

- // How do you clarify what success means for you?
- // How do you lay rock-solid foundations for success?
- // How do you raise your impact in face of challenges?
- // How do you handle setbacks and grow stronger as a consequence?

Success in any sphere is built from the ground up. Only with robust fundamentals and values and by laying one course of bricks at a time can we reach for the sky.

The 100 ideas in this book show you how to build success in all areas of your life – from work and family to the wider community. Learn how to balance priorities well, understand the drivers of your ambition, address what might be holding you back, generate forward momentum, handle setbacks, build your reputation, balance the short term and the long term, sustain positive results, grow team success, and engage with future possibilities.

100 Great Building Success Ideas provides a wealth of prompts to enable you to identify what success means for you, and to put in place the essential building blocks of lasting personal and professional fulfilment.

DR PETER SHAW is a founding partner of Praesta Partners and works with individuals, teams and groups across six continents to help them grow their strengths and tackle demanding issues confidently. He has held a wide range of board posts covering finance, personnel, policy, communications and delivery, and worked in five UK Government departments. He is a Visiting Professor at Newcastle University Business School, the University of Chester Business Faculty, and St John's College, University of Durham, and teaches at Regent College, Vancouver. He is the author of 22 influential books on leadership.

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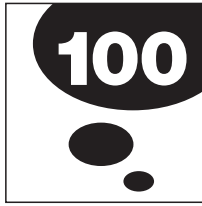


from leading organisations
around the world

Dr Peter Shaw



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GREAT BUILDING SUCCESS IDEAS

Dr Peter Shaw

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This book is dedicated to Professor Gerald Blake,
an outstanding geographer who taught at Durham University.
He has been a key influence on me at moments of decision,
always combining clarity of thinking and
calmness of approach.

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In writing this book I have drawn from my first career working in the public sector for 32 years and then a second career working in the private sector for 13 years, alongside a variety of roles within the voluntary sector. It has been a privilege to draw from the experience of working with leaders across six continents in a wide range of settings. I am indebted to a range of people for sharing ideas about what success has meant or not meant for them.

Most of the manuscript was written in a wooden hut at the end of our garden in Godalming, away from the distractions of the computer and the telephone. Some chapters were written in Bowness, overlooking Lake Windermere, and in Ayrshire, looking towards the hills of Arran.

Frances, my wife, has been hugely supportive. I am indebted to her and our three children and their spouses, who regularly tease me

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and bring me firmly back to earth. I am indebted to my mother, who was widowed when I was seven. She taught me that success is always about enabling others to overcome their own inner obstacles and living contentedly and calmly with whatever happens to you.

I am grateful to you, the reader, for the time you are committing to dip into the ideas in the book. I hope they give you some useful pointers about what success might mean or not mean for you going forward.

FOREWORD

BUILDING SUCCESS, like building anything else, takes time, energy, patience and commitment. It is a team activity too, and I have always liked collaborations that aim for mutual success. This book is full of fantastic examples of how to build success. I thought I would open it with some reflections on the essential ingredients for success and how we can put values into effect.

I am delighted to see Peter turning his attention to one of the big themes of the moment. He has built success throughout his civil service career, and more recently as a leading coach and thinker he has helped many leaders to do the same.

Over the last 20 years I've learnt a lot about leadership – more often from the things that didn't go so well. I have concluded that in the end it's about creating the right environment for others to give their best. It's about giving broad direction and supporting people to get there, particularly when the going is tough.

I have seen plenty of examples of things that have gone well, and plenty that haven't. There's no magic formula, but the common features of success are threefold.

Firstly, leaders who are authentic do not hide behind job titles, structures or governance. The most successful leaders are the ones who take the time to understand and connect with the people they work with, and who are not afraid to show uncertainty or vulnerability. They adopt a holistic approach, always try to see the whole picture, and are not afraid to ask when they don't know.

Secondly, it is essential to have the right people behaving in the right way involved in a team endeavour. The most successful people will

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always invest in and nurture their team. Creating real success means allowing others to succeed too. It's really not necessary to try to prove that you are the smartest person in the room. The real skill is to let others shine and achieve their potential.

