavior patterns should be part of diversity and inclusion initiatives. A team's ability to work effectively is greatly influenced by the compatibility of the individual behavior characteristics of the team members. Two critical factors affecting a high-performing team are team cohesion and team productivity. While a team can adjust to accommodate compatibility issues, the fewer adjustments necessary, the more effectively the team will function.

In managing a team, the more behavior data leaders have about the characteristics of the team members, the more focused the management of that team will be. One of the primary causes of a lack of team unity and productivity is an overabundance of one or more of the four behavior patterns.

When no one on a team, including the leader, exhibits behavior pattern 1, the team may struggle to connect with its purpose. Team members will have difficulty adapting to change and managing stress. They will lack clarity about the direction and scope of their work, will be slow to execute, and will struggle with productivity. They may fail to better themselves through training and development opportunities and become stagnant and unfamiliar with technological trends that improve job performance.

When a team has no access to pattern 2 behavior characteristics, they may struggle to develop trusting relationships with each other and may create artificial barriers that preclude open and honest disclosure and feedback. The “all work, no play” demeanor dominating this team may create poor work–life balance and result in an unhealthy, stressful work environment. Instead of expecting the best and preparing for the worst, they expect the worst and are surprised when anything good happens. Sometimes, expecting negative outcomes becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Without pattern 3 behaviors, team members may place too much emphasis on the project to the detriment of the people. These unbalanced teams tend to place too much pressure on team members to perform. Lacking patience and composure, team members become cynical and overly cautious, resistant to change, inflexible, and closed-minded. They may fail to effectively problem solve because safe and nonthreatening environments are lacking, stifling communication. The resulting levels of negative stress may also result in errors, missed deadlines, underperformance, and reduced productivity.

When pattern 4 behavior characteristics are missing from the team, people may make mistakes due to oversights in compiling, reviewing, evaluating, or applying information. The team can place too much emphasis on a finished product without consideration for careful analysis and study. This team will resist continuous performance improvement activities and struggle to replicate desired results consistently. Finally, this team will disregard a deliberate planning process, rushing to complete projects without regard for safety and quality.

THE KEY TO ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

In all four patterns, the expression of behavior—upper brain or lower brain—is directly related to the neuroanatomy of the brain and how it creates performance neurochemical cocktails. Various

neurotransmitters and neuropeptides contribute to how we form relationships, meaning they play a major role in creating high-performing teams. The key neurochemicals contributing to upper-brain performance behavior are endorphins, dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin. The primary neurochemical activating lower-brain impediments is cortisol (Lambert 2018).

Endorphins serve as an analgesic, relieving physical pain. They have played a major role in human survival and the perpetuation of the species. They allow us to be risk takers, to overcome physical obstacles. Endorphins also help us form the social attachments that are essential for creating high-performing teams.

Dopamine is sometimes called a chemical messenger. Our nervous systems use dopamine to transmit messages to nerve cells. Dopamine plays a role in how we feel pleasure. We receive a dose of dopamine when we eat food; that is why eating can be a pleasurable activity. It also explains why dining with other people—mixing endorphins and dopamine—is a pleasurable social event. In terms of performance behavior, dopamine allows us to be goal oriented. Every time you check off something on your task list, you get a little dose of dopamine. Dopamine also plays a major role when an organization pursues a lofty, aspirational vision. Endorphins and dopamine both play a major role in the task-focused elements of our lives and work.

Serotonin and its neurochemical twin oxytocin support the people-focused elements of our lives and work, giving us our relationship rhythms. Serotonin plays a key role in mood regulation—promoting feelings of well-being, joy, and happiness. Serotonin helps us create trust, leading to the bonds of friendship and the foundation of a high-performing team. Serotonin provides us empathy and compassion in relationships.

Oxytocin is also related to empathy, trust, and relationship building, as well as helping to regulate our sleep patterns and boost our immune system. Researchers often call oxytocin “the love hormone.” Oxytocin motivates us to perform acts of kindness, generosity, and benevolence. Every time you perform, receive, or witness

an act of kindness, you get a dose of oxytocin. Research on oxytocin is far from complete. Preliminary studies suggest that oxytocin plays a dual role in managing responses to circumstances in times of low and high negative stress (Uvnäs-Moberg and Petersson 2005). During times of low stress, oxytocin physiologically rewards those who maintain good social bonds with feelings of well-being. During times of high social stress or pain, it may lead people to seek alternative, more effective social contacts. Just as endorphins and dopamine are responsible for instant gratification and can explain the fight response to stress, serotonin and oxytocin are responsible for creating lasting feelings of calm and safety, helping to explain the flight response to stress.

Researchers call both serotonin and oxytocin the “social neurochemicals.” Mix a neurochemical cocktail without them, and you achieve success in the absence of meaning, value, and purpose. Toxic leadership behavior will inhibit the release of serotonin and oxytocin in team members, damaging the team’s culture. Studies show that low levels of serotonin result in disengagement, burn-out, and depression. As a leader, when you mess with the brains of your people, you do so at your own performance peril.

Finally, we want to discuss cortisol and its influence on the disruptive elements of the lower brain. Cortisol is a naturally occurring steroid hormone that plays a key role in the body’s stress response. Best known as the “stress hormone,” cortisol plays a major role in mediating blood pressure, glucose metabolism, immune response, and much more. Our immune systems are neurologically sensitive to stress that is generated by fear, loss, doubt, and other elements of toxic thinking. Toxic thoughts and emotions interfere with the body’s natural healing processes.

