

Learn to Work Differently

Owning Your Experience

Taking responsibility for your results at work, and in your life



The Salesforce Ignite team is a passionate group of professionals who have been working differently (and loving it!) for years. We come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, but share a common love of creating new products and services that bring new value into the world. We're excited to work with you and your team to help you start working differently today.

Owning Your Experience was developed through years of experimentation, using various models to help us work differently. Special thanks to The Conscious Leadership Group for much of our inspiration.

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**I'M MY
OWN
WORST
ENEMY.**

How many times have you heard the phrase, "I'm my own worst enemy"?

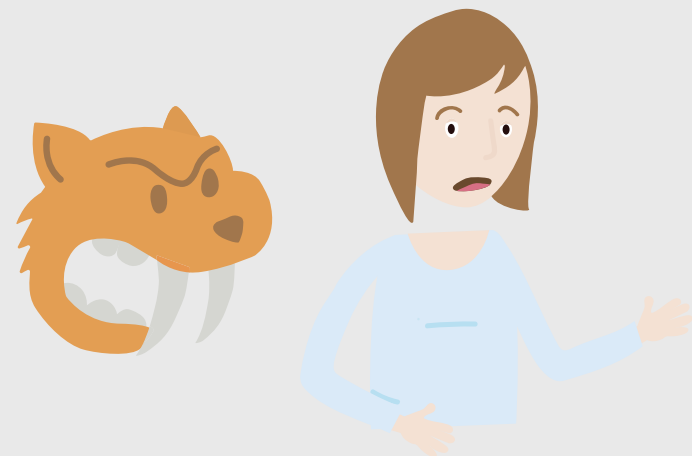
In the world of innovation this is true for most of us.

Bringing something uniquely valuable into the world is hard, and innovators often fuel their work with self-created pressure. Whether it's an inner critic telling us our work isn't good enough, we have concern for how others are perceiving us, or simply have a basic fear of failing, these pressures give us the juice we need to get things done.

However, while this internal drive helps push us across the finish line, it often comes at a cost. Team collaboration can suffer, and even the best in the game can burn out. And unfortunately, too much internal tension can diminish our ability to maximize our creativity.

This guide was written to help innovators get out of their own way. The following pages include a framework with simple activities to help you maximize your creative potential as well as your happiness at work.

REAL DANGER, OR IS IT?



We're hardwired to create tension and stress.

Humans have evolved as skilled survivors over thousands of years. In doing so, we've developed autonomous behavior patterns and continually scan our environment looking for threats. However, our brains are horrible at differentiating between threats to our physical safety and threats to our ego.

Have you ever experienced sweaty palms, shallow breathing, and an elevated heart rate before presenting to an audience? That's your brain saying "Run for safety!!!" when the only danger is getting some strange looks from your audience.

Aside from fight or flight physiological responses, many of our decisions and behaviors are impacted when we sense a threat to our ego's survival. More specifically, we're influenced when we sense a threat to three primary desires:

1. Security
2. Control
3. Approval

Some common behaviors most of us fall prey to include: blaming, avoiding conflict, gossiping, getting overwhelmed, convincing others you're right, and numbing out our pain with food, media and other distractions.

Regardless of which fear-based behaviors are common for you, all of them can get in the way of innovation.

MIND OVER MATTER



SAFE STATE

NEOCORTEX

CREATIVITY
PROBLEM SOLVING
INNOVATION

THREATENED STATE

AMYGDALA

HYPER-FOCUS
REACTIVITY
FIGHT OR FLIGHT

We sacrifice our creative potential when we're in a threatened state.

When in an anxious or threatened state, our amygdala (feeling brain) bypasses our neocortex (thinking brain) and we lose our ability for expansive thinking and creativity. Ultimately this can result in sub-optimal work, lost time, and wasted money.

While research shows that a moderate amount of arousal can lead to motivation, feeling present and safe helps us optimize our creative potential. Being in a state of safety is especially important for teams trying to bring something new into the world through design thinking and innovation practices.



Moving from
a threatened
state to a safe
state is a choice.
We call this
Owning Your
Experience.



Owning Your Experience is a four-part process.

