



Issue 166 - January 2017

"I hate all this change. Why can't things just stay the same?" Dirk shouted angrily at the TV news anchor. He threw a pillow at the TV screen and clicked it off with a snort. Suddenly a hissing noise arose from the corner of the room and green, shimmering mist filled the air. Dirk stood in shock as a one-foot tall, wrinkled old man emerged from the glowing cloud. The tiny, grizzled fellow had a long flowing white beard and was dressed from head to toe in green. His eyes twinkled with mischief as he flashed a gap-toothed grin. "Hi, I am Mike. I can take you to a place where people don't have to deal with change and things stay the same all the time."



Before Dirk could say a word, the little elf drew a handful of sparkling green dust from his vest pocket. With an impish smirk and a big wink, he threw the powder at Dirk. With the hissing sound filling his ears Dirk was engulfed in the green, twinkling fog. Still unable to see through the emerald haze, he heard Mike say, "Here we are. Here's a place where things stay the same and people don't have to deal with change." The elf blew away the mist. They were standing on the lush green grass of a well-trimmed graveyard. Neat, polished gravestones stretched far out to the horizon.

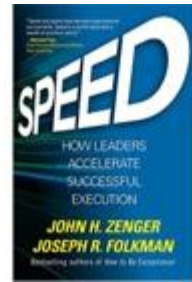
"Life is change," the aged elf said with a chuckle as he leapt to the top of a headstone. "It's one of nature's mighty laws. Eons ago, I had this conversation with my old buddy, Heraclitus, and told him that change is the only thing that's permanent. Of course, he took the credit for saying that," the elf playfully grimaced. "It's a timeless principle. People who aren't changing and growing aren't living. Growth is one of nature's vital signs. It shows you're alive. Once you stop changing and growing, you'd better check your pulse."

I wrote this story for my book, *Growing the Distance Timeless Principles for Personal, Career, and Family Success*. As we click over another year's trip around the sun it's a good time of year for a change check. Are we constantly on the grow? Is the rate of external change exceeding our rate of internal change? If so, we're eventually going to be changed.

In this issue, you'll find a review of Zenger Folkman's new book and webinar on leadership speed. You'll also find a few year-end reflections on leadership behaviors that help us continually grow and change. And you'll find what's becoming an annual tradition; change check-ups to help focus on all the positives so often overwhelmed by the news and social media storm of negativity.

Review of *Speed: How Leaders Accelerate Successful Execution*

Impermanence and constant change has always been one of nature's mighty laws. Today that pace is accelerating. Organizations are turning to Agile, Lean, and other strategies to become a victor, rather than victim, of change.



An organization's speed is set by its leaders. In their newest book, *Speed: How Leaders Accelerate Successful Execution*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman draw from their firm's database of over one million 360 assessments of about 80,000 leaders, to show how leaders can provide optimum quality in the quickest time.

Here are a few key evidence-based findings documented in *Speed: How Leaders Accelerate Successful Execution*:

- When asked "if this organization were able to move faster would it substantially influence our success," 69 percent of 5,100 people agreed and 77 percent of top management agreed.
- When either doing things fast or doing things right is a strength (rated at or above the 75th percentile) the probability of a leader being in the top 10 percent is only 2 or 3 percent. However, when both are rated as strengths that probability shoots up to 96 percent.
- Correlating pace survey results and stress levels showed that stress is cut in half when people increase their speed.
- Leaders rated in the top 10 percent on speed had direct reports with engagement levels in the top quartile.
- The highest leadership speed correlates to the highest annual performance ratings.
- The slowest leaders were nearly four times more likely to be terminated than their fastest peers.

A tool emerging from this new research is ZF's **Pace Assessment**. This helps leaders determine their preference for a slow or fast pace. Answers to 15 pairs of choices are plotted on two scales; quality/quantity and patience/impatience. With a high correlation between this self-assessment and their 360 data, Zenger Folkman conclude "our data is very clear that the most effective leaders have a fairly quick pace and excellent execution."

Speed provides plenty of practical tips and practices to increase speed such as chapters on "Speeding Up Your Day," "Modeling Speed," and -- the oh so vital -- "Accelerate Meetings."

A key element to increasing leadership speed and effectiveness is cross-training. ZF analyzed 360 feedback data from 728,328 bosses, peers, direct reports, and others for 52,000 leaders across 49 behaviors. They statistically correlated the behaviors of leaders operating at optimal speed and found eight companion behaviors to increase effectiveness:

1. Innovating
2. Exhibiting strategic perspective
3. Displaying courage
4. Setting stretch goals
5. Communicating powerfully
6. Bringing external focus
7. Taking initiative

8. Possessing knowledge and expertise

Eight chapters (one for each of these companion behaviors) then provide application tips and examples.

A paradox of a highly effective and faster leader is he or she can often be the least stressed and the most balanced. *Speed* concludes with a chapter on life balance and discusses when to go fast and when to go slow. By speeding up in the right places we can create the space to slow down and enjoy life more.

Speed is a well-researched, practical, and easy read. It's a timely book for today's leadership and organizational changes, challenges and opportunities.

