

# Inflection > Reflection > Traction

Finding & leading with purpose, passion & promise

by Mark Wojtasiak

# HELLO

I'm Mark Wojtasiak - VP Portfolio, Product & Customer Marketing Code42 | Author | Golfer | Cyclist | UA alum | Chicago Sports Fan | Student of leadership marketing & security. Thank you for the opportunity to share my journey with you. Before we dive in, there are 3 things you should know about me:

- I believe in the power of 3. Whether it's 3 objectives, 3 goals, 3 takeaways - I'm just wired to always think in 3's. My wife, daughters, family, friends and teammates know this and perhaps are annoyed by it, but that's just me.
- I believe in "writing it down" literally - mechanical pencil to paper. There is something therapeutic about the physical act of handwriting. I do it every day, all day long.
- I believe reflection creates traction. Reflecting on things I read, hear, watch, experience helps me prioritize, focus, connect the dots and build traction around what matters most.

That said, there are 3 reasons I embarked on this journey:

- **Purpose.** I'm a big believer in personal growth - the constant pursuit of better - how could I be a better father, partner, friend, teammate, coach, leader.
- **Passion.** I'm a sharer. I believe in sharing what is discovered, learned, used and experienced everyday - how could I better share in the growth and success of others?
- **Promise.** I'm a leader. I believe leadership is affirming and recognizing others' growth and success is as important, if not more important than my own. How do I better live my promise?

It just so happens these are the same 3 reasons I share my journey with you.

Maybe finding my own purpose, passion and promise just might help you find yours.





**START WITH  
WHY**

**ONE.  
MY STRENGTHS**

**TWO.  
MY OPPORTUNITIES**

**THREE.  
MY GAPS  
PROFESSIONAL**

**FOUR.  
MY GAPS  
PERSONAL**

**FIVE.  
MY GROWTH**

**MY JOURNEY**  
with my coach & friend Will Wiebe



WHY

MY STRENGTHS

*“Finding WHY is a process of **discovery**, not invention.”*

- Simon Sinek

My Journey

## START WITH WHY

Why did I embark on this journey of growth and development?

I believe leadership is **affirming others' success and recognition is as important as my own.**

That said, I embarked on this journey to discover, learn, use and experience what it takes to be a great leader. What I found is that being a great leader begins with being true to oneself - embracing one's strengths, acknowledging one's weaknesses, and answering one simple question:

What do I want to be remembered for activating in others?

Naturally, I started with **my 3 words.**



*The My Three Words idea is simple. Choose 3 words (not 1, not 4) that will help guide your choices and actions day to day. Think of them as lighthouses. Should I say yes to this project? Well, does this align with my three words?*

*- Chris Brogan*



My Journey

## MY 3 WORDS

- **Room:** Room rises to the top of my 3 words. I've been doing a ton of reading on productivity and leadership and it dawned on me - balance is not something I find. Who in this day and age can find time? It's not about finding time to create balance, it's about consciously, purposely and deliberately making room. It's about taking the time to make time matter. It's about ruthless prioritization and making room for what's most important in life and work. Make the room and I'll create the life work balance I've been searching for.
- **Render:** Render was my output or outcome word for 2021. It's to "provide or give" and to "cause to be or become; aka make." It spans everything from reading more books to writing more content to finishing home projects my wife and I have put off. Render is helping my daughters explore and discover their passions - to render whomever, whatever, wherever they want to be and go. It's about doing the same for my team and teammates at work and my community. If I make the room, every day is filled with output and outcomes. Every day about rendering.
- **Rally:** Rally is my action word. Nothing beats a great Nadal-Federer rally in tennis, or a bottom of the ninth, two-out Cubs rally and walk-off win. A rally is exciting, energizing, euphoric. It's filled with purpose and passion. When done with conviction, a rally sparks confidence and becomes contagious. A rally creates experiences, milestones and memories that live much longer than in the moment. If I make room and always render, then 2021 will be filled with some great rallies that will move more than myself forward.



My Journey

# THE JOURNEY BEGINS

My 3 words.

Each and every day I would write in my Full Focus Planner goals for that day. Room goals, render goals and rally goals. Every bit of my focus centered on my three 3 words. They became the lighthouses Chris Brogan described.

At the end of 2021, I began to wonder if I selected the right 3 words. Sure, I accomplished a lot in the last year. I had some great wins at work, but missed miserably on my personal and family goals. Why was that? Was I off balance? Were my priorities out of whack? Was I failing at what I truly believe: leadership is affirming others' success and recognition is as important as my own?