So if our brains are wired to keep us in a threatened state, what can we do to eliminate our stress and tension? Well, short of brain surgery, there aren't many options. And we wouldn't want to eliminate this part of our brains anyway. It helps us survive! The idea isn't to eliminate this natural reaction but to recognize when it is occurring and shift back to a safe state.

We've found that a simple four-part process can help us do just that. This is the essence of "Owning Your Experience."

- 01 LOCATE**
Determine if you're in a threatened state or a safe state at any given moment.
- 02 INQUIRE**
Get curious about how you've landed exactly where you are.
- 03 ACCEPT**
Appreciate yourself for having gotten exactly where you are.
- 04 SHIFT**
Take a step to move back to safety.

Locating yourself

Identifying “where you are now” is the first step to shift from a threatened state back to safety.

STEP 01

Take a moment to scan the list of behaviors and thoughts below. Now identify which of them are showing up for you around a particular issue you're facing.

STEP 02

If you're experiencing any behaviors or thoughts from below the line, then that's where you are: below the line! In our experience just simply acknowledging we're below the line can help break us out of our threatened state.

01

LOCATE

At any given moment each of us is either in a safe state or in a threatened state. Using a simple model to make this theory tangible, we can say at any moment each of us is either “above the line” or “below the line.” Effective innovators recognize when they're below the line and “shift” back above. Ineffective innovators stay below the line and recycle their tension.

SAFE STATE

–
Curious
Driven by vision
Learning focused
Open
Present

BEHAVIORS

- Listening attentively
- Maintaining curiosity
- Recognizing feelings
- Speaking unarguably
- Differentiating between facts and stories
- Questioning beliefs
- Playing
- Finding appreciation
- Breathing easefully

THOUGHTS

- What can I learn from this?
- How can the opposite of my story be true?
- I appreciate you for...
- I choose to...
- How are they my ally?
- How can everyone win?
- I'm lacking nothing.
- This doesn't need to be serious.
- Revealing is better than withholding.

SAFE STATE ABOVE THE LINE

THREATENED STATE BELOW THE LINE

THREATENED STATE

–
Defensive
Driven by fear
Focused on proving you're right
Closed
Distracted

BEHAVIORS

- Blaming
- Arguing
- Clinging to an opinion
- Gossiping
- Getting overwhelmed
- Distracting (food, media, etc.)
- Avoiding conflict
- Convincing others you're right

