



Issue 167 - February 2017

F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "The test of first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still be able to function."

The highest levels of leadership and happiness often come from living in the paradox between two rights. For example, we need to balance the need for teams and teamwork with personal accountability. The most profitable companies aren't those who focus on profitability as their main purpose. Reengineering and radical change needs to be balanced with incremental improvement. The history of innovation shows many come about accidentally but they can be fostered by "controlled chaos." Organizational improvements often come from both top down and bottom up.



Highly effective leaders are comfortable living in the gray zone of ambiguity. A great deal of destruction in organizations, relationships, families, religions, and throughout societies comes from the intolerance and inflexibility of demagogues who believe there are clear right and wrong answers to just about every situation. Their harsh and judgmental position usually comes from a base of fear and insecurity. Highly effective leaders can live with not having clear answers or letting situations unfold.

A key way to speed up execution and balance the pace is by sharing the workload and leveraging everyone's strengths. This issue's article on shifting from driving and directing to coaching and developing is illustrated by the story of a scout leader taking his scout pack on a hike through a very dense forest with a narrow path cut through the thick trees and tangled brush. When he came to a fallen tree blocking the path he struggled to lift it out of the way. "Are you using all your strength?" one of the young scouts asked. "Yes!" was the exhausted and exasperated response. "No. You are not using all your strength," the scout replied. "You haven't asked us to help you."

This issue highlights one of the vital paradoxes of our crazy-busy times. Slowing down in order to speed up. Or speeding up in order to slow down. High performing athletes live in the critical balance of peak effort and periods of rest. Zenger Folkman's new research shows that top rated leaders producing the best results operate at the highest speed. Paradoxically, they're also the least stressed and can create space to slow down and enjoy life more. And slowing down to focus on what's most important helps to accelerate successful execution.

From Driving and Directing to Coaching and Developing

Recently I was coaching, "John," a very successful entrepreneur who'd built his company from a small to mid-sized player in their industry. His goal was to become one of the major companies in their market.



We were reviewing his 360-assessment report. Feedback from 21 direct reports, peers, and others rated him very high in technical expertise, taking initiative, driving for results, strategic perspective, and connecting to customers. However, developing others was a major weakness creating a huge drag on his leadership effectiveness.

We talked about how much harder it was becoming for John to keep up as the company grew. He was reaching a burnout point.

John's at a classic fork in the road of high growth companies. His considerable strengths fuelled the organization's growth. But as the company grows, being that hard driving engine that powers everyone forward gets tougher and tougher. John's choice is to keep hitting the accelerator and power on through or build a team and organization that shares the load and eventually soars way beyond what one person can do himself.

Years ago, I worked with a leader who couldn't switch from being the star player to becoming a coach and team builder. After taking his company public and accelerating growth, he got to the point of working 100 hour weeks. He slowly burned himself out as his frustration grew. He couldn't understand why his team wasn't stepping up and taking more responsibility. They were frustrated as he showed diminishing confidence in them, took an ever-stronger command and control role, and hollowed out their jobs. Many left or were let go. The company's no longer in business.

We're now helping John make the critical transition from driving and directing to coaching and developing:

From	To
Commanding	Coaching
Solving Problems	Enabling Others to Solve Problems
Directing and Controlling	Teaching and Engaging
Seeing People as They Are	Developing People Into What They Could Be
Empowering	Partnering
Operating	Improving
Pushing	Pulling
Heroic Manager	Facilitative Leader
Quick Fix to Symptoms	Search for Systemic Root Causes

Successful leaders who grow their organization to the next level build strong executive teams to create an enduring organizational culture. I'll be discussing this further in my February 15 webinar on ***Executive Team Building and Culture Development***.

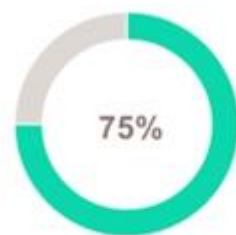
Archived Webinar: The Tango of Speed and Quality – The Key to Achieving Both

Last month Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman delivered a webinar overview around the ground-breaking research of their newest book *Speed: How Leaders Accelerate Successful Execution* and new online or live mini-workshop.

Here's a slide from the webinar with some of their research providing a glimpse into the need for speed:



Most People Feel a Need to Increase Their Speed



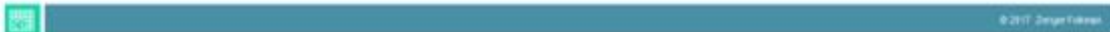
I feel that I am often expected to move faster and do more.