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

Start the New Year learning how to tango!

Many leaders believe it's a trade-off; you can do it fast or you can do it right, but you can't have both. Drawing from assessments of 75,000 global leaders Zenger Folkman proves that while many believe it can't be done, the best leaders are already doing it. They found leaders rated in the top ten percent are dancing the tango of speed and quality much better than their peers.



As outlined in their just published book, *Speed: How Leaders Accelerate Successful Execution*, those extraordinary leaders are helping their organizations increase competitiveness, profitability, productivity, get new products to market faster, make changes quicker, and are on top of the latest information.

In their 45 minute complimentary webinar, **The Tango of Speed and Quality - The Key to Achieving Both!**, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman will:

- Define what leadership speed means and why it's becoming so critical today.
- Show the powerful impact of doing things fast AND doing things right.
- How leadership speed correlates to employee engagement, productivity, and other organizational results.
- Help you determine your preferred PACE based on scales of quality/quantity and patience/impatience.
- Answer the vital question; how can I improve my speed?
- Outline what they discovered were the highly differentiating behaviors of leaders most highly rated in consistently delivering both speed and quality.
- Provide key steps to deciding where to focus improvement efforts to increase speed and effectiveness.
- Identify seven unique factors that improve speed and quality.

If you thought last year went by at blazing speed, there's a good chance we ain't seen nothing yet! The pace of change and pressure to move fast isn't likely to slow down in 2017. The tango beat is pulsating ever quicker.

Join Jack and Joe on Wednesday, January 18 at 11 am PT, 12 pm MT, and 2 pm ET. [Click here](#) to register.

Year End Reflections on Leadership Behaviors

Recently Laurie Wilhelm, editor of the online publication, *Realizing Leadership*, interviewed me on a range of leadership topics. It was a stimulating conversation. She summarized our discussion in a Q & A article now available on our web site at "[Leadership Behaviors](#)".



Given my meandering musings on a very broad topic, Laurie did an excellent job of writing, editing, and polishing to make me sound fairly coherent!

As I reviewed "[Leadership Behaviors](#)" and reflect on my own highlights and learnings from 2016, a few key points and thoughts stand out:

- What leaders often view as staying on top of operations and guiding their team can often be seen as micromanagement.
- I judge myself by my intentions. Others judge us by our actions. Many leaders don't realize how his or her actions are perceived. Too often this blissful ignorance leads to lower engagement, performance, and results.
- When you think of the best leaders you know they're defined by the presence of a few profound strengths, not the absence of weaknesses. We'll often live with, or trade off, weaker leadership behaviors for the powerful impact of towering strengths.
- The path to elevating leadership effectiveness is to leverage strengths that intersect with our passions and most pressing organizational needs. That sustains personal development way beyond fixing weaknesses.
- Weaknesses do need to be addressed if a behavior is so glaring people can't see past it. Disrespect, poor communications, damaged relationships, or creating team conflict are examples of behaviors that must be fixed.
- Baby Boomer leaders often hide behind the common myth that millennials need to be led differently. But research shows it's less about generational differences and more about better leadership for everyone. Millennials are less acclimatized to, and tolerant of, poor leadership. And being early in their careers and eager to learn, millennials want more coaching and feedback -- which many leaders do very poorly, if at all.
- Coaching skill development is becoming a more critical leadership skill in today's workplace. Many leaders confuse training, mentoring, and coaching. Giving advice isn't coaching. A key test is who owns the plan and is most motivated to follow through on the conversation.
- Two simple keys to increasing leadership effectiveness is to 1) Get systematic and regular feedback and 2) Have a personal development plan.

Review, reflection, and renewal is key to growing leadership effectiveness. This is the perfect time of year for it.

As organizational behavior author and consultant, Meg Wheatley, has found "time for reflection with colleagues is for me a lifesaver; it is not just a nice thing to do if you have the time. It is the only way you can survive.... without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful."

Beyond the Doom and Gloom: Over 65 Ways Our World Keeps Getting Better

We're naturally wired to look for what's wrong -- or could go wrong -- and overlook what's right -- or ignore the high likelihood that things will work out. We also live in a world where the dealers in disaster who can stoke our fears get the most attention. Videos of horrendous crimes or fake news go viral on social media, journalists report heart-wrenching stories of violence, and TV news brings High Definition images of war, suicide bombings, and terrorists driving trucks through crowds into our living rooms. And manipulative politicians harness our fears to promise they'll fix it all if we elect them.



Polls in North America and Europe show the vast majority of people think the world is getting worse. Just 5% of Britons and 6% of Americans feel things are getting better. This extreme pessimism is completely wrong. Almost every major measure of our quality of life has dramatically improved.

Two years ago I began what's now becoming a New Year tradition: researching how things are getting better. My first blog post, "**A Dose of Reality: Our World is Dramatically Better**", listed 19 facts of highly positive changes. Last year I posted "**Despite the Dire Headlines the World is Getting Much Better**" and listed another 24 "factoids" as further proof.