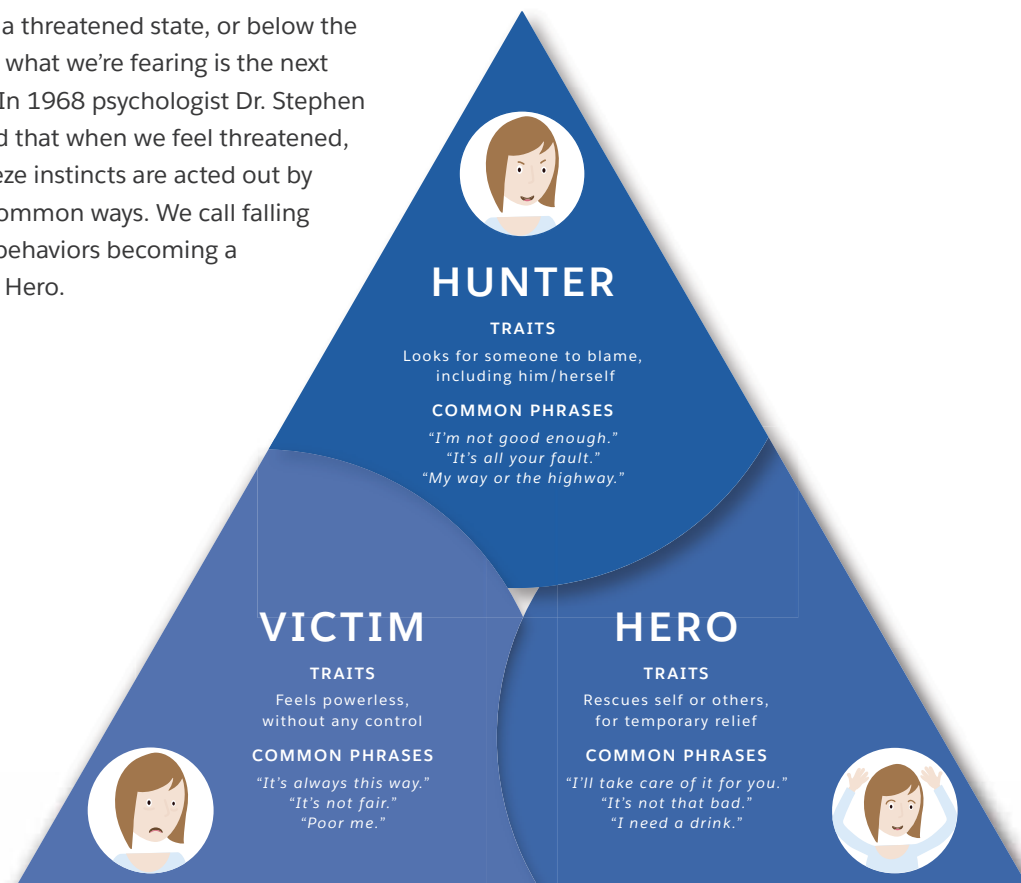
THOUGHTS

- There is a threat here.
- I don't have control.
- It's not my fault.
- I should... I have to...
- There are only two options.
- There is a right and wrong.
- I have no choice.
- There isn't enough.
- This is serious.
- They don't get it.

02

INQUIRE

If we know we're in a threatened state, or below the line, understanding what we're fearing is the next step in releasing it. In 1968 psychologist Dr. Stephen Karpman concluded that when we feel threatened, our fight, flight, freeze instincts are acted out by behaving in three common ways. We call falling into these primary behaviors becoming a Victim, Hunter, and Hero.



Walking the threat triangle

STEP 01

Find a room with some space and place three cards or sticky notes on the floor (one for each role: Victim, Hunter, Hero).

STEP 02

Take two minutes to walk from card to card, and act out how you're playing each role around your issue. Ham it up! Get as dramatic and over-the-top as you can. Rather than talking about how you are a Victim,

Hunter, and Hero, speak as the role itself. The more you amplify how you're acting, the clearer it will become how you're creating your issue.

STEP 03

At the end of your two minutes, reflect on your pattern for moving from one role to the next. What did you learn? What do you see differently about your issue now?

Note: If space is limited, this process can be done by typing or journaling.



03

ACCEPT

Once we have clarity as to how we've reacted to the threat, the next step is to find a way to accept ourselves for creating it.

While it's easy to judge the tension in our lives as "bad," there's always a good reason why we created it. If you take a look, you'll see that all of our reactive behavior stems from a part of ourselves just trying to protect our security, control, or approval. And there are lots of benefits of being below the line! It feels good to think "I'm right." People also report that they can get things done when they're playing a Hunter. So the third step to Owing Your Experience is to identify what we're getting from being below the line and find a way to accept ourselves for creating it. If we beat ourselves up for being below the line, it usually just drags us deeper into the muck.

Identifying the benefits of being below the line

We wouldn't get stuck below the line if we didn't get any benefits from being there. Understanding the upside for doing what we're doing can help us build empathy for the threatened parts of ourselves that are just trying to keep us safe.

STEP 01

Take a moment to consider how being in a threatened state is working in your favor.

I get to avoid my core feelings, especially fear, sadness, and anger.

I get to stay connected with the people in my situation.

I get to feel the excitement and adrenaline.

I get to stay in this predictable pattern and avoid uncertainty of different choices.

It makes life interesting and will result in a fun story to tell.

I get to focus on someone else's problems and avoid my own.

I get to avoid taking responsibility for my issues.

I get to be right about something.

STEP 02

Next, write down all of the other reasons you might benefit from creating this situation.

03

ACCEPT



Letter to self

When we're below the line, a threatened part of our self is driving the bus. One common part that shows up for most of us is our inner critic. Striving for perfection, this part often gets caught up in thoughts and assumptions that likely aren't true.

Helping our threatened parts understand there is no real danger allows them to loosen their grip and relax.

STEP 01

Take a minute to check in with the part of yourself that feels threatened.

STEP 02

Write a short letter to him or her.

