

Mark Samuel

“A terrific operations manual for getting and staying in the driver’s seat of life.”

—David Allen, author of *Getting Things Done*

MAKING YOURSELF



INDISPENSABLE[©]

THE POWER *of* PERSONAL
ACCOUNTABILITY

THE MISSING CHAPTER®

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: BEING INDISPENSABLE IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

INTRODUCTION

The writing of “Making Yourself Indispensable” was a work of love. It’s such an important topic in our current world of change, limited resources and uncertainty. Being indispensable is a big topic because it not only impacts you at work it also applies to your personal life. So often, I see people who become dispensable in their personal life because they are more “me-centered” rather than considering the greater good. Becoming indispensable makes you a stronger teammate at work and a more valuable partner at home. And, as you probably read in my complete book, being indispensable is NOT an ego statement of being “louder”, or “bullying” others to get your way, or “manipulating” others to get ahead in your job.

Making yourself indispensable is about creating value for others while honoring your unique qualities. Being indispensable is being of service to others at work, at home, and in your community. When you are indispensable, you know your purpose, play “big” in support of your purpose, and are adaptable to change. You are “we” centered considering the greater “good” rather than only serving yourself. You have the discipline to focus on your priorities rather than getting distracted by email, gossip, and other emotional needs.

Making yourself indispensable is also about valuing others. Up until now, winning was viewed as being better, bigger and more successful than everyone else. But, that is a short-term view of life. It isn’t sustainable. There will always be another winner at some point in time. Being indispensable has more to do with building other winners. In fact, the more winners you help to build, the more indispensable you become. Finally, becoming indispensable is about being “counted on” by others and being able to “count on yourself.”

Because there was so much for me to say about being indispensable, my first version of the book was over 300 pages – and we didn’t want to publish a book that was so large. My goal was an easy and quick read for people that contained a huge value in terms of content, stories and application activities in order to be practical. So, I cut down the size of the book by removing many ideas for becoming indispensable in your personal life. I realized later that for those people who are truly dedicated to being indispensable, they would appreciate receiving this information for work-life balance. This missing chapter includes:

- Additional key “Insights”
- A “Case Study” of a university student
- New “Activities” for taking action to be successful

IN THE BEGINNING

I first witnessed what it looked like to be indispensable from a man named Marty, who eventually became my first mentor. I was twenty-one years old, a student at UC Irvine, and working at stereo store from one of the large chains at the time. I worked in the stock room – the lowest level position available.

Whenever Marty would come into the store as a customer, it only took 5 minutes for him to have a group of our top sales people and customers surrounding him. They had the deepest respect for Marty as he shared his insights and words of wisdom about the different pieces of stereo equipment. He had no position of authority and wasn't paid a salary, but he did gain something from imparting his knowledge with others – self-confidence and the gratification of being of service to others. He loved stereo equipment and being an expert in the field – even though it was his hobby. He was indispensable to store managers, the salespeople and to the customers.

He also gained another benefit. The store managers made sure to supply Marty with the most state-of-the-art equipment for free. They called Marty to test the equipment, which was on perpetual loan in his house. Marty didn't have to spend a dime for having tens of thousands of dollars worth of stereo equipment in his home for him to use.

As my first mentor, Marty shared with me these words of wisdom, “Having influence at work doesn't come from your position, how smart you are, or political power. Influence comes from being the ‘go to’ person when others have problems, need information or need to be connected with others. If you make yourself the trusted person – the one others can “count on,” it won't matter what position you hold, you will be invaluable (indispensable) to others.

EXERCISE: USING YOUR PAST TO BE INDISPENSABLE

It is important to draw on your “heroes” or “mentors” from your past. Whether family members, famous influencers, a teacher or friend, you can learn a lot about the qualities of indispensability you see in them. Answer the following questions to access those qualities.

1. Who in your past was indispensable to you?
2. What were their qualities that made them indispensable – list at least 5?
3. Currently, who would be your role model for someone who is indispensable?
4. What qualities do they demonstrate that you want to emulate?
5. What are the qualities you identified that you already emulate in your life that is contributing to you being indispensable?
6. What qualities can you enhance to be even more indispensable?
10. What support would you like from others to be successful?