I set off on a journey to respond to those very questions with BetterUp and my coach and now friend, Will Wiebe. What I discovered, learned, used and experienced would set the groundwork for my 3 words in 2022, my purpose, passion, promise and thus, priorities and goals as a partner, father, friend, teammate and yes, leader.

And so, my journey began with one giant step - **inflection**.

ONE

MY STRENGTHS - INFLECTION



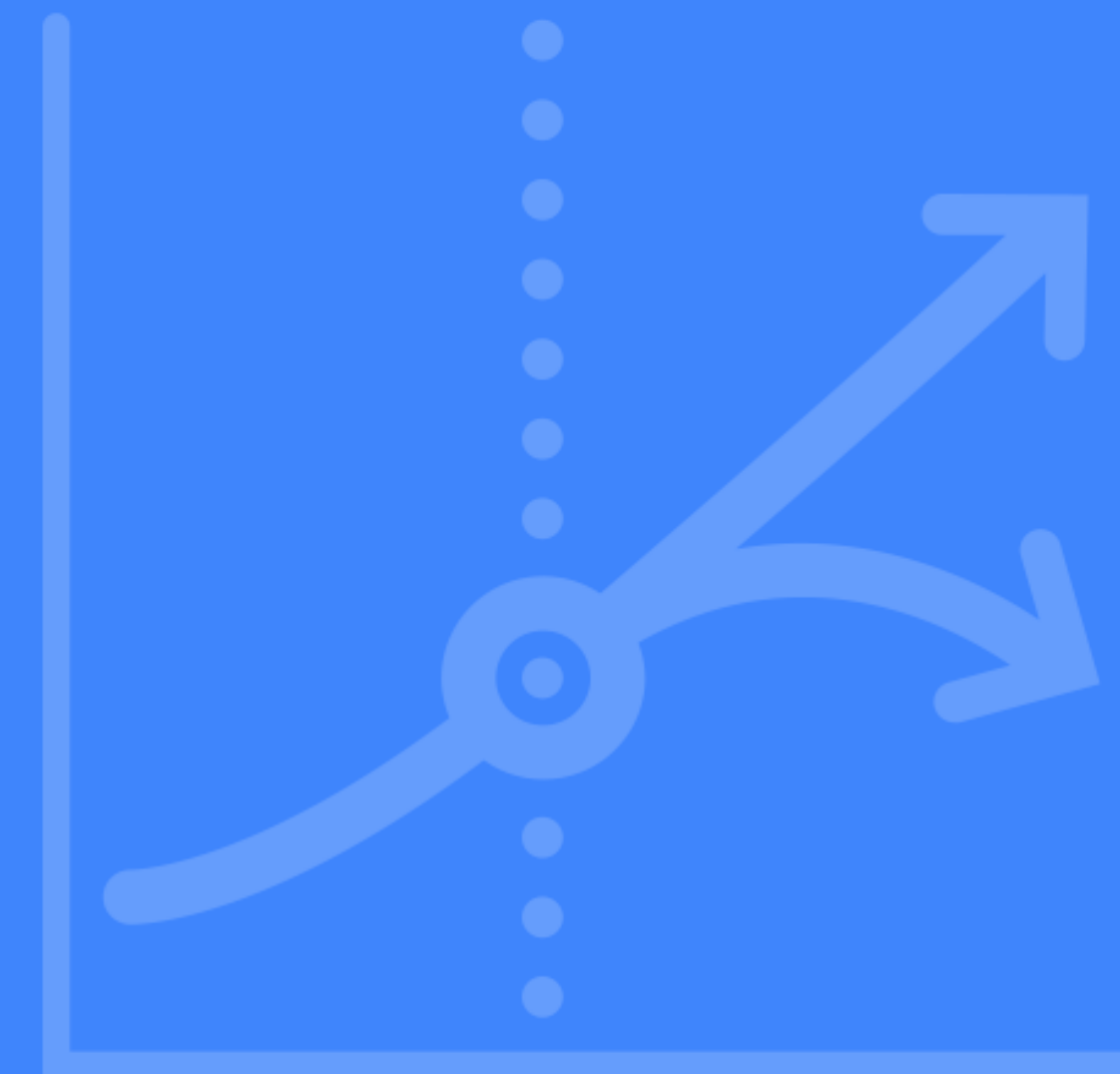
# MY STRENGTHS

1. **Empowerment** - I encourage others to take ownership by allowing them to decide how best to approach their work. I support others' decisions and motivate driven individuals who appreciate the latitude I give them to 'run with it'. I enable others to determine the best way to complete their job requirements (check). I allow autonomy so others can make decisions on their own (check). I structure work so that individuals have the flexibility to achieve in their own way (check).
2. **Self-compassion** - I treat myself as I would a friend by not being overly critical or ruminating on shortcomings. I'm more resilient to setbacks and contribute to higher levels of well-being. I understand that mistakes are bound to happen and can be overcome. I focus on my team's strengths and opportunities rather than their shortcomings. I avoid being unnecessarily hard on people for failures. Wow, that sounds like me. I was on a roll. What possible growth did I need? These results are awesome.
3. **Authenticity** - I'm open and authentic with others. I express myself honestly and build trust and make others feel more comfortable opening up and expressing themselves. I make efforts to connect with others in an authentic way. I'm comfortable being vulnerable and transparent - showing my true feelings. I let others see their flaws as well as their strengths. I take this one very seriously. I'm a big believer in transparency and vulnerability and doing something that scares me everyday.
4. **Rest** - I practice self-care by ensuring I get the rest I need to operate at my best. I give myself the time I need to unwind. I pay attention to when I'm feeling run down or overly tired. I make time in my schedule to rest and recharge. I stick to a healthy sleep schedule and routine. Umm...this does not sound like me. I'm a workaholic, just ask my wife and kids. The strength train is a bit off the tracks here.
5. **Purpose and Meaning** - My strong sense of purpose makes my job feel more like a calling than a career. This helps me stay motivated, focused, and brings a level of meaning and satisfaction that permeates all areas of my life. I take pride in your work and your organization. I desire to contribute to my organization's mission. I believe that what you do is having an impact. Phew, that feels better. I would have thought this one was my top strength, but I will settle for top five.

## Step One. Inflection.

My journey started with a bit of **inflection** - a Whole Person Strengths Report - a starting point in self-awareness.

What I learned was encouraging, motivating and rewarding. Right out of the gate, my top five strengths reflected how I perceived myself as a leader.



My Journey