Consider these prompts:

What words of support might that part want to hear?

What might help that part feel a greater sense of safety and security?

What's really true? What stories or assumptions are driving this part that may be hard to recognize?

STEP 03

Ask yourself, "Am I willing to accept there is just a scared part of me that feels threatened?"

If your answer is no, take a minute to find something about this situation that you are willing to accept.

04

SHIFT

Often times gaining self-awareness and acceptance is all it takes to shift from below the line to above. Sometimes a simple breathing exercise can do the trick. However, to make larger shifts around recurring patterns, the dissatisfaction of staying below the line must outweigh the resistance to change.

In Kathleen Dannemiller's 1992 *Formula For Change*, change can only happen when Dissatisfaction x Vision + Knowledge of a First Step exceeds Resistance to Change.

For most of us, creating a new vision for what's possible is easier than fully feeling the dissatisfaction of where we are now. Not fully taking responsibility for our dissatisfaction is what prevents us from making big shifts.

The next activity will move you closer towards making large shifts by helping you connect with the dissatisfaction of staying below the line.

$$C = (D \times V + FS) > R$$

CHANGE DISSATISFACTION VISION FIRST STEP RESISTANCE

Claiming your unconscious commitments

The key to embracing your dissatisfaction with your current state is to take responsibility for creating it. Innovators with high emotional intelligence ask themselves,

What am I REALLY committed to?

Rather than answering with what they want, they answer the question by highlighting the results they are actually achieving. For example: *"I'm committed to being anxious around my manager and living a life of exhaustion."*

As you begin to play with this concept don't blame and shame yourself! The idea is simply to recognize the part of yourself that feels some threat to security, approval, or control. Then from a place of acceptance you can see if the dissatisfaction you're experiencing outweighs the resistance to doing something different.

STEP 01

Write down the core complaint of an issue that is keeping you below the line.

STEP 02

In front of the issue, write **"I'm committed to..."**

Examples:

"I'm committed to not getting promoted."

"I'm committed to living a life of exhaustion."

"I'm committed to doing work that is unfulfilling."

STEP 03

Write a list of all the ways you create those results.

What do you do or not do?

What is the exact sequence of steps you take?

What thoughts or beliefs do you hold on to?

STEP 04

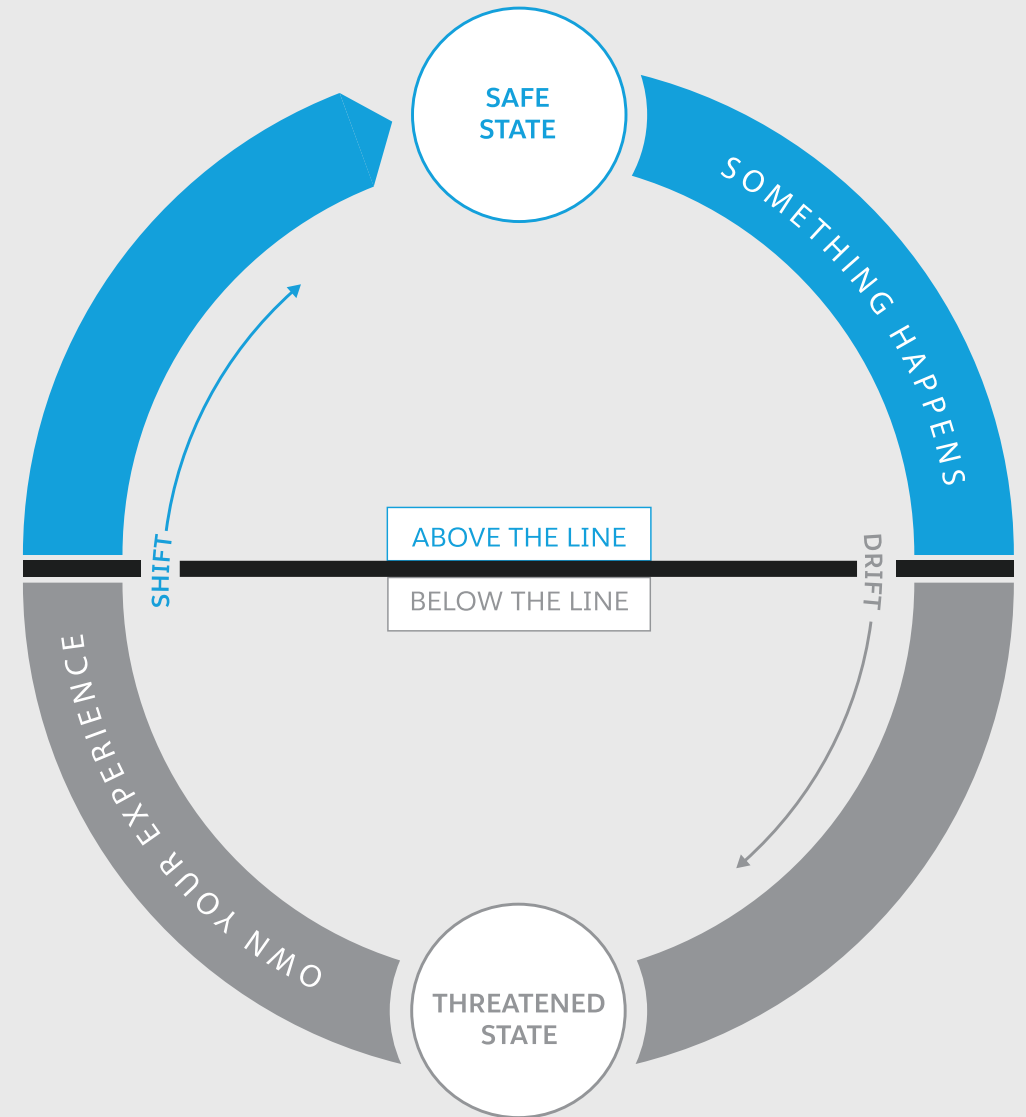
Tell three people you trust what you're unconsciously committed to.