Toxic stress also puts undo pressure on the heart. Not only a pump, the heart also has at least 40,000 nerve cells and produces its own neurochemical—atrial natriuretic factor (ANF), an atrial peptide. ANF is a “balance hormone” that regulates many of the brain’s functions and triggers behavior. When threatened by something in your environment, your body instantly begins

preparing you to respond to the threat. The limbic system, namely the amygdala, functions as a processing center that signals a range of responses, including the release of hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol.

Cortisol is important for your body to function normally, but too much cortisol can be bad for your health and impede performance behaviors. The outcome of chronic fear and its related stress is chronic doses of cortisol. Cortisol is not supposed to linger in our bodies. When a person lives in perpetual fear, loss, and doubt (which a toxic boss and toxic work environment can stimulate), the effects of cortisol on the heart, immune system, and the digestive system can cause lasting physical harm. Whereas oxytocin boosts our immune system, cortisol compromises it. Whereas dopamine lights up the upper brain for performance, cortisol literally turns off the upper brain. This poses a serious threat to the well-being of people working in dysfunctional organizations. It also poses a serious threat to any organization's performance, but can have particularly dire consequences for healthcare organizations in terms of failure to deliver safe, high-quality patient care. The constant flow of cortisol to the human brain is bad for people and bad for performance.

FINAL NOTE

Performance requires more than your skill, talent, and intellect; it requires you to have a highly developed sense of behavior smarts so you can function as an effective leader. Leaders have two fundamental daily requirements—managing the process context (technical skills) and the people context (behavior skills). The behavior skill set is a combination of a leader's ability to manage thoughts, emotions, and behavior. A leader's inability to manage the people context through highly developed behavior skills affects their ability to manage and execute process context (technical skills) to produce results.

Behavior performance as outlined throughout this book takes an integrated and systematic approach to linking effective leadership with engagement to drive performance. As you discovered in part I and part II, behavior capacity is a matter of how the brain functions, in terms of both the wiring and the neurochemicals that result in either upper-brain or lower-brain behaviors. Performance behavior, growth, and development derive from the prefrontal cortex managing neurochemical cocktails of endorphins, dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin. The limbic system, primarily through the amygdala, governs threat response, fear, and stress.

The upper brain is built for performance, displaying analytical and technical ability. The upper brain also grasps concepts quickly, creates vision, and manages complexity. The lower brain responds to survival needs and threat responses. It shifts our focus away from the technical and analytical elements of the upper brain, instead focusing us on surviving when survival is paramount. These are not trivial distinctions. Effective leadership results from a cause-and-effect relationship between performance behaviors in the upper brain (growth and performance) and blocking behaviors that reside in the lower brain (fear and survival). Management of the tension between these two competing operating systems provides the spark to energize, engage, and enhance performance throughout the organization.

Every leader knows there is a better, more effective leader within, waiting to grow and choose development-expressing behaviors that will create higher levels of engagement and performance in their teams. An effective approach to discovering the better leader within you is the use of an executive coach. The environment in a coaching engagement makes it safe for you to explore the key aspects of your personal and professional aspirations, talking about the things that matter most to you, your team, and your organization. Effective coaching can have several valuable benefits: improved self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills; increased motivation and empathy; clearer thinking; and more effective leadership behaviors.

A universal truth in the life cycle of high-performance organizations is that individual breakthroughs drive organizational breakthroughs. Reducing the variability of leadership performance is critical to aligning your strategy with key performance objectives and with the performance results you desire as a leader. Effective leadership behavior is the means to a greater end, particularly in healthcare: safe practices, high-quality care measures, and patient care experiences that create high levels of service satisfaction.

You can get everything else right regarding the technical skill elements of performance—recruiting and retaining the most talented team members, having the most innovative strategy and the most robust financial margins—but if you lack effective leadership behavior, you will never obtain the high level of performance you are technically capable of achieving. Highly effective leaders exhibit behaviors that create highly effective relationships. They cultivate an organizational culture that allows those relationships to thrive and drive organizational engagement. They use the power of engagement as leverage to create organizational behavior capacity. By flexing and accommodating the four fundamental behavior patterns, effective leaders learn how to lead the upper brains of their team members to higher levels of performance.

Effective leaders are always on an improvement journey, looking to discover the better leader within. We are on that journey, too. Will you join us?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- We want to help people achieve a sense of meaning, value, and purpose in their work.
- At the end of the day, you will never be able to conquer your outside world until you first learn how to calm and conquer your inside world.

- When you mess with the brains of your people in such a way that they must focus on survival, the high-level performance that drives results cannot happen.
- Behavior, not personality, is what drives performance. That is why your behavior capacity allows you to leverage your technical skills to drive performance.
- Behaviors that made you successful in one job will not necessarily make you successful in your next.
- As a leader, when you mess with the brains of your people, you do so at your own performance peril.
- In managing a team, the more behavior data leaders have about the characteristics of the team members, the more focused the management of that team will be.

PUT IT TO WORK

1. In 1948, Bertram Forer conducted a study with his students, seeking to validate the accuracy of personality testing. The results, published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* the next year, demonstrated what is now called the *Barnum effect*, or sometimes the *Forer effect*, in which people give high accuracy ratings to vague, generalized personality descriptions when they are told those descriptions are personalized to them (Forer 1949). Read the original paper (<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0059240>) or the discussion in the online Encyclopedia Britannica (www.britannica.com/science/Barnum-Effect) to understand why behavior, not personality, is the key driver for performance.
2. Describe your team's communication approach. How does it help or hinder the dissemination of information? What tools and resources are available to your team to facilitate

communication among members and between members and other cooperative partners?

3. Are you aware of the performance behavior patterns of your team members? How do these patterns complement or conflict with each other? What effects do these differing patterns have on your team's unity, cohesion, and productivity?

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