# REFLECTING ON INFLECTION

This inflection made me feel great.

Maybe that's what inflection is all about - appreciating one's strengths. It gave me a reason, an excitement and motivation to go all-in on the journey.

**Reflecting on inflection**, I learned that in my head I'm curious - my mind is wired to search for purpose and meaning. That must be the researcher in me. I learned that I'm compassionate. My heart feels what others feel and how I lead mirrors how I desire to be led - with the freedom to just go, to take charge, to run with things, make some mistakes, create some wins. I learned that I'm courageous - I trust my gut. I feel the freedom to be myself, to be open and authentic and want my team, peers, family and friends to feel the same.

I walked away from my Whole Strengths Report feeling fantastic, but I knew growing as a leader is not only about playing to one's strengths. There are definitely opportunities at play that we have not yet explored. That came with step two of my journey - The Whole Person 360 Report and wow...

**...my eyes were opened to opportunity.**



**TWO**

MY OPPORTUNITIES - REFLECTION

Step one got me hooked. Inflection made me feel great about myself and my strengths as a leader, but inflection is not only about strengths. Inflection takes exploring where I have opportunities for growth and let's face it, that is what this journey is all about.

## **Step Two.** Opportunity.

My Journey

# MY OPPORTUNITIES

My opportunities revealed themselves as the result of the Whole Person 360 responses from my team, peers, leaders and coworkers. The results would put me on a path of self-discovery that I'm pretty sure I have never been on. It all felt so new to me and it was eye opening.

The final report is "a snapshot of how you and your colleagues view your strengths and areas of development as a leader." It compares how I view myself versus how others view me in 15 leadership skill areas. The results in a nutshell - the expectations I place on myself as a leader are completely out of whack with the expectations I meet for my team, peers, leaders and coworkers.

In other words, **I don't know me very well.**





My Journey

# SELF COMPASSION

I will start with my biggest gap - shockingly - Self-Compassion. What?! I thought this was a killer strength of mine. Just one step ago, I was celebrating this, now I'm cursing it. This one had me puzzled and pissed off. My "find the purpose and meaning" in things strength was kicking in, and this had me racing to learn why?

The why came down to me. I wasn't really practicing what I preached as a leader. I didn't treat myself as I would a friend by not being overly critical or ruminating on shortcomings. I wasn't more resilient to setbacks and contributing to higher levels of well-being. I didn't understand that mistakes are bound to happen and can be overcome. The expectations I placed on myself were in a word unattainable.

When it came to me, I was a perfectionist and that was paralyzing my progression as a leader. And here is the scary thing, it was paralyzing the progress of my team. It was paralyzing their growth and development. Where was this coming from? To find out, I had to do some more serious reflection.