Each of us has the power to recognize when we're below the line and shift.

Owning Your Experience is a simple four-part process.

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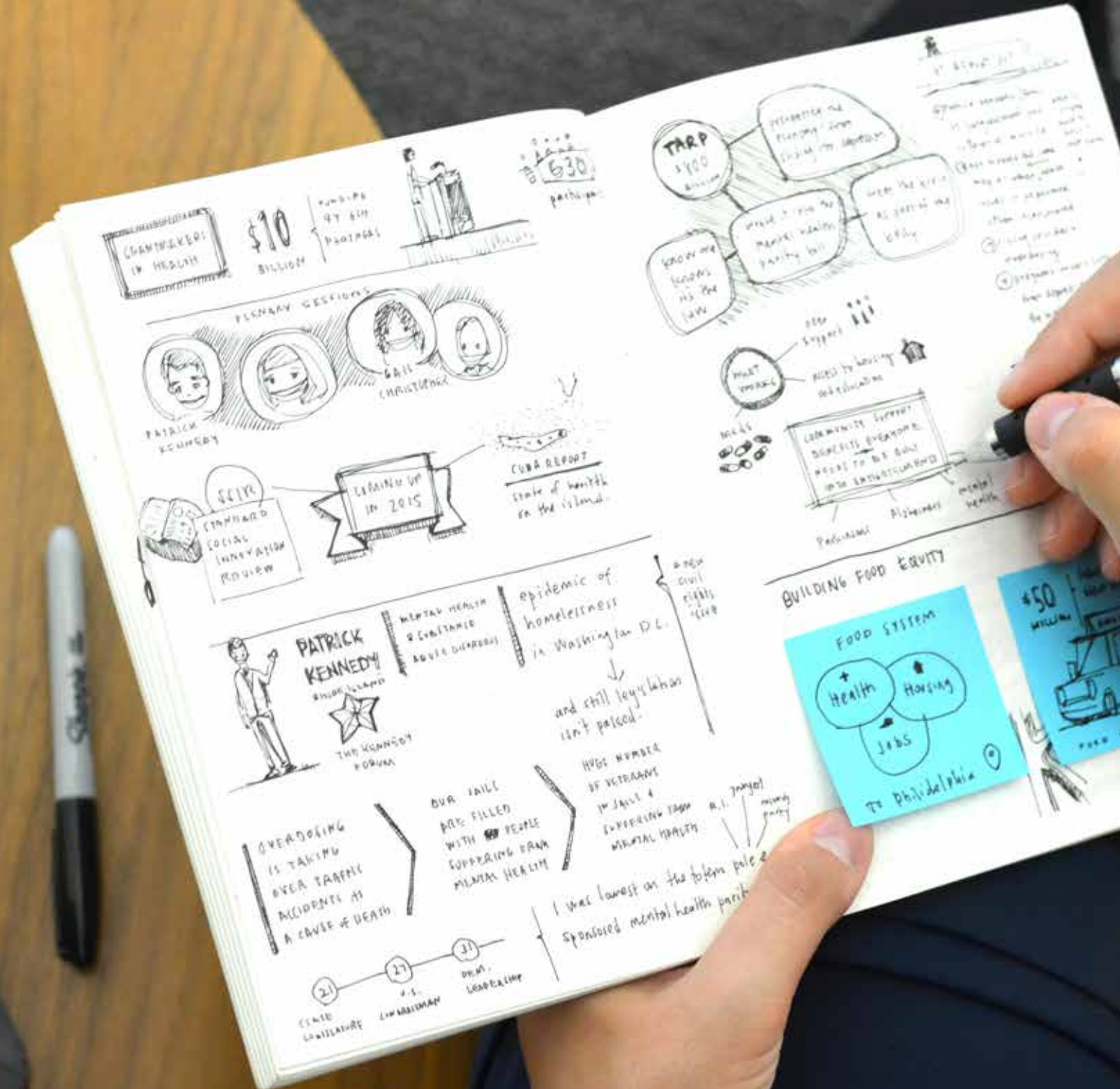
OWNING YOUR EXPERIENCE