MRS. “D” – MY PERSONAL ROLE MODEL

Mrs. “D” is the mother of one of my closest friends. She was a stay-at-home mom who took care of her 5 children and her home. While her husband was the strongest voice in the family, she quietly raised her children to be respectful and achieve good grades in school. And, Mrs. “D” became the informal leader in her neighborhood by being the “carpool” mom for two families who had working moms. As new families would enter the neighborhood and the children of the previous families grew up so that they no longer needed carpooling help, she offered carpooling support for the new families. She would pick up children from school and bring them back to her house until their parents came home from work. She was indispensable to her family and to her neighbors.

Life caught Mrs. “D” off guard, when at the age of 40, her husband suddenly died of a heart attack leaving her with 5 teenagers and no job. Within a few months, after the shock and grief diminished, Mrs. “D” took a job as an office assistant to make ends meet. While she could no longer serve to be the “car pool” mom for the other families in the neighborhood, she still demonstrated a leadership role in her neighborhood by setting up a rotation system for all families to help each other out in sharing the carpooling role to which she also contributed even though her children didn’t need that support.

Mrs. “D” was indispensable to her family and to her neighborhood even when her conditions of life were less than ideal. But, her purpose of supporting other families in her neighborhood was more important than her life situation. She demonstrated the qualities of being purpose driven, we-centered, and adaptable.

KEY INSIGHT #1: PURPOSE DRIVEN LEADS TO FULFILLMENT

Goals to achieve personal gain tend to feed the addition of always wanting more. When I got out of school, my goal was to purchase a car – any car. I just wanted the free-

dom of transportation. Then, after I got my first job, my goal was to purchase a BMW – a better and more prestigious car. It took a long time, but after a decade, I now owned a BMW and at first, felt on top of the world. Then, my goal became to purchase a convertible.

There was always something more to achieve that would make me feel more satisfied, more accomplished. And, it seemed that even though I “loved” my cars, I wanted to get a new one every three years. As I learned to become more purpose-driven, my purpose was to be safe in my car, enjoy the experience of driving and to conserve energy. The last car I purchased was a Hybrid. I can honestly say that while my BMW’s handled the best, my overall fulfillment driving is at my peak now with my Hybrid. It’s been over three years, and I have no desire to replace my car with another one. I am grateful every day I go out in my Hybrid and I love driving it.

When you are purpose driven, fulfillment is less about having more things. It is about the meaningfulness of what you have. It is less about the cost or image, and more about the value – not only to yourself, but also to the betterment of your household, community and world.

ACTIVITY: CLARIFYING YOUR PURPOSE FOR YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

1. What are your unique talents, personal attributes, relationship-building qualities and capabilities that could be of service to others in your personal life?
2. Who are the important people in your personal life?

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3. What are their goals and needs?
4. Which of your qualities identified in response to question #1 can be applied to each person identified in your response to question #2?
5. What can you do to begin utilizing your qualities to better support others in your life?
6. Which group in need do you care about that you would like to assist and support (ie. Homeless, cancer patients, people out of work, veterans, abused women, students struggling in school, etc.)?
7. What could you do to support or serve those groups through the use of your qualities identified in question #1?
8. What would you be willing to do to either start offering your service or to enhance the service you already provide for your chosen group to support?
9. Based on the above answers, what will commit to do and by when?
10. What support would you like from others to be successful?

BE ADAPTABLE – ONE KEY FOR SUSTAINING LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

One of the challenges that we all have is adjusting to life's evolution. As an example, some parents wish their children will stay infants, when they are so adorable and loveable. But, when they become teenagers they want to have more control and can rebel

against the rule of their parents. Even relationships change over time because one partner grows in a way different from their partner, and this can create tension and conflict.

It is critical to maintain a level of adaptability, so that you can respond to the changing goals, needs and conditions associated with your loved ones. But, in order to be adaptable, you also must be we-centered and value others. Instead of being rigid, and advocating or expecting your loved ones to return to their old reality, you may need to adjust your communication, behavior and actions accordingly.

