



5 AGREEMENTS FOR YOUR FUTURE CULTURE

BY JASON V. BARGER

Much in the world often seems out of our control.

We experience rapid change, political and economic uncertainty, employee shifts and the war for talent, and the “future of work” that everyone is forecasting is still being created. A lot seems out of our control. However, even in the midst of all that is swirling around us, there is so much that every leader, team and organization has right in front of them that is fully within their control.

Most teams and companies just need to step back and acknowledge it. In fact, one of the greatest mental exercises for all of us is to recognize and name the things that are within our control. When we can’t control the weather, the economy or the latest media scandal, we still have a decision about what we will choose to give our energy to. There is always a response or action that is within our control. Every time we shift our thinking from reactionary finger pointing, excuse making or feeling sorry for ourselves and direct our focus and energy to solutions, gratitude and ownership over our next actions, positive ripples are felt by all around us. It models a different spirit for the path forward.



The best leaders and teams on the planet understand their role is to help positively influence the mindsets of their people in ways that give energy, hope and clarity to the path forward.

At a time when nine out of 10 employees say they would take a pay cut to work for a more meaningful culture, it's way past time for all of us to think about the role we all play in creating these meaningful cultures. The mindsets, actions and behaviors that we choose will send ripples to everyone around us.

The best leaders and cultures are intentionally co-creating their future culture together. The mindsets they fuel and the actions they take determine the direction they head.

Five Agreements to Make to Yourself and For Your Future Culture

- 1 **Breathe** — Practice breathing in good oxygen of gratitude, appreciation and joy each day rather than toxic air of blame, gossip, negativity and excuse making. How you begin your day often sends your mind and your actions in a particular direction. Which air do you want to breathe?
- 2 **Share Clear Messages** — We all need and want clarity. Share clear messages about the direction you're heading and what you want for the road ahead. Is your mission clear? Is your vision clear? Are the values for how your team is committed to travel clear? Is your strategy for the next priorities clear? If not, your team may get trapped focusing on all that is out of their control.
- 3 **Develop an Intentional Strategy** — Do you and your team or organization have a clear and intentional strategy for the future culture you are trying to create? Can you articulate the desired culture you want? Do you have support and a guide to help keep you all move in the same direction? If not, agree to develop an intentional strategy and seek partners to go on the journey with you.
- 4 **Flex Your Muscles** — Practice working through challenges and obstacles personally and as a team. Every time you flex those muscles and move through discomfort, you get stronger. Resolve plus toughness is critical to help people navigate their way through obstacles, challenges, negativity, finger pointing and division. Leaders help their people breathe oxygen and learn through adversity. Toughness isn't about being physically stronger than others, it is about being able to be vulnerable with your people and still have the resolve to find solutions together.
- 5 **Take Ownership** — Be accountable for your words, your actions and your physical, mental and spiritual well-being. The best leaders connect the things they say they will do with positive accountability and action. Accountability isn't a negative word, it's a positive mantra that all take ownership of. The best cultures empower everyone involved to be an owner and an ambassador for the future culture they are creating together.

Your future culture is being created right now. It's either being led and dictated by all that is outside of your control or it is being intentionally led by leaders who are focused on everything within their control. The mindset, actions and agreements you make to yourself and others will dictate the path you walk.

The best cultures proactively help their people breathe and navigate through obstacles together. They make agreements to themselves and others to choose to inhale positivity and exhale negativity, blame, gossip and division. The agreements they make dictate the quality of the culture for all. The ecosystem of their culture is grown, developed, cultivated and led with intentionality, one agreement at a time.

The process for developing high-performing and engaged teams never stops, and the best leaders, teams and organizations make agreements to lead an intentional strategy for how they hire, onboard, do performance evaluations, develop emerging leaders and recognize excellence. The best leaders invest in their teams and the mindsets they cultivate together.

If you're experiencing a lack of clarity, energy, passion or hope for the road ahead, it may be time to make some new agreements to yourself and with those on the journey with you. 🌟



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