Inspired by The Hendricks Institute

Quick Shift Moves

There are many ways to shift back to presence from below the line. Here are a few that require only a few minutes of time and can be done just about anywhere.





4 x 4 x 4 x 4 breathing

When we're in a threatened state, our breathing shallows, and the oxygen level in our blood drops. Resetting our blood chemistry is the quickest way to move out of a reactive fight or flight state and back above the line to safety.

4 X 4 X 4 X 4

FIND A SPACE

Find a space where you'll be comfortable closing your eyes and sitting silently. This can be a conference room, your desk, a bench outside, or any other place.

BREATHE, HOLD, EXHALE

Breathe in slowly for four seconds (through either your nose or mouth).
Hold for four seconds.
Exhale for four seconds.
Stay still with empty lungs for four seconds.

REPEAT

Repeat for two minutes or until you feel a shift back to presence.



Debunk your story

Human beings are wired to create stories and interpretations of what's going on around us.

This autonomic process helps us avoid danger. The problem, however, is that we're often wrong, which commonly creates all kinds of unnecessary stress and tension in our lives.

Exploring how the opposite of our stories is true is a speedy method for releasing their grip.

Is it REALLY true?

STEP 01

Identify the negative story, belief, or assumption that is creating tension.

i.e. "Our customer thinks I'm not smart enough to lead this engagement."

STEP 02

Ponder the question: How might the **OPPOSITE** of the story I'm making up about this situation be as true or truer?

i.e. "How might our customer think I'm more than smart enough to lead this engagement?"

STEP 03

Find at least three reasons why, and write them down.

STEP 04

Identify additional stories, beliefs, or assumptions, and repeat steps 1-3 until you feel a shift back above the line.



Finding the gift in front of you

For most of us, it's easy to get stuck focusing on what's "wrong" with any given situation. It's also easy to get stuck fantasizing about what "should have" occurred.

"Our customer should have bought what we were selling!"

"I should have gotten a promotion!"

"My teammate should stop being so inconsiderate!"

What's really true is that your customer didn't buy what you were selling, you didn't get a promotion, and your teammate is doing whatever she's doing. AND, here you are!

With embracing what's actually true comes an opportunity to shift back above the line. Every event at work, and in life, comes with learnings if you choose to see them.

To shift back to above the line, answer the following questions:

What can I learn from this situation?

How might what happened be absolutely perfect?

What's the real gift this situation has to offer me?