Mike Riera, a brilliant author and parenting coach, spoke on a radio show I was listening to said, “When your child is growing up they expect clear boundaries and guidelines. You are the manager in their life, and they like it when you provide clear direction and play that role. Boundaries give them a sense of clarity and safety. However, when your child turns 12 or so, they ‘fire’ you as their manager. They don’t let you know that you are fired. They just respond that way. You keep on trying to manage them and now you only get resistance. Unless you change your role to ‘consultant’ with your teenager where you discuss options to problems as equals rather than directing them, you will run into some tough years until they reach their twenties.”

ACTIVITY: BEING ADAPTABLE WITHOUT GIVING UP YOUR VALUES

1. Identify family members in your life that have been going through major changes in their life. This could be as a result of growing up, personal transformation or physical changes.

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2. What changes are they experiencing and what challenges are resulting from those changes?
3. What support can you provide them that would be on their terms?
4. What do you need to support and honor yourself during these times of change?
5. How will you know when your support has been helpful to your family member and to yourself?

KEY INSIGHT #2: OPENNESS LEADS TO ADAPTABILITY

Being open to other people's input, perspective, ideas and solutions breed adaptability. It provides you new thought and responses that give you alternatives to change and improve your own reactions. No one has every critical thinking skill to perfectly respond to every situation. We must rely on the views of many, gaining insights from others and distilling the information in order to make an effective decision about how to move forward. Whether at work or at home, it is vital to openly listen to other's feedback, responses and input in order to figure out the best ways to move forward. If we aren't open to other's perspectives, we create rigidity in our approach to life and thus, cut ourselves off from having options for improving our life, our relationships, our careers and our fulfillment.

THE MISSING CASE STUDY – BRENDA, AN ASPIRING STUDENT

Brenda was one of those students who didn't have to study very hard to be successful in school. Her grade point average was 3.75 out of 4.00 all through high school. She decided to go to nursing school to become a Physician Assistant. This is the highest level of registered nurse who is able to write prescriptions for medicine. Brenda's parents helped her to develop a high sense of self-esteem through continual acknowledgement of how wonderful she was, not only in school where she excelled, but also in music and sports where she didn't perform well at all. The truth was that Brenda wasn't very interested in sports or music, but participated to receive her parent's acknowledgement. So, she didn't practice, goofed off in rehearsal and barely showed up for games or performances on time. But, her parents always let her know that she was great and never said anything critical about her lack of dedication or commitment.

Now in nursing school, Brenda is struggling. Her grades are ranging from C's to F's and she is risking being kicked out of school. She is blaming the school for being unfair and her teachers for being too strict and demanding. She doesn't understand how she could get a failing grade on her test when she is "showing up" for class and for the tests. She believes that she is entitled to getting passing grades if not excellent grades for just being there. After her last failing grade on a test, she came to her teacher and asked, "Why didn't I get at least a 'C – passing grade' since I showed up on time for the test?"

Thinking you are entitled to anything – a passing grade, a promotion or getting hired for a new job leaves you vulnerable and stuck in victimization.

In "Making Yourself Indispensable," we discuss the Personal Accountability Model that describes two loops – the Victim Loop and the Accountability Loop. Brenda was clearly caught in the Victim Loop. She demonstrated denial, since she didn't see her role in her low grades. Furthermore, she expressed blame by

pointing fingers at her the school and teachers for her demise.

About a week later, Brenda took another step into the Victim Loop by rallying other students to make complaints against the professors and the nursing school about its unfair practices. She thought that rationalizing and resisting the schools approach to teaching students would result in her success. And, she enjoyed the power and independence she felt by influencing other students.

However, when you use your power and influence for negative purposes rather than serving others for their betterment, the result can be a high level of dispensability. This was the case with Brenda. Based on her low scores and her professors catching wind that she was stirring up negative attitudes with her peers, she was suspended from school and asked to make a choice of whether she wanted to go to school or drop out and go somewhere else.