My Journey

# SOCIAL CONNECTION

The answer came when Will and I looked at my other big gaps. The first - Social Connection. Social Connection is about valuing high-quality relationships and making an effort to invest in them. It's about maintaining strong connections with a supportive social circle, making time for the important people in my life, surrounding myself with people I can depend on and seeking out individuals who provide support and encouragement. I rated myself really low here whereas my teammates rated me very high. The difference was 59 points! Why? What is the deal with me thinking I don't have high value relationships and maintain strong connections with people that support me, because lord knows I do.

Then it hit me. My low self-score wasn't about social connectivity. It was about social accreditation. In my mind, at the time, I felt like I was not getting the credit, the recognition for my work - my contribution to the company - and I wasn't getting it from the top down. I was bitter. I was bitter because for a short time, I had a seat at the table. I was getting the credit, the social accreditation from executive management. Heck, I was an executive albeit an interim one. The scary thing - that was 2 years ago. I was hanging onto these feelings for two years! I needed a wake up call in a big way and I needed one now.



My Journey

# RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

So, we dug deeper into the next big gap - Relationship Building.

This one is all about developing strong relationships at work and actively building my network. Maintaining positive relationships creates an environment that supports creativity, learning, and commitment. The delta here between my self-score and my teammates' score was 57 points and it makes sense - social connection and relationship building go hand-in-hand. As Will and I dug into this one, it was less about credit and recognition and more about validation and influence. Validation from my network that I know my stuff that I'm a leader that can be trusted and respected. Influence in the way that my voice matters, that people listen to what I have to say and want to connect with me personally and professionally.

Again, I have this. At least I know now that I have and always had this. At the time, I realized the giant chip on my shoulder created a bit of a victim mentality and looking back I could see that how I was feeling about myself was rubbing off on my team. When one plays the victim card constantly seeking credit, validation, influence, one starts trying to perfect everything. The perfect presentation, the perfect team structure, the perfect process, the perfect message...the list goes on. This constant striving for perfection got in the way of progress.



My Journey

# REFLECTION

This was evident as Will and I continued diving into the Whole Person 360. The giant gaps between how I saw myself and how others saw me relative to self-compassion, social connection, relationship building spiraled into gaps associated with problem solving, recognition and participation. My desired image of my perfect self was stifling me as a leader.

## **It wasn't all bad news.**

There are strengths where my self-perception and teammates' perception jive. For one, we all agreed I'm very focused. I can concentrate, ignore distractions, and cancel noise. I'm strong and steady, and able to stay on a single task, work productively and get a lot done. Maybe it's my love for 3 things that keeps me focused. Secondly, I have strong cognitive agility. I can shift my thinking quickly and successfully adapt to the demands of any situation. I can solve problems efficiently, adjust to last minute changes, and identify novel solutions. This one can be attributed to my love for mystery solving, connecting the dots, making complex things simple to understand. Thirdly, coaching, empowerment and empathy - I guide and empower others' development through coaching and being empathetic to their feelings, challenges, personal goals and aspirations. I get this because I've been there. I share my own personal experiences in hopes that what I've learned on my journey might help them on theirs. This journey I'm sharing is another example of that.





My Journey

# AWAKENING

Then I was awakened!

The awakening came down to me playing to my shared strengths in order to close the gaps between how I view myself versus how others view me. I had to face the reality that My Whole Person Strengths and my Whole Person 360 results were in complete conflict with each other in critical areas. And, this very conflict was the root of my problem and the core to me growing as a leader and accomplishing my purpose: affirming others' success and recognition is as important as my own. The gaps I aimed to close were:

- My strength is empowerment, yet my perfectionism was paralyzing me and my team.
- My strength is self-compassion, yet my self-expectations were unrealistic.
- My strength is authenticity, yet my sense of self was inauthentic.
- My strength is rest, yet my constant thirst for credit kept me unfulfilled.
- My strength is purpose and meaning, yet my own purpose and meaning was missing.

The gaps would not be closed by simply flipping a switch and ignoring how I feel about myself and accepting how my teammates feel about me. I had to write it down. I had to acknowledge the problem and make a plan and track my progress.

**Enter step 3 - my gaps.**

# THREE

MY GAPS - PROFESSIONAL

My Journey

# MY GAPS - PROFESSIONAL

I'm a framework guy. I love building and adopting frameworks that help distill big projects into small steps. Perhaps it's my purpose and meaning strength that drives me to think methodically, structured. I've been a power user of Michael Hyatt's Full Focus program for 3 years now, so I'm the kind of person that needs stuff written down (as you can probably tell). This was just another opportunity for me to capture what I've learned about myself so far and put a plan down on paper. Will introduced me to a simple gap analysis framework that does just that.