Body listening

Most innovators are good at “figuring things out.” While most of that puzzle solving happens in our heads, often our bodies have all the answers. If your brain falls short, take a moment and see what wisdom your body has for you.

STEP 01

Scan your body looking for any sensation.

STEP 02

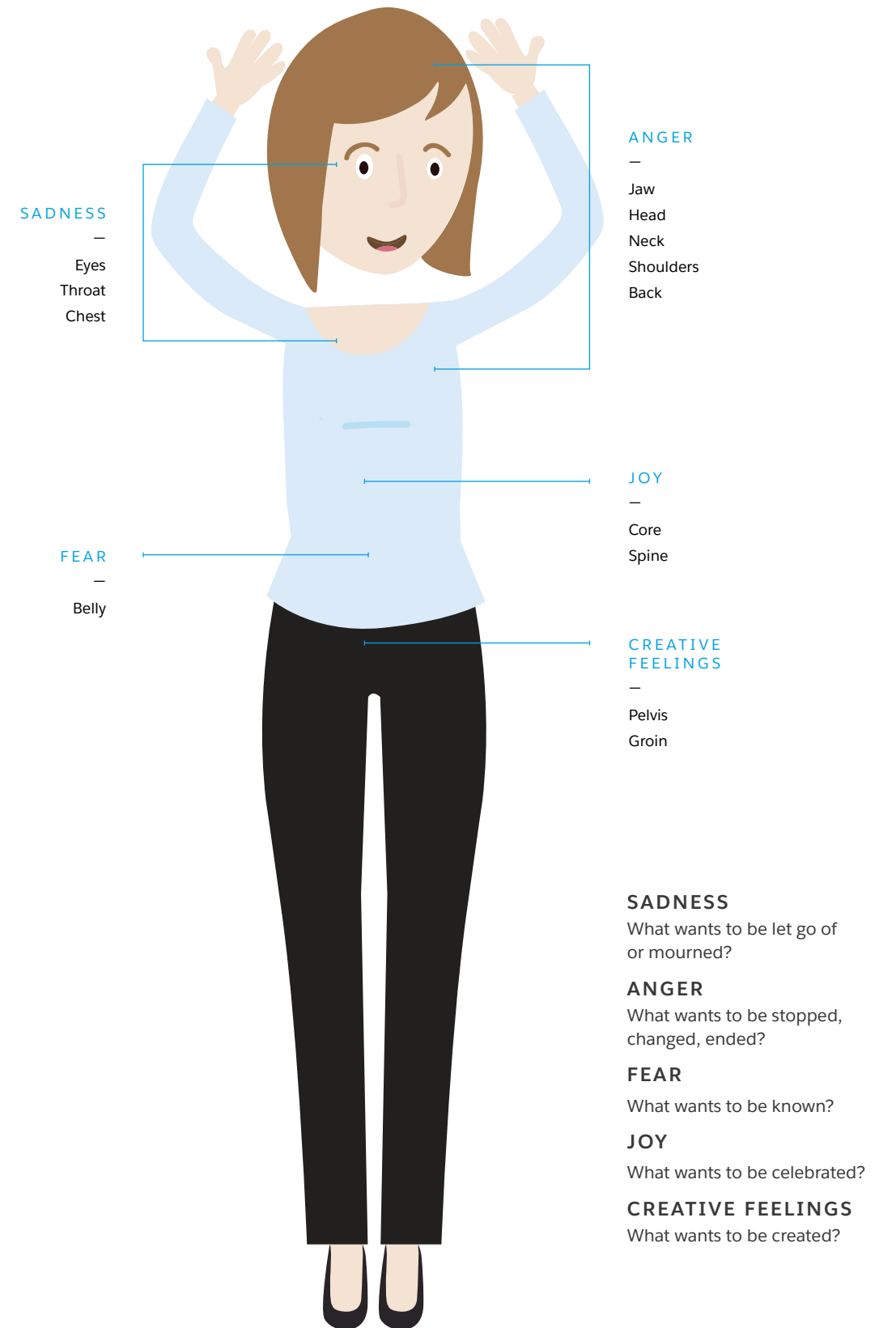
Describe each sensation you notice using words that end with “ing” (aching, pulling, tingling, etc.).