During her suspension she had a chance to relook at her situation and her goals. She wanted two things from going to school – a solid career in which she could be successful and a good income for her employment. Nursing still held her strongest interest and she decided to give it another try.

She changed her entire approach to school based on having a new revitalized intention. She partied less and took better care of herself. She focused on her homework and studies. As a result, her grades improved significantly to the A's and B's she was used to getting in high school. She also formed study groups to help her study and to help other students who were struggling. She was now using her influence to support and help others in addition to improving herself.

Not only did her grades improve and the respect she gained from her professors, but also she created new opportunities for herself. One professor asked her to be a Teacher's Aide, which was a paid position and a great resume item. Now she was enjoying her school experience, but it wasn't the school or her professors that changed. It was purely her approach, attitude and behavior that resulted in her new high level of enjoyment and fulfillment.

THE REWARDS OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND BEING INDISPENSABLE

I was recently asked, “Why is accountability the most important key for being indispensable?” There were three reasons that occurred to me. First, if people cannot count on you, then you don’t have their trust in order to be indispensable. Second, no matter how hard you try, at some point, your humanness will show up in the form of your frailties, mishaps, or failures, and accountability is used to overcome those challenges and get back on track to achieving success.

This was the case of Magic Johnson, who became indispensable as a member of the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team – a championship team. But, shortly after he contracted HIV, his career was over, but not his accountability. He redirected himself to form one of the most successful retail business empires that was not only a financial success, but also served to better the communities in which his businesses were developed.

Third, being indispensable is a moving target. You can be indispensable one year and later become dispensable, so you must stay in a process of redefining success, increasing your competencies, and expanding your influence to remain indispensable. The Personal Accountability Model and Roadmap provides such a process. Ultimately, accountability helps you to achieve the level of indispensability that you desire and provides the vehicle for sustaining your success long-term.

Specifically, there are five rewards to being accountability and indispensable.

The Reward of Trust

Who do we call when we have a problem? Who do we reach out to when we need support? Who do we consult with to make an important decision? Who do we connect with to share confidential information? Answer: The person who we can count on. The person we trust. The person who comes through, consistently. The

person who keeps their commitments and agreements. The person who respects confidentiality. The person who is accountable.

And, the ultimate reward of trust comes with “inner” trust. This is the trust you have with yourself. And, when you are accountable and can count on yourself, you don’t have to be perfect. You know that you will pick yourself up when you fall, and you will support yourself to get through challenges. You know that you will honor your uniqueness and not sell yourself out. Your trust enables you to go to sleep at night knowing you are doing the very best you can.

The Reward of Involvement

When you are accountable and indispensable, you don’t play small. You take calculated risks and get involved in making things better. You participate in the new project, process or change effort. You are involved in your family rather than off in your head, or TV show, or Internet chat or other distraction. You help when someone needs it, and you ask for help when you need support. It’s through your involvement that you live and experience life – to the fullest.

The Reward of Accomplishment

When you are accountable, you get results. At work, you accomplish your projects and assignments. But, in your personal life, you also gain the reward of accomplishment. You accomplish building a home regardless of where you live. You accomplish creating a loving environment for your family to be nurtured and to evolve. You accomplish creating a life in which you have a balance between work and play. When you are accountable, you fix what is broken and improve upon greatness. Nothing stops you because you are constantly accomplishing your dreams. And, when your dreams change, you change and accomplish those too.

The Reward of Recognition

When you are indispensable, you are helping others, supporting others and helping others to be successful. Those people will recognize you for sure, but also the people who watched them grow and evolve will take note of your contribution. People will learn that you are the one who helps people succeed and you will be recognized quickly as the “go to” person. More importantly, when you are accountable, you recognize your own value and how you help others. As your purpose is bigger than self-interest, you are always in a position of recognizing yourself in a way that is not ego-gratification and self-promotion, but more about that inner sense when you go to sleep at night that you made a meaningful and positive difference.

