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## Preface

The material in this book has been presented to high level executives as well as high school and college students and people in every stage of life in between over the last twelve years. It is a message of leadership that everyone can relate to in their own way because everyone has the opportunity to be a leader whether it's for a team of professionals or in their own lives.

*Decide* aims to help the reader lead toward improvement in their business and their life by making better decisions based on the real results they want to experience. *Decide* explores what drives us to do the things we do each day. It explains that the things we don't have to do at all matter the most in defining us as leaders and as individuals. It explains how to achieve balance in our lives through better decision making, rather than waiting for an employer to provide it for us. It presents the reader with a perspective on the different ways we create the energy we need to get through each day-- including accomplishments and procrastination-- and challenges the reader to make a choice on how to get theirs. It presents an understanding of the value of time from an opportunity cost perspective and how our understanding of that value determines how we will spend our lives. It offers valuable advice on prioritizing, planning, managing interruptions, and organizing to provide real life practical skills to apply in order to get more done in less time, reduce stress and complete the things we "have to" do so we can have more time for the things that make life worth living. And lastly it offers an explanation of how our decision-making habits shape our lives and relationships in the long run.

This project is the culmination of many years of content creation, idea development, live presentations, audience polling and brainstorming, researching and soul-searching on the topics of time management and personal leadership. I have spent many years in the talent development industry because I believe in its mission to help people think and reflect about their values, to take responsibility for their lives, to take a step back and recalibrate when new direction is needed, and to provide the framework within which people can evaluate their decisions, direction and vision of their future.

I also believe in the power of this industry to help businesses form vision, missions, common culture and meaningful purpose as well as the roadmaps to fulfill them. Employee development, as part of a company's mission, has been linked to happier employees, happier customers, and longer retention of both. These metrics improve not only the general wellness of an organization but also productivity and the bottom line. After my leadership programs, clients have reported results including increased engagement, improved retention and intensified corporate culture. Leadership is essential for companies to survive and thrive in a fast-changing world. I especially believe my definition of leadership *as improvement* is necessary in business and in life. Without constant improvement organizations begin to fall behind and die out. As individuals the same thing is true. Personal leadership, pursuing Gain and adhering to values, is what gets us out of the rut and allows us to grow and improve over time.

Leadership and progress take time, energy and commitment. But time continues to pass, whether you use it to accomplish something worthwhile or not. If your decisions about life and how you use

your time do not reflect an effort to make the future better than it is today then it won't be. Pursuing Gain, making proactive choices and considering the consequences of your actions or inactions on your employees, family, colleagues, friends, or children, define you as a leader because you are improving things and determining what the future can be rather than leaving it to chance.

My passion for cultivating leadership at all levels has driven me to develop this material and present it to thousands of people every year. After hearing people around the world tell stories about their leadership experiences, I can tell you that leaders really do make a difference. So I hope you decide to be a leader and to make a difference, and I hope this book will show you how.

If, after reading this book, you Decide and Commit to making improvements in your life and leading toward a more passionate, engaged future, then *Decide* has accomplished its purpose.

DRAFT

## Introduction

September 16<sup>th</sup> was always a great day during my childhood. Once per year, every year, for at least eighteen years, it was the only day I got to decide what I would eat for dinner. It was my birthday.

With twelve kids, a husband and various guests in the house every evening, my mother would had to have been crazy to take orders and try to satisfy everyone. So every day, she surveyed the pantry and made the decision herself regarding what everyone in the family would be eating that night. The only time this wasn't the case was on someone's birthday. Then the royal treatment was bestowed, and everyone had to eat *your* favorite that night. I remember what each person's favorite was and the look of pride and satisfaction on each one's face when it was served. I also remember the rarely successful negotiations my siblings and I undertook in trying to influence the birthday kid's choice. Everyone understood the value of the opportunity in front of them. No one was naïve enough to let that feeling of power and freedom of choice slip by for another year.

Lucky for us, the meals, though undemocratically chosen for us, were always enjoyable -- and always welcomed as something we didn't have to do for ourselves. The fact was there was a lot you had to do for yourself from a young age in a family this big. For the record, Mom was a fair-minded person and a believer in free will -- so for the 364 days per year on which the meal choice was not up to you, an alternative meal of cereal and milk was always available. You still had to sit at the table with everyone but your cereal bowl was the statement of individuality that would satisfy even the crankiest child among us.