Too often I am frustrated that our organization moves too slow and gets stalled.



If this organization were to move faster, it would substantially influence our success.



"I believe the future belongs to the fast," says Meg Whitman, CEO of Hewlett Packard Enterprise, "The winners are going to be the companies that are nimble, fast, and focused."

Click on [The Tango of Speed and Quality – The Key to Achieving Both](#) to view the webinar.

Slow Down or Die

A road sign on a winding mountain highway warned, "Slow Down or Die." Simple, succinct, and great life advice as well. If day after day of stressful racing around doesn't manage to physically kill us before our time, it will surely kill our happiness and enjoyment in being here.

Here are a few tips for living in the now:

- Pay attention to when time flies and you think, "When can I do this again?" and to when time drags and you think, "When will this ever be over?" What are you doing during those times? What does this tell you about ways to make your life more enjoyable?



- Practice regular meditation to keep yourself centered and relaxed. Take meditation training or experiment with this powerful force on your own. For a wealth of meditation resources, do an Internet, book search, or look for apps on "meditation techniques."
- Study books that deal with deeper issues like the soul, mysticism, spirituality, prayer, purpose, and meaning. Combine this with meditation and reflection.
- Watch your mind. Monitor your thoughts. You might even say out loud, "There's worry," "I see anxiety is back," or, "Today's to-do list is clamoring for attention."
- Adapt the mind of a photographer. Be still. See the light, texture, and colors around you. Observe without judging.
- Imagine you're a novelist writing about the scene around you. Describe the setting and mood.
- Feel your own presence and inner energy field. Notice your breathing and the pressure on your feet or buttocks where you sit or stand.
- Get in the habit of monitoring your emotional state. "How am I feeling right now?" Observe your "monkey mind" (how Eastern philosophers describe our racing thoughts) and smile as you watch it racing to chase one shiny thought after another.
- Look for the lessons in negative events. What do you think you'll be saying you learned from this five or ten years from now? Is this event waking you up or slowing down your racing thoughts so you can be present in the Now?

Click [here](#) to browse through additional resources on **Deepening Spirit, Meaning & Purpose**

Tweet Reading: Recommended Online Articles



This section summarizes last month's LinkedIn Updates and Twitter Tweets about online articles or blog posts that I've flagged as worth reading. These are usually posted on weekends when I am doing much of my reading for research, learning, or leisure. You can follow me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JimClemmer>

My original tweet commenting on the article follows each title and descriptor from the original source:

See the 6 key capabilities that differentiated the creative superstars from everyone else in an advertising agency.

"What it Takes to be a Creative Superstar" -- Joe Folkman
www.forbes.com

"When we looked at the overall leadership effectiveness of the 10 superstars compared to other leaders in the agency we found that the superstars were not just slightly above others, but were rated as significantly better leaders."

Explore links to ZF's pace assessment, infographic, webinar, and new book on how top leaders accelerate successful execution.

"Leadership Speed" -- Zenger Folkman
<http://zengerfolkman.com>

"When we researched 360-degree feedback data of the highest performing global leaders, we discovered that a critical element of their effectiveness was their ability to execute with speed."

A great menu to draw from based on best practices drawn from research on 1,400 highly rated leaders.

"10 Ways The Best Leaders Reach Goals" -- Joe Folkman

www.forbes.com

"Rather than give you advice that is generally not very helpful and tends to either make you feel guilty or pump you up for one day, I am going to give you some research that may help."

Read *The Leader Letter* in Weekly Installments



The items in each month's issue of *The Leader Letter* are first published in my weekly blog during the previous month.

If you read each blog post (or issue of *The Leader Letter*) as it's published **over twelve months you'll have read the equivalent of a leadership book**. And you'll pick up a few practical leadership tips that help you use time more strategically and tame your E-Beast!

Feedback and Follow-Up

I am always delighted to hear from readers of *The Leader Letter* with feedback, reflections, suggestions, or differing points of view. Nobody is ever identified in *The Leader Letter* without their permission. I am also happy to explore customized, in-house adaptations of any of my material for your team or organization. Drop me an e-mail at Jim.Clemmer@ClemmerGroup.com or connect with me on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [FaceBook](#), or my [blog](#)!

May the Force (of strengths) be with you!



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