This framework has six distinct stages:

- Current State
- The Gap
- Ideal Future State
- Action Plan
- Progress
- Outcome



MIND THE GAP

My Journey

# MY GAPS - PROFESSIONAL

## Current State

Reflecting on my strengths and opportunities, I wrote down 3 things that define **my current state of self.**

- Today, I have earned a great amount of respect and influence, but am I using it effectively across the organization to drive progress and results?
- My curse-of-knowledge and drive for perfection creates complexity and confusion for my team, my peers and my partners across the company.
- As a result, I'm too far ahead in my thinking. I feel like I don't live in the now, that what we have now is good enough, thus I'm always "changing" which results in a lack of focus, ineffective communication and a failure to bring the right stakeholders along for the ride.





My Journey

# MY GAPS - PROFESSIONAL

The Gaps

How I feel about my current state became **my gaps**.

- I feel overwhelmed, that everything is a priority, that expectations for me and my team are high and a sense of failing to meet expectations creates a false sense of self insecurity.
- I feel like I'm not pulled into conversations that I should be. I tend to wait to be invited versus being more proactive inserting myself into conversations. If I have something to say, be confident and say it.
- I feel like when I'm in the conversation, I oversell. I talk too much. I preach. I tend to rely on my curse of knowledge as a crutch to prove I'm worthy of being in the conversation.



My Journey

# MY GAPS - PROFESSIONAL

Ideal Future State

Writing down how I feel about myself was enlightening, forcing me to think about what's **my ideal future state**.

- I can trust my team more and delegate more to them by setting clear expectations and timelines. Provide them the journey to success, but don't prescribe a path to perfection.
- I can celebrate my team, my peers and my partners across the organization more - taking pride in our work and impact on the business on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis
- I leverage my skill of taking what is perceived as complex and making it simple to understand, thus empowering my team, my peers and my partners be successful in their endeavors



My Journey

# MY GAPS - PROFESSIONAL

Action Plan

From here, I could make **my action plan**.

3 things that could help drive me to my ideal state.

- Take control of my calendar by focusing on what matters most. Set expectations and empower others to do the same.
- Traction & Reflection - Never lose sight of the big picture. Write everything down because little wins add up. Celebrate the little wins.
- Create a communication & collaboration routine / cadence with execs, my team, my peers and my partners across the company.





"It takes confident humility to admit that we're in a **work in progress.**"

- Adam Grant

My Journey

# PROFESSIONAL ACTION PLAN

Current State	Gap	Ideal Future State	Action Plan	Progress	Outcome
<p>Today, I have earned a great amount of respect and influence, but am I using it effectively across the organization to drive progress and results?</p> <p>My curse-of-knowledge and drive for perfection creates complexity and confusion for my team, my peers and my partners across the company.</p> <p>As a result, I'm too far ahead in my thinking. I feel like I don't live in the now, that what we have now is good enough, thus I'm always "changing" which results in a lack of focus, ineffective communication and a failure to bring the right stakeholders along for the ride.</p>	<p>I feel overwhelmed, that everything is a priority, that expectations for me and my team are high and a sense of failing to meet expectations creates a false sense of self insecurity.</p> <p>I feel like I'm not pulled into conversations that I should be. I tend to wait to be invited versus being more proactive inserting myself into conversations. If I have something to say, be confident and say it.</p> <p>I feel like when I'm in the conversation, I oversell. I talk too much. I preach. I tend to rely on my curse of knowledge as a crutch to prove I'm worthy of being in the conversation.</p>	<p>I can trust my team more and delegate more to them by setting clear expectations and timelines. Provide them the journey to success, but don't prescribe a path to perfection.</p> <p>I can celebrate my team, my peers and my partners across the organization more - taking pride in our work and impact on the business on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis.</p> <p>I leverage my skill of taking what is perceived as complex and making it simple to understand, thus empowering my team, my peers and my partners be successful in their endeavors.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take control of my calendar by focusing on what matters most. Set expectations and empower others to do the same.</li> <li>2. Traction &amp; Reflection - Never lose sight of the big picture. Write everything down because little wins add up. Celebrate the little wins.</li> <li>3. Create a communication &amp; collaboration routine / cadence with execs, my team, my peers and my partners across the company.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing and it's working. I've been able to prioritize making time for me and my team.</li> <li>2. Started - but need to be more deliberate. Reflect after every meeting by standardizing on reflection questions and journal entries</li> <li>3. Started, room for improvement - Team meetings are a great place to start, but what about execs and partners across the company? Use 1:1s more effectively</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find the 40 hour work week. Find the self-family-work balance and always having something to look forward to.</li> <li>2. Write / Blog every week. Share my experiences, insights and knowledge embracing transparency and vulnerability.</li> <li>3. Use my influence to build my brand as a present, positive, passionate leader who always makes room to render and rally the best in others.</li> </ol>