Here are yet more facts showing how much better off we are today:

1. In the last 50 years we've reduced the amount of our disposable income spent on food by 50%.
2. Teen births in the U.S. have dropped by more than 60%.
3. American violent crime has fallen over three-fold since the 80s and 90s.
4. In 1820 in the U.S. most people had less than 2 years of education. That's since gone up more than 10 times.
5. Global literacy rates have risen from around 10% to 86% in the past 500 years.
6. From 1915 to 1997 U.S. infant mortality rates are down 90% and mothers dying in birth is down 99%.
7. The brutal behavior of ISIS would appear normal as recently as just a century ago -- and even more so over the centuries before that.
8. Scientists can now respond much quicker to epidemics. In 2009, they sequenced the swine flu genome in one day and produced a vaccine within 6 months.
9. 68% of the world now has modern sanitation compared to just 24% in 1980.

10. In 2012 86% of Americans approved of interracial dating (it's 95% among 18- to 29-year olds) compared to only 48% in 1987.
11. There's a 10 times higher chance of a European dying by falling down stairs than being killed by a terrorist.
12. Over 2 billion people in the past 25 years are no longer suffering from hunger.
13. Since 1980 the percentage of humanity around the globe with access to clean water has risen from 52% to 92%.
14. Average global life expectancy has jumped to age 71 from 31 in 1900.
15. People killed in wars between countries has dropped to an average of 3,000 today from 86,000 in the 1950s.
16. Total emissions of six leading air pollutants tracked by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has been reduced by 2/3 since 1980.
17. The amount of oil spilled in our oceans has been decreased by 99% since 1750.
18. 178 countries have registered improvements in their Environmental Performance Index between 2004 and 2014. Only six countries worsened their performance.
19. The risk of dying from a natural disaster has declined by 94% since 1900.
20. Despite biblical guidelines (in both old and new testaments) on how to manage one's slaves, the number of countries with legal slavery has gone from 60 in 1800 to none.
21. In 1900 nobody lived in a country with a real democracy where each man and woman had one vote. Today it's nearly 60% of the world.
22. Child labor rates have been cut in half since the 1950s and continue falling sharply.

In 1783, Benjamin Franklin wrote, "[T]he Progress of human Knowledge will be rapid, and Discoveries made of which we have at present no Conception. I begin to be almost sorry I was born so soon, since I cannot have the Happiness of knowing what will be known 100 Years hence."

Today we live in a utopian world that our ancestors could only dream about.

Enjoy the New Year!

Sources and Further Perspectives:

- *Progress: Ten Reasons to Look Forward to the Future*, new book by Johan Norberg
- "Why the World Is Better Than You Think in 10 Powerful Charts", Peter Diamandis (author of *Abundance: The Future is Better Than You Think*)
- "Only 6% of Americans Think the World is Getting Better", Alex Berezow, American Council on Science and Health
- "Your Life is Getting Better. These 5 Charts Can Prove It", Keith Breene, World Economic Forum
- "If the World is Getting Better, Why Do We All Feel So Much Worse?", Kevin Drum, *Mother Jones*
- "The World is Getting Better and Nobody Knows It", Johan Norberg, Foundation for Economic Education
- "The State of the World: Better and Better", *The Economist*
- "You Think the World is Going to Hell in 2016? It's Actually Getting Better", Jay Michaelson, *Forward*
- "Business as An Agent of World Benefit", Sustainability site curated by David Cooperrider and Christopher Johnston, Scoop.it!

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:

These five key actions taken by the best leaders at developing others apply across gender or other coaching relationships.

"The Leadership Tightrope: When Male Managers Develop Female Subordinates" -- Joe Folkman, *Forbes*

www.forbes.com

"We compared the leaders rated as the best at developing their subordinates with the lower-rated counterparts to identify the specific behaviors that caused these great developers to be viewed so positively."

Interview with Dr. Susan David, psychologist at Harvard Medical School, co-founder of Harvard/McLean Institute of Coaching, and CEO of Evidence Based Psychology.

"Emotional Agility – Master Challenges Without Getting Derailed" -- interviewed by Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman

<http://zengerfolkman.com>

"Emotional agility is fundamentally the ability to be with and be healthy with our thoughts, emotions, and stories – even ones that might be troubling or concerning – and still take action..."

Drawing from research on how leaders can be both fast and effective.

"5 Smart Ways To Speed Up Your Day (Beyond Caffeine)" -- Jack Zenger, *Forbes*

www.forbes.com

"Those who constantly strive to increase their personal productivity set the pace for their group. Their speed is contagious. They are able to get a lot more done than their slower colleagues."

Seven unique factors showing how the best leaders achieve what many see as contradictory goals.

"The Traits of Leaders Who Do Things Fast and Well" -- -- Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, *Harvard Business Review*

<https://hbr.org>

"We sought to identify the most differentiating behaviors of leaders who were rated as having high levels of both speed and quality. What did they do differently from other leaders?"

See the 360 assessment research of 45,000 leaders showing on the "best bosses" and turn one of these behaviors into your strength.

"Infographic: 8 Steps to Being a Better Boss in 2017"

<http://zengerfolkman.com>

"The bosses who dedicate their limited time to developing others this year not only improves their relationships with employees, but also increases the productivity and profitability of their organizations."

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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