Mom didn't make the choice as a reminder of who was in charge. She had constraints: time, budget, only two hands and one kitchen. Thankfully she didn't have to deal with any food allergies; but there was no shortage of strong opinions. Almost every night there was someone who chose the cereal.

When I anticipated going away to college, I was excited about my visions of the independence I would have living in a dorm. I knew there would be many choices available to me regarding schools, majors, how to use my time once I was there, and so on. But I had to laugh the first time I went to the campus cafeteria and found that there was a limited, predetermined menu every day, and there was a large cereal dispenser at the end of the tray line in case you didn't like what they were offering.

That rush of pride and freedom that came from the authority to make our own choice, our own decision, was a powerful feeling to experience. Even as children, we recognized the power of having choices. Obviously, as we mature, the process of making decisions moves from what we

once considered a cherished privilege to a significant responsibility. This usually happens as the consequences of those decisions become more serious and lasting. The bigger the decisions we make, the more the results begin to affect other people like our family or employees. Sooner or later, making decisions can even feel like a burden to the point where you sometimes just want someone else to tell you what to do or pursue next and how to get there... or at least just to decide what's for dinner.

While most of the decisions we make just result in a good meal choice or affect similarly insignificant matters, some have a significant impact on our lives. Do these things deserve equal amounts of time and attention? How do you decide how to prioritize them? Do you know where to start when it's time to make a crucial decision?

Let me ask you some other important questions: How do you feel about the big decisions you've made so far? What about the everyday choices that affect your daily life? Does your life feel balanced? Do you have enough time to get to the important things or are you always just running in place trying to keep up? Do you know how to prioritize and plan effectively to get more done in less time? Can making better decisions produce better results? Do you know how to progress from managing to leading? Are you fully engaged in your career and your goals? Do you find ways to improve your business and your life while still managing and maintaining the daily business of just *being you*? This book will show you that these things are not only possible, but indeed *they are necessary* in order to prevent burnout, maintain happiness, and become an effective leader in your business and in your life.

Chapter 1: Two Forms of Human Motivation

***“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” ~ Mark Twain***

What decisions or pursuits produce significant results in our lives -- and are we giving them enough time and attention? Which of the many things that we do each day actually move us forward, and which just keep us running in place?

According to popular psychology, we all have the same reasons for doing the hundreds of tasks that we do each day. Many psychology studies have agreed that we can divide all sources of human motivation into two categories: to move toward **Gain**, or **Prevent Pain**. Every time you’ve felt compelled to do *anything* -- from making a phone call, to getting up off the couch, to spending money, going to work, travelling, et cetera, you were either motivated to move toward something you want (Gain), or prevent the loss of something you have (Prevent Pain).

We can illustrate this concept in almost any part of your life -- health, money, career/work, even family and hobbies. Let’s look at your health first. Do you exercise regularly, take vitamins or medications, or see doctors for checkups or when you feel ill? Every time you’re motivated to do something about your health, it has either been to Gain in that category (get healthier than you are now, lose weight, lower cholesterol, tone muscles, heal injuries) or to Prevent Pain (prevent illness, weight gain, disease, muscle deterioration, and so forth). Sometimes you can have *both* motivations for doing something; for instance, you might exercise to lose weight *and* prevent heart disease.

How about money? Everyone has been motivated by money at some point in their lives. Are you trying to Gain in this category by getting a promotion and a raise, making a profitable investment, increasing your savings? Or are you trying to Prevent Pain – that is, keep from losing the money you have -- by buying insurance, clipping coupons, applying for a scholarship or grant, refinancing your mortgage or finding a cheaper place to live?

Then of course there’s food and eating. Sometimes you want to Gain a fine dining experience or try a new type of cuisine. Sometimes you are far too hungry or busy for that and just need to eat *something* to prevent hunger pains or headaches and be done with it so you can get back to work.

The “Gain versus Pain” question applies in business as well. Ask yourself: is the purpose of your weekly meeting to identify new target clients or figure out how to improve the process of taking new orders? Or do you use it to go over meeting protocols and talk about employee lateness,



or inventory status? Is it a Gain meeting that will move your business forward -- or a Prevent Pain meeting that will simply keep you from falling behind?

Consider any motivation you've recently had about your career. Has it been focused on Gain tasks that would benefit your career in the long term-- like pursuing an advanced degree, earning a professional certification, or closing a landmark deal that could put you in the running for a promotion? Or are you thinking more about how to avoid the next round of layoffs that may be coming, or what needs to be done to "meet expectations" on your next performance appraisal?