My Journey

# PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

Now that I have a simple action plan rooted in 3 things, I could track progress and set weekly, quarterly and annual goals that give me Full Focus. There's one thing that Will caught as we built my gap analysis. It was all work. What about home? Like many of you, I struggle with balancing my work life, wellness and home life, so I went through the same gap analysis exercise.

Only this time, it was **personal**.





# FOUR

MY GAPS - PERSONAL



# MIND THE GAP

My Journey

## MY GAPS - PERSONAL

My current state was simple. There was **little balance**.

Today, my self-family-work balance is out of whack. If there are approximately 100 available hours in a given week, I currently spend: 10% on myself, 30% on family and friends, 60% hours on work.

Clearly, I need to find more balance, live in the now, embrace the present and not be defined by my work. I want to be remembered for much more than being a great leader at Code42. I could be an even greater partner, mentor, cheerleader at home for my family and my friends.

What was stopping me? What is stopping me is how I feel about myself. I feel my work defines me. It's what consumes my conversations with my wife, friends, and family. My daughters see me as a hard worker - "Dad is always working" - but is that what I want to be remembered for activating in them? Hell no. So my ideal future state is simple - celebrate my family, my friends, myself - making time to always have something to look forward to (get traction) and always celebrating those experiences (reflection).

I began to see how my professional ideal state and personal ideal state were almost mirror reflections of each other. It was all about taking and making time for myself and others and celebrating our collective successes.



My Journey

## MY GAPS - PERSONAL

My 3 things action plan for personal growth looked oddly similar to my 3 things for professional growth.

- Make room for self - physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually by finding the routine that works for me.
- Ramp up every morning and reflect everyday. Allow myself the time to reflect after every meeting, day, week, month, quarter. Celebrate the little wins everyday.
- Be more proactive in creating family & friends together time and things to look forward to.



*"People lose their way when they lose their why."*

*- Michael Hyatt*

My Journey

# PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Current State	Gap	Ideal Future State	Action Plan	Progress	Outcome
<p>Today, my self-family-work balance is out of whack. If there are approximately 100 available hours in a given week, I currently spend: 10% on myself, 30% on family and friends, 60% hours on work.</p> <p>I need to find more balance, live in the now, embrace the present and not be defined by my work.</p> <p>I want to be remembered for much more than being a product marketer.</p>	<p>I feel my work defines me. It's what consumes my conversations with my wife, friends, and family. My daughters see me as a hard worker - "Dad is always working"</p>	<p>I celebrate my family, my friends, myself - taking time to always have something to look forward to (traction) and always celebrating those experiences (reflection).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make room for self - physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually by finding the routine that works for me.</li> <li>2. Ramp up every morning and reflect everyday. Allow myself the time to reflect after every meeting, day, week, month, quarter. Celebrate the little wins everyday.</li> <li>3. Be more proactive in creating family &amp; friends together time and things to look forward to.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Started taking small steps to create my ideal day, my ideal routine that encompasses self, family and work.</li> <li>2. Making great progress. Already creating time to think and do. I feel like I am creating more traction and celebrating through reflection.</li> <li>3. Progress! I am much more conscious of how I spend my time, with who and on what.</li> </ol>	<p>Get here: 20% self . 40% family / friends. 40% teammates.</p> <p>Answering one simple question and living it.</p> <p>What do I want to be known for activating in my family, friends, team and peers?</p>



My Journey

# PERSONAL REFLECTION

Five months into my journey, it was time to reflect on where I was and where I'm today. Naturally, Will and I wrote it down.

What changed

Coming to the realization through coaching I'm much harder on myself than I need to be. I need to celebrate my success and the success of my team and I have found little ways to do that each and every day. Overall, I feel more present, positive and passionate about the work I do and the contributions of my team. I'm making time for what matters most and spending much less time worrying about the little things.