The Reward of Freedom

When you are accountable and indispensable, you are in demand; you are valued; and you are rewarded, and that creates an outer freedom that translates to being wanted when others are dispensable. You have choices and the ability to create new options. You will have the tools to transform yourself at work and at home when circumstances change around you. While you may experience temporary set-backs, those won't hold you back for long, because you have built your muscle for dealing with and overcoming uncertainty and adversity. And, that translates to the kind of freedom that comes from self-trust, accomplishment, involvement and recognition.

ACTIVITY: TRACKING YOUR REWARDS

1. What are the rewards of inner and external trust that you have developed over the years?
2. How have you benefited from getting involved at work or at home with your family?
3. What accomplishments have you experienced in the past 5 years and what have been the rewards you received from achieving those accomplishments?
4. Identify three times when you were recognized you for making a meaningful difference. What was the circumstance in which that happened?
5. In what areas of your life are you becoming more accountable and indispensable? Describe how that is contributing to greater freedom and choice in your life.

GRATITUDE: MAKING THE CHOICE OF WE CENTERED OVER ME CENTERED

Often times when we think of being we-centered the reference point is people. The most indispensable people I know think beyond other human beings. This could be their belief in God, “the Universe,” a “Higher Power,” or another term to define an infinite source of wisdom.

In me centered thinking we are the center of the universe and everything we accomplish is a result of our hard work and brilliance. Yet, is there a possibility that you were gifted with intelligence that others didn’t get when they were born? Is it possible that

you were graced with the circumstances that gave you opportunities that others didn't have? Is it possible that while you did work hard and you did make good choices along the way and you definitely get the credit, that there may be other people that work hard, are smart and make good choices, but aren't as fortunate as you?

When anything goes my way, and this could be as mundane as a getting a parking space or as significant as a successful project that I worked extremely hard to achieve, I am the first one to thank God gracing me and blessing me with that my life. I have a practice of expressing gratitude in the morning for each family member that I was blessed to have in my life. At night I express gratitude for everything that took place during the day that I was pleased about. And, I express gratitude for the learning experience that occurred from mishaps and disappointments. In those cases, I am even more grateful that tomorrow will be a new day and I can start over.

KEY INSIGHT #3: DISCOURAGED? GRATITUDE IS YOUR SOLUTION

Regardless of how bad your situation is, you can generally find a way your situation could be worse. So, even in the worst of situations, you can be grateful that your lot in life wasn't worse than it is. If you lost your job, you can be grateful that you have your health or the little amount of savings to support your transition. It is not to suggest that you shouldn't feel bad or sad or angry when things don't go as expected. Those are natural human responses, but the length of time we spend dwelling on those difficult feelings is based on your perspective. And, remembering that it could have been worse is very helpful. When the economy shifted and 75% of my clients suddenly broke off their contracts with me, I was grateful it wasn't 100% and showed great appreciation for the 25% of my remaining clients. And, while I was upset by not being able to

pay all of my bills on time, I was grateful that I didn't have to file bankruptcy.

Gratitude is the key to living a joyful life, even when you are facing disappointment, concern and discouragement.

ACTIVITY: WHAT ARE YOUR GRATEFUL FOR?

1. What qualities and capabilities do you have that you are grateful for?
2. What is your current living environment and what are you grateful for about that situation?
3. What are the successes or small wins that you have recently experience in which you are grateful that it turned out that way?
4. Who are the people in your life that you are grateful for? And, how have you or plan to express that to them?
5. What are you grateful to yourself for in how you treat yourself and care for yourself?

THE MISSING CHAPTER IS NOT THE FINAL CHAPTER

I want to acknowledge you for putting in the extra effort and time to download and read the missing chapter. I so appreciate your commitment to excellence and self-improvement.

While it is great to make yourself indispensable at work for the advantages that come forward in terms of your career, there is nothing more valuable or meaningful than becoming indispensable to yourself in your life...living a fulfilling and joyful life.

Through being more accountable and indispensable, you can now assist others in becoming more accountable and indispensable. How? By being a role model, a support system and valuing others. And, for that, I thank you in advance.