Either Gain or Prevent Pain pushes you towards completing every decision and activity you pursue. And while it could be a combination of both, one is always in the majority. You have 51% or more of one of these motivations driving you to do that specific task. The most important difference between the two is the results they produce.

**[Insert box]**

**Tasks that you are driven toward by Gain produce more significant positive results in your life and your business than tasks that you are driven toward by Prevent Pain.**

**[End box]**

You might immediately wonder why. When you are thinking about Gain and you are being motivated by Gain, you are focusing on something you *want*. You are figuring out how to produce a result that you *desire* in your life. You are not thinking about losing something or maintaining the status quo. You are working to move your life forward from where it is now, making it better than what it is today, considering how you *desire* your life to be -- and that's exciting! Gain gives you focus, a direction to head toward.

These aren't the thoughts that cross our mind as we do our everyday Prevent Pain tasks like paying bills and doing laundry. "Clean laundry" isn't something we *desire* out of life. When we do laundry we are Preventing the Pain of having no clean clothes to wear. Similarly, paying bills Prevents the Pain of having our electricity turned off or paying late fees on the credit cards. But focusing on a Gain is different. It pushes us to move toward something we *want*, that will make our lives better. And those results are much more significant to our lives than the results that Prevent Pain tasks produce.

Take a minute to think of something you'd love to do or achieve in life that you haven't already done. There is no right or wrong answer; this is uniquely you. Have you always dreamed of getting an MBA or PhD, finishing a marathon, learning a new language, writing a book, opening a business, starting a foundation or even restoring a vintage car? What about learning a new sport,

travelling to foreign countries or even researching your family tree? How about buying your first house or owning an income property or running for political office? Think of one thing that stands out among all the others. What would you most love to do in life that you haven't already done?

Now -- would you say that this goal or accomplishment is about moving toward something you want, or preventing the loss of something you have? For most people, it's about *Gain*. Few people, when asked to identify something they would love to do in life, talk about paying their electric bill or filing an expense report. ***When we think about things we want to accomplish in life, we are thinking about Gain.*** Consider what your life would be like if you accomplished that Gain task -- would it bring you pride, a sense of accomplishment, and happy memories? Would your life be better than it is today?

That's what Gain is about: improving life, and moving forward. It's about the experiences and accomplishments that you *want* to have as a part of your life.

### **Prevent Pain: I Have To Do It!**

Prevent Pain tasks simply prompt us to do what we "have to" do. There's that old saying that the only certainties in life are death and taxes. However, I'm sure if I asked you what you "have to" do today (or any day) in order to keep up, you would have a much longer list.

Everyone has responsibilities; some more than others based on our age, job, family, and so forth. There are many "have to" responsibilities that simply come with earning a paycheck; after all, your employer is paying you to take care of them. If you are in school, you "have to" study and take advantage of the opportunity to learn and prepare for your future. Things like home ownership, car ownership and even pet ownership come with big responsibilities. Parenting is in a category by itself when it comes to taking on responsibilities and all the "have to" tasks that come with it. Some responsibilities, like dealing with illness or injury, may have come to you without your consent; some you may have willingly signed up for; others may have come as an indirect result of your decisions.

No matter how many "have to" things are on your plate, you can always fill your day with them. There's always something to repair, maintain, clean, feed, keep up with, pay for, or care for. The reason that "have to" tasks go on and on is that they never actually go away; they just eventually repeat. You can't really cross "doing dishes" off your to do list, just move it to the bottom because by tomorrow night you will have to do it again. The same is true with checking email or stocking inventory. You don't cross it off; just move it down the list, because it's coming back again at some point. Tasks like putting gas in your car, doing laundry, and going grocery shopping all have to be

done over and over again because the things necessary to maintain your life are never finished. By always focusing on getting them done and Preventing Pain you don't end up with Gain, you just end up with no Pain and unfortunately no progress.

Prevent Pain tasks come with varying degrees of urgency. You have to complete some, like a certain assignment for work, according to deadlines. Others, such as housecleaning, have a bit more flexibility in terms of timeline; it's your responsibility to get them done sometime or deal with the consequences of failing to complete them. There is one thing that all "have to" tasks have in common, which is our definition of a "have to": A "have to" is any task or activity that, if you neglect it, someone else will eventually bring to your attention.