Will's feedback: Ways that Mark has changed/grown since living into his BetterUp Coaching journey is as follows:

- Modeling and encouraging healthy striving, empathy, and self compassion.
- Practicing gratitude and mindfulness in his day to day living
- Modeling clarity, kindness and hope \* Cultivating commitment and shared purpose
- Acknowledging, naming, and normalizing collective fear and uncertainty
- Cultivating a culture of belonging, inclusivity, and diverse perspectives
- Leading from the heart
- Creating and integrating a culture of accountability (Team and Self)
- Learning and integrating the power of appreciative inquiry/leadership.





My Journey

# CHECKING IN

What did I discover, learn, use and experience

I have all of the tools, I just need to better apply them. I took control of my calendar and my time and am making the most of the time I spend with my team. I feel I'm more confident and a better source of positivity for my team, peers, daughters and wife. I have made more positive and impactful connections inside and outside the organization. I'm more comfortable sharing my feelings, being more vulnerable and acknowledging the trust and respect I have earned over the years.

*Will's feedback:* Key learnings and achievement since Mark has started on his BetterUp Coaching journey is as follows:

- Continues to lead from the inside out
- Cultivating authenticity and vulnerability
- Continues to see the inherent positive potential in a person and or situation
- Continues to appropriately sense and express emotions, and listens compassionately
- Engages with his colleagues to co-create the future and awakening the creative spirit not only within himself, but with his team as well.
- Mark is engaging in daring leadership that is ultimately about serving others, not himself. which is why Mark chooses courage.
- Mark has been integrating deep personal growth and he lives into his life purpose
- Mark is recognizing that his life purpose is a choice to share his gifts, talents and positive attributes naturally and spontaneously, whether it is in his work environment or when Mark is creating a life for himself outside of the workplace.
- Mark continues to ignite, awaken, inspire, support, teach, guide and mentor individuals.



My Journey

# TRANSFORMATION

This journey has been eye opening, therapeutic, hard work - in a word - **transformational** - for me as a partner, coach, mentor, teammate.

My strongest skill: Authenticity. My greatest skill growth (ironically): Growth Mindset. I'm never done. My future direction requires me to continue to build my ideal routine and time for myself remains my biggest struggle. I love my work. My work is what drives me. How do I spend more time finding fulfillment in other activities that contribute to my well being? How do I find focus in what drives me?

*Will's feedback:* Mark's next stage in his professional and personal growth is as follows:

- To continue to give life to his whole team as he integrates curiosity and enthusiasm for life in sharing, caring, listening and loving.
- Mark continues to pay attention to what inspires individuals... asking his team mates, "Tell me about a time when you were at your best?" or "I don't know where this idea comes from, but what if we...or I have a creative idea that I need your help thinking through"... or "I would love to...", they are expressing their creative spirit.
- I see an inspired workplace humming with the sounds of creative collaboration, synergy, and the surprise of collective wisdom unfolding.
- I see Mark as he futures herself choosing to create a culture of positive inquiry, identifying strengths and core competencies, envisioning positive possibilities for the future
- Articulating a shared vision and being able to select strategic opportunities to focus on, which will all focus on leadership that brings out the best in everyone.

FIVE

MY GROWTH - TRACTION

My Journey

# MY GROWTH

What are my true strengths?

As my journey with Will came to a close, we did some more inflection and dusted off the Whole Person Strengths Report. Funny how the more things change, the more they change (and stay the same).

What I learned is that finding my true strengths was this journey.

At the beginning, I remember being jazzed about my five biggest strengths: Empowerment, Self-compassion, Authenticity, Rest, Purpose & Meaning. At present, I can honestly say that finding my true strengths feels more like me - I just didn't know it back then.



# MY TRUE STRENGTHS

1. **Authenticity** - I'm open and authentic with others. I express myself honestly and build trust and make others feel more comfortable opening up and expressing themselves. I make efforts to connect with others in an authentic way. I'm comfortable being vulnerable and transparent - showing my true feelings. I let others see their flaws as well as their strengths. I take this one very seriously. I'm a big believer in transparency and vulnerability and doing something that scares me everyday.
2. **Social Connection** - I value high-quality relationships and make an effort to invest in them allowing me to maintain strong connections with a supportive social circle. I make time for the important people in my life and surround myself with people I can depend on and seek out individuals who provide me support and encouragement.
3. **Empowerment** - I encourage others to take ownership by allowing them to decide how best to approach their work. I support others' decisions and motivate driven individuals who appreciate the latitude I give them to 'run with it'. I enable others to determine the best way to complete their job requirements. I allow autonomy so others can make decisions on their own. I structure work so that individuals have the flexibility to achieve in their own way.
4. **Strategic Planning** - I'm a planner and think strategically about where I want to be in the future. My ability to plan ahead helps me stay focused on what I want to achieve, identify pathways for success, and increase the likelihood that I will achieve your goals. I take time to reflect upon my ideal future, set clear goals for what I want to accomplish, and make plans for how to get from where I'm to where I want to be.
5. **Goal Attainment** - I value my goals and believe I have what it takes to achieve them. Having clear goals helps me stay focused, perform at a higher level, and increase the likelihood that I will achieve what I want in life. I'm confident that I can achieve the goals I set for myself by ensuring that I have the resources and support I need to be successful and select goals that are meaningful and important to me.