STEP 03

Map your physical sensations to a feeling state (sadness, anger, fear, joy, creative feelings).

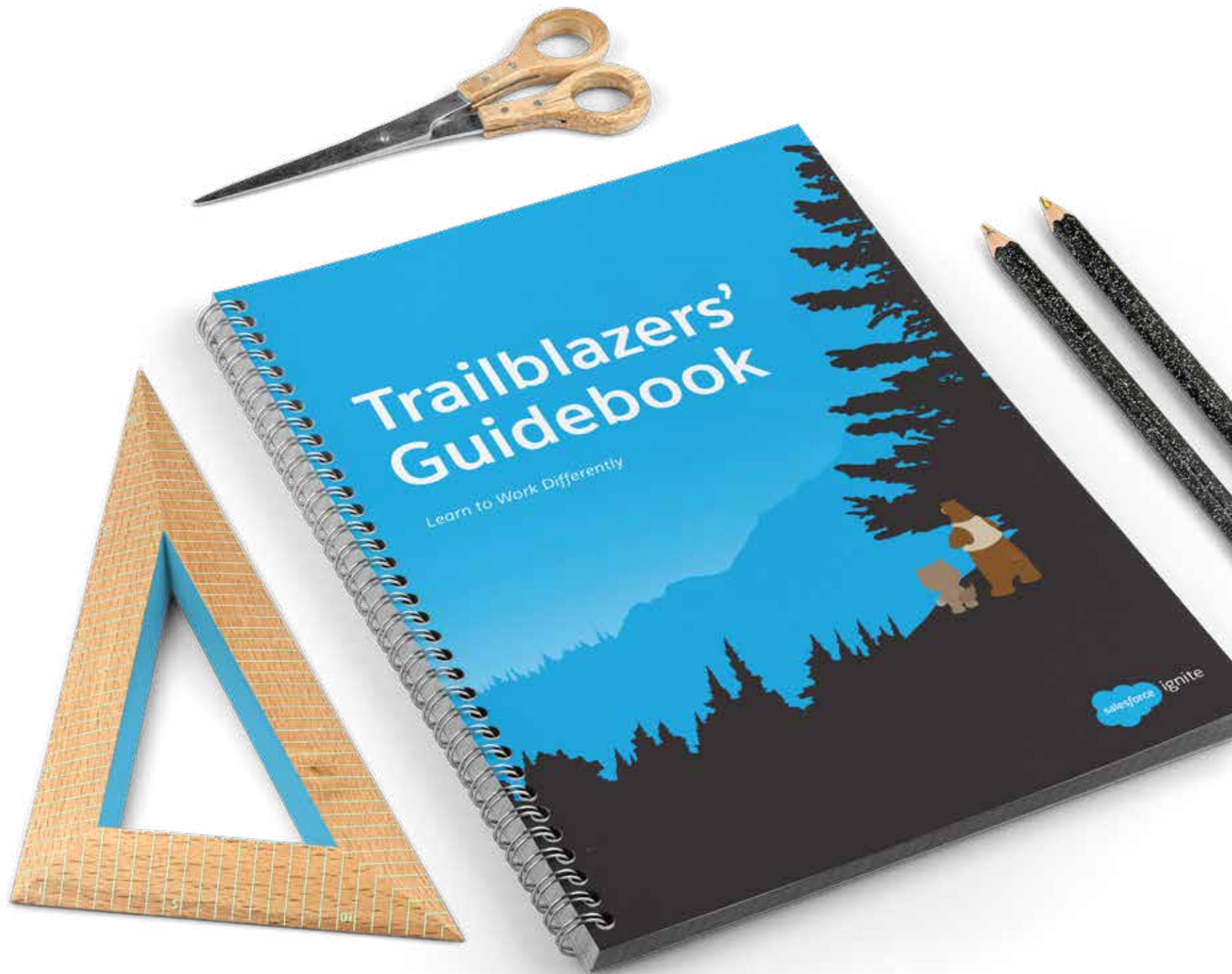
STEP 4

Using the questions to the right, ask what is trying to happen within yourself.



Find additional resources to help you work differently at:

salesforce.com/workdifferently





salesforce.com/workdifferently