For instance – let's say someone is waiting for you to complete a task. If you don't do it, they will eventually catch you at the elevator, call you on the phone, send you an email, stop you in the hall, send a reminder in the mail, or come knocking on your door and say "*hey, did you ever get a chance to...?*" Whether it's a manager, colleague, client, family member, neighbor, roommate, bill collector or someone else —they'll want to know if you did what you were supposed to do. That is the nature of a "have to" or Prevent Pain task. The Pain that you should have Prevented will visit you eventually if you don't do it.

### **Do I Really "Have To"?**

Now when I say "have to", you may think, "*I don't 'have to' do anything; I am a free person!*" And sure -- the decision about whether or not to complete these tasks *is* technically up to you. However, if you decide *not* to do them, you will "have to" face the consequences of that decision. For example, if you decide you will not pay your rent or mortgage anymore, you will "have to" deal with the consequences of not being able to live in your home anymore and possibly not being able to get another one because of your destroyed credit. So you either "have to" pay it, or you "have to" deal with what happens if you don't. The consequences are the Pain you are Preventing when you complete a "have to" task.

While I doubt anyone wants to risk becoming homeless, some unfinished Prevent Pain tasks have less severe consequences that you may choose to accept instead of doing the task. For example: If your neighbor knocks on your door and says, "*Hey, did your yard become the Amazon? When are you going to mow it?*" You could respond in any number of ways including, "*Hey, thanks for bringing that to my attention, BUT I'M NOT DOING IT EVER AGAIN! It's my yard and I can do what I please with it!*" You have made your decision to ignore mowing the lawn from now on and not complete this "have to" task. But now the Pain that wasn't Prevented will start to roll in: your

yard looks overgrown and you can't use it for anything, your grass might die, and your relationship with your neighbors will suffer. If you let it go long enough, your kids or pets might even get lost out there! If you can live with these consequences then you might choose this course of action, but either way, mowing the lawn is a "have to" because you either "have to" do it or you "have to" deal with the consequences of not doing it.

This is how you can distinguish between Gain and Prevent Pain tasks. There is no "have to" with a Gain task, because there are no consequences if you choose not to pursue Gain in your life.

And yet it is the Gain tasks, the things that you *never* "have to" do, that will produce the most significant positive results in your life and in your business. It seems a little backwards, doesn't it? You would think that if something is required then you should be congratulated for getting it done. But that's not how it works. If you continue to do solely what is necessary to survive every day all you will accomplish is Preventing Pain from coming your way. In order to move your life or your business forward from where it is today and to see an improvement, you must do something extraordinary—something that you didn't "have to" do at all. You must pursue Gain.

This concept first came to me when I was about to graduate from college. I did very well in school, but I didn't have the highest grades in my graduating class. In addition to studying, taking tests and writing research papers, I played football and volunteered a lot of my time with various groups. In particular, I was a Big Brother to a great kid from the city since my freshman year. I always liked and was grateful for the fact that I had choices. Therefore, I thought a great way to spend my extra time would be to offer some positive choices to a kid who wouldn't otherwise have any. I spent a lot of time with him playing sports, going to movies and helping with his homework among other things.

Well, as graduation approached and I was scrambling to complete papers and exams like everyone else, I received a surprising call from the Graduation Committee. They chose me as the Valedictorian Speaker for graduation. The committee-- which was comprised of faculty, advisors and students—didn't choose me because of exam scores and academic prowess. They informed me that I had been chosen because of all the extra things I did while I was in college that I *didn't have to do*-- like being in the Big Brother program, serving on student government and hosting my own campus radio show. None of the stuff they mentioned was required for graduation.

At the time, that struck me as strange. There were some students in my class who had higher grades than I did, they were doing a better job at what was *required* to graduate—but they were not chosen for this high honor. Instead they chose me because of all the things I did that I *didn't* have to do at all! The more time I spent thinking about this, the more I began to understand. Everyone had to pass their classes in order to graduate and many students had high grades, but that wasn't good

enough to differentiate them. It was the Gain I pursued that separated me from my peers. The decisions I made regarding how to spend my time and energy is what built my identity. When those people on the committee thought of me they weren't asking, "*is he keeping up with what he has to do?*"; rather, they were asking, "*what is different about him? What choices did he make? What did he do that he didn't have to do?*"

This experience and this way of differentiating myself always stayed with me. It provided evidence of the power and the significant positive results that can come when we decide to do more than just what we "have to" do. These results can only come from Gain.