My Journey

# TRACTION

Reflecting on my newly discovered strengths, my personal and professional action plans, and the answer to one simple question - what do I want to be known for activating in others? - I discovered 3 things about myself that would shape my 3 words for this year.

- **I know what I need to do.** I need to continue to be true to myself. I can always think big, but know that I can start small. I do not need to boil the entire ocean when boiling one cup at a time is good enough. I need to be present and embrace the journey.
- **I know where I need to focus.** I need to redefine what I consider a win. A win does not have to be a 30 mile bike ride, when 10 miles is my best. I need to acknowledge my best is my best on any given day and be positive celebrating those little wins in life (and work).
- **I know why I need to do it.** I know my purpose as a father, husband, leader, mentor, partner...person is to affirm others' success and recognition is actually more important than my own. I always tell my team, "my job is to make you more marketable inside and outside this company." My purpose is to help the people I care about most grow and be recognized for their growth."

I get the most self-fulfillment and positive energy from this and I need to be passionate about it, hence this journey and memoir.



**NEXT**

MY 3 WORDS

My Journey

# MY 3 WORDS

At the very beginning of this journey, I shared my 3 words for 2021: Room, Render, Rally. I shared that over the course of 2021 and talking with Will, I began to wonder if I selected the right 3 words. You know what - I did at the time.

At the time, that was who I was, what was important to me, what I needed to do, where I needed to focus and why. What I love about Chris Brogan's My 3 Words is that every year you can create new lighthouses - new guides for where you invest your time, energy and talent - your strengths. Last year, I wanted to create more room, render more and rally my team, peers, partners to accomplish and succeed more than ever before.

This year is different. This year is about being more present, positive and passionate. It's about embracing each day as a step in the journey, celebrating the little wins that happen with each step and living my purpose never compromising my strengths nor my values.



My Journey

# MY 3 WORDS

Be Positive, Present, Passionate. Write it down.

**Be Positive:** Being positive is about embracing the opportunities that come with each imperfection, flaw, stumble and mistake. It's about the constant pursuit of better. It's not complaining about things that are wrong, instead welcoming the chance to make things right, to make things better and grow. Being positive manifests itself in the words we use, the emotions we evoke and the actions we take. To be positive takes discipline, practice, routine and support. Support from those we depend on to tell us when we're not and affirmation when we are. I can honestly say that I have not always been positive and it has a negative effect on those around me. I know this. I embrace it as an opportunity and I choose to pursue better and welcome the opportunity to grow.

**Be Present:** Being present is about putting the phone down, being in the moment, looking people in the eye. It's not multitasking during Zoom calls, or checking Instagram while your wife is talking, or worrying about that big presentation one week from now. Being present does not mean I ignore the future or stop thinking strategically or setting long term goals. It means seeing each day, each moment as a strategic step and as progress towards my goals. It's about trusting my vision, mission, purpose and promise and celebrating each opportunity, each step, each bit of progress that happens along the way.

**Be Passionate:** Being passionate is about embracing my strengths, what makes me unique and staying true to myself. It's not about second guessing myself, my influence or my contributions. It's about doing what I love, sharing what I experience and learn, and being authentic, transparent and yes, vulnerable when doing so. It's never being afraid to take risks, never fearing what others think or setting expectations for myself that do nothing but knock me down. I know what I want and why I want it. I know what I need to do to get there and I know where to focus. The only thing that can get in the way of being passionate is me.





My Journey

# GETTING TRACTION

So, that's my journey.

That's how I arrived at my 3 words.. I share this story because I'm a believer that in order to get traction on anything, inflection - looking inward - is the best place to start. I believe reflection is a habit that helps pave growth and development. And, I believe traction comes with what is discovered, learned, used and experienced and sharing it with others. What or how will you gain traction as you live into your life journey this year?

Please share because your story matters just as much as mine,

Woj

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Thank you.