### **Attributes of a Gain Task**

If we examine the attributes of a Gain task, we can discern exactly which tasks we can label as "Gain" and which are "Prevent Pain". It will also help you figure out how you feel when you are doing each. (Hint: you'll soon see why one makes you feel *accomplished* while the other just makes you feel *busy*.) Once we identify these attributes, we can look at the results you get from spending time doing each kind of task. We can then consider if this difference in results should influence the decisions you make as to how to spend your time.

**1) A Gain task is *never urgent*.** Urgency is a great human motivator. Just *labeling* something as "urgent" makes people sit up and stress over what they may have missed and what is due right away. But when it comes to results, urgency alone can't deliver. It is not a great criterion for deciding what is most important or what will produce the most significant results in your life.

For example, you've already identified something that you would love to do in life that you haven't already done. Think about that particular Gain task. Is it necessary for you to get started on it *today*? What if you are really busy this week; can it wait until next week, or even next month? What if you went a whole year without doing anything about that Gain task? Would anything bad happen? No. A Gain task can *always wait*; there are no deadlines or reports due for it. You don't owe it to anyone. There are no consequences for not doing it. Your only motivation to do it is to improve your life in some way. It is never an urgent situation. Therefore – if you base your decisions on what to do with your time solely on what is urgent, you will not find yourself doing any Gain tasks -- and you won't experience the significant positive results that come from Gain.

You can't delay or ignore Prevent Pain tasks. For instance, how long can you go without food? People have made it 30-45 days in extreme circumstances without food. People have lived two to three days without water in extreme cases. The urgency of finding food and water, paying your

mortgage, turning in a proposal on time, and showing up for work is obvious. These things have deadlines and consequences if you don't do them.

**2) You don't "have to" complete a Gain task.** The second attribute for a Gain task is *you don't have to do it*. Motivation to complete a Gain task comes from the opportunity to gain improvement and results in your life -- not from fear of the consequences that may arise if you *don't* do it. No one will ever ask you about it or follow up on it. There's only one reason why you would do it; because you *want* to, not because you *have* to.

What happens if you *never* complete any Gain tasks? Well, nothing, really. If you don't ever do anything about a goal, no one will ever impose a fine or penalty on you; no one will ever ask why you didn't do it. Nothing bad will happen, but *nothing great will happen either*. You will not experience that Gain in your life. You won't move towards that goal or enjoy improvement. Your life will stay the same for as long as you let it.

You can go through a lifetime without ever doing anything about your Gain task. There are people who have lived a long, happy, full lifetime without ever accomplishing that particular goal. The reason to complete this goal is because you desire the results in your life which that task would bring. The difference between the Gain and the Prevent Pain tasks is the difference between "I want to" and "I have to", the difference between "don't have to" and "have to", and the difference between motivation from the desire for results and motivation by the fear of consequences.

If you achieved the Gain task that you identified, would it produce significant or insignificant results? And don't just think of "results" in terms of how much money you will make from it, how it will look on a resume, or what other people will think. Results are -- even more importantly -- how accomplishing or experiencing the Gain task makes you feel, and how it will enhance your life—the memories, feelings, progress, growth and improvement in your life are the results.

Completing a Gain task should produce *significant* results; otherwise, you wouldn't do it. If you are choosing to spend your time on something that you "don't have to" do, that you really *want* to do...you are working to enhance your life. Whether it's volunteering, developing a new skill, improving a process at work, or anything else that we "don't have to" do, *whenever we are motivated by Gain, we are thinking about the results our time and effort will bring us* -- in our lives, our relationships and in our business.

**3) You can't delegate a Gain task to anyone else.** The nature of a Gain goal or accomplishment means that *only you* can achieve the results you seek -- and *only you* can experience the satisfaction

and improvement that comes from them. You can't delegate your goals and dreams to another person.

We are all faced with the question of how to best spend our allotted 24 hours every day to get the most out of them. Every time you take on a task, you make a decision to spend the amount of time that the task will take. *And every time you do something that someone else could do for you, you are giving up the opportunity to pursue Gain.* Everything you hire or ask another person to do-- from having your shirts dry cleaned to hiring a lawn service cut to ordering pizza for dinner -- is delegation. Even when you buy clothes at a retail store, instead of making them yourself -- you are delegating! Almost every time you spend money you are delegating someone else to do something for you.

The question is -- are you delegating *enough*? If you're spending time completing Prevent Pain tasks that someone else could complete, you're missing out on chances to advance your business, relationships or life. You are giving up the chance to Gain when you do not delegate effectively.

There is much to consider when you decide to delegate. Is there someone who is more *available* than you are? Do *time and urgency* matter? Is someone else *more talented or more skilled* at a given task? Does *quality* matter? If it's a professional task: does someone else need to complete it for education or succession planning, to grow, learn or develop part of their job? How much will it cost your organization for you versus someone else to complete it? But the number one question to consider is: *what else could you be doing with your time if you weren't doing that task?* Most likely the answer would have something to do with pursuing Gain in some area of your life.

The result of a Gain task is achieving a sense of *leadership* in your life, your business or your relationships—and finding time for leadership is difficult without delegation. Have you ever wondered where you might find the time to think outside the box, to work *on* the systems as opposed to working *in* the systems, to *improve* the business rather than to *do* daily business, to develop strategies rather than to spin wheels and waste time doing things the old way?

[Insert Box]

***Delegation is where the time comes from for us to move things forward.***

[End Box]

What should you delegate that would give you more time to improve your expertise in a certain area? If you had more time what could you reach expert status doing? If you reached this expert status what new solutions could you come up with for your employer or your clients? The more valuable those solutions are, the more valuable you become.

Delegation is a necessary tool because limited time is the number one obstacle to learning, growing and pursuing goals. It is the key strategic skill that enables you to spend time moving your life forward versus staying where you are.

I learned this lesson several years ago when my business was taking off. The phone was ringing every day with presentation opportunities. It was a sign of a good economy as well as the good reputation that I had built with a few years of satisfied customers with word-of-mouth power. And it felt great! I had been “pounding the pavement” (so to speak), cold calling clients for the first few years -- and my efforts were finally paying off. In fact, I was getting so busy that I would respond to a voicemail asking about presentation dates with a quick email to confirm and just hope everything went well. I had no time for in depth contract discussions or long sales calls.

I was speaking or training four to five times per week, and customizing material, preparing hand-outs and making travel arrangements at night or on the weekends. Although I was excited about the business, the hours were killing me -- and I knew I needed help. The problem, of course, was carving out the time to find the right people to help me. I was scared to death to hire the wrong people and have employee issues on top of everything else. Months went by with little sleep and lots of stress. Not only did I need to delegate some of my responsibilities to someone; I also needed to delegate the task of finding the right person because I didn't have time to do it!

I finally reached my breaking point; then I came up with a simple plan and ran with it. It started with babysitters. My wife, who has an MBA in finance, was up to her eyeballs in daily work to do with four small kids at home. So the first step was to make quick call to my sister, who works at a local high school. She sent over several eager young students to our house every day after school to provide our children with supervision and fun from three to five pm (for no more than ten dollars per hour). This gave my wife two hours every day to do what I had no time to do: find our first employee. She attacked career websites for several weeks and came up with 400 resumes. She then researched these people on social media, looking for someone with the right profile for our business, the right personality fit for us, and the right skills to help us out. She weaned the crop down to about fifteen people and presented them to me.

I chose four resumes that looked like they were just what I needed. We interviewed each person -- and I hired one! We got our new executive assistant quickly up to speed on what we do and needed *her* to do. Within a few days, she was making travel arrangements for me and took over invoicing and website management.

My wife then started using the babysitter time to work on our business every day. I went from being a one man show to having an executive assistant and a part-time MBA consultant in the course



of a few weeks. We contracted with several more professionals along the way and I began to feel like a person again.

Just a few months earlier, my business had hit an unsustainable growth point. With the right delegation, we moved beyond it, made it sustainable and thrived. With the management of Prevent Pain tasks like travel arrangements, billing, and advertising taken off my plate I was free to actually think about where I wanted to go next with my business and spend more time in the Gain category.

*Managing* my business was taking all of my time; but my business was ready for *leadership*. Delegating gave me the time to provide that leadership and move my business forward.

### **Management vs. Leadership**

What is the difference between management and leadership -- and what does it have to do with Gain and Prevent Pain and managing your decisions?

As we've seen, Prevent Pain tasks keep your life or business *the way they are today*. Paying your mortgage, doing your laundry, showing up for work on time and handing in your reports on time are all about maintaining the status quo and keeping your life in the state it's currently in.

If you complete these and all other Prevent Pain tasks, you're doing a great job of *managing* your job and life without facing any consequences or falling behind on your responsibilities. Management is *maintenance* --keeping things the way they are today. If all you do is maintain for the next five years, what will your career and life look like half a decade from now? Pretty much the same as it does today. And perhaps that's not a bad thing for you. I'm not discounting the effectiveness of management. Having a well-managed life, business or relationship is something to be proud of. Good management is vital to your success in business and in life; but *it is not leadership*. If you want things to be better than they are today, you will need leadership.

If management is maintenance, then leadership is *improvement* -- moving things forward from where they are today and making them better. What will be different and better in your life five years from now? The answer to that question lies in whatever Gain tasks you decide to take on.

[Insert Box]

Management is keeping things the way they are today.

**Management = Maintenance**

Leadership is moving things forward from where they are today.

**Leadership = Improvement**

[End Box]

Are you deliberately determining where your life is going? Or are you just managing it and making sure you keep up with the minimum requirements of what you “have to” do each day to Prevent Pain?

We should be asking that question in business much more often than we are. I have met many people in business over the years who were supposed to be in leadership roles but who actually made things worse! They ran divisions out of profitability, drove companies out of business, cost their organizations millions of dollars and lost some of their largest customers. That’s not leadership; it’s *mismanagement* – which leads to decay, deterioration, and things getting worse. True leadership does not depend upon a title or position. Having a position of authority in a group *gives you the opportunity* to make decisions that improve or change things. But if things *don’t* get better as a result, then you are not a leader.

This turns leadership from a somewhat fuzzy concept into a *result* that you must produce. If you have made good decisions, identified Gain tasks and are moving toward those goals, then you are truly *leading yourself* toward a better life. If you have grown and developed your business, then you have proven your *leadership*, regardless of your title or position. True leadership doesn't require a title. If you want to be a leader all you have to do is *make things better*. And every member of a group can tell who is making things better, who is making things worse, and who is doing a great job of maintaining or managing things. Anyone who is improving things is a leader. Changes in economies, technologies, trends, cycles, and employee landscapes require changes in thinking and improving the way things are done. Leaders have the guts to put forth changes and new ideas for the future of the organization.

This definition of leadership means that *anyone* in an organization can be a leader as long as they are focused on the betterment of the organization. But it also begs the question –

[Insert box]

**Who in *your life* can be a leader except *you*?**

[End box]

Doing what we “have to” do each day to maintain our lives is *management*. This is not what defines us as individuals; rather, it is what makes us *the same* as everyone else. *Personal leadership* is doing what we “don’t have to” do to lead ourselves forward and grow each day. This is where we get our self-identity, and what differentiates us from others. If we don’t get our identity from Gain

tasks, then we're left to determine it based on how we compare to other people. And this is a breeding ground for negativity, mistrust, jealousy and depression as well superiority or inferiority thinking. We must continuously adapt, grow and improve in order to lead ourselves forward as things around us change – and in order to avoid getting stuck in a rut. And the way to do that is through personal leadership, or Gain – which we will talk more about in the next chapter.

### **The One and Only Exercise I Will Ask You To Do In This Book...Brainstorm!**

Before we move on, I want you to think a little more about Gain for a few minutes. What are the Gain tasks or pursuits that would move your life forward? What would make your life better? Throughout this book, we will be exploring how your decisions about how you spend your time result in the quality of life that you experience -- and how that experience could be better if you insert more Gain into your life. We will also explore how to better manage all your daily tasks while improving your life at the same time.

In order to prepare for that, take five or ten minutes and brainstorm a list of Gain pursuits that, if accomplished, would make your life better than it is today -- regardless of how long it would take to accomplish them - and *write them down*. Consider professional and personal goals, long term and short term. Think about your career, family life, relationships, home, health, travels, hobbies, interests, finances, community, circle of friends, neighborhood, and on and on. You want these to be things that you would love to do or experience in life that you haven't already. The more you can imagine, the better.

Remember -- thinking about all the ways that your life could improve doesn't mean you are dissatisfied with where you are now. It just means that you're considering ways to improve and move, what you want for your life and what would make things better. Spend a few minutes thinking about what your life would be like if you accomplished one or two or *all* of those improvements.

Your goals, or Gain tasks, may be as diverse as going to law school and climbing a mountain, getting a promotion and planting a garden, opening your own business and learning a new language, adopting a child and painting copies of famous Impressionist art. But whatever you put on it, *keep your list*. You may want to refer or add to it as you make your way through this book and envision what Gain can do for you.