Thirdly, leaders who manage to sustain success are usually comfortable in their own skin. They know what drives them and what holds them back. Great leaders find ways of building personal and organisational resilience. There is a synergy between their personal and professional values, and a hinterland of wider interests which enables them to keep a balanced perspective. A successful life is about more than just success at work.

One of my personal passions is creating the conditions for success in an organisation. A lot of this centres on developing a culture that is positive and outward-looking, and on making sure that line management is first-rate. I think everyone realises that a line manager can make all the difference in someone's experience of an organisation.

I also want to leave behind the outdated concepts of a fixed workplace and fixed working patterns. In organisations I play a part in, I want flexible working with technology that supports it as a basic part of everyone's job.

Fairness is also of great importance to me. No organisation can hope to succeed if it does not embrace and promote diversity and inclusion. Fairness extends to performance management and demonstrable equal treatment. All of these things play a part in creating successful organisations, but what matters most is trust and common purpose. If you have these then you are well on the way to building success.

Those of you reading this book will be from a wide range of organisations in different countries. There will be lots of differences, but something that unites all organisations is that good leadership builds

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success. I hope you enjoy the book. Peter has collected some great ideas about building success which I hope will inspire you to come up with, and put into practice, some of your own.

Matthew Coats
Director General
Ministry of Justice
London

INTRODUCTION

WHEN WALKING RECENTLY along the River Ayr Way I was hoping to see an occasional kingfisher. Suddenly I spotted a hint of blue on a rock in the river. I knew for certain that it was a kingfisher when the elegant bird flew down the river with its blue plumage reflecting in the sunlight. Seeing this kingfisher was a delightful surprise. It was an unexpected and welcome moment of success.

A couple of years earlier, when I had been walking along the Ribble Way, I strayed off the route accidentally. I decided to take a shortcut – over some wet ground – to rejoin the route. To my surprise the mud was deep and I sank to hip level. If I did not do something quickly there was a risk of my disappearing into this quicksand. I managed to scoop out the mud around one leg and lift myself flat onto the mud and then crawl to solid ground. Getting stuck in the mud and feeling for a moment that I could sink into oblivion was an unpleasant surprise. Success was crawling out of that situation, reaching safety and being able to complete the walk.

Success might be a delightful, unexpected surprise, or it might be about survival through demanding or difficult times. Success might mean different things at different stages of life. Success in your twenties might be about finding a job or a spouse. In your thirties it might be about progressing in your chosen career. In your forties it might be about living harmoniously with teenagers. In your fifties it might be about balancing a range of different responsibilities. In your sixties it might be about using those golden years to best effect through a range of activities. In your seventies it might be passing on your wisdom to your grandchildren. In your eighties it might be about coping with physical and mental limitations. In your nineties it might be about surviving and trying to keep a smile on your face.

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This book is about building success across different areas of your life. I encourage you to lay the foundations for success across the whole of life. The ideas in the book are intended to form a basis for you to be successful in whatever are your chosen activities. For many it will be in paid work, but for others it will be in voluntary activity. Success across the whole of life depends on holding on to a balance about what is important to you, covering your family, community, culture, faith and work.

As you seek to build success I encourage you to:

- Be willing to seek success, and if it comes sit lightly to it
- Be willing to take responsibility and not run away from accountability
- Encourage others to be successful and see your mentoring of them as part of your success
- Accept that success means different things at different times of your life
- Be ready to move on if success does not come or if your success begins to erode
- Accept that despite all your best efforts the success you seek does not always happen

Building success requires commitment, energy and an open mind. It involves listening to others and distilling their perspectives and advice. Building success involves shaping ideas, testing boundaries, building alliances and learning from what works and does not work.

This book provides prompts for thought on balancing priorities well, understanding the drivers of your ambition, addressing what might

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hold you back, generating forward momentum, handling setbacks with care, building your reputation, balancing the short term and the long term, sustaining the success, growing team success and engaging with the future.

The book is designed so you can dip into the different sections. It is intended to be a practical tool both for individuals and for those mentoring younger people.

My encouragement to you is to spend some time developing clarity in your own mind about what building success means for you. I hope that the ideas in the book will provide prompts for thought as you review what success means to you in different areas and stages of your life.

Professor Peter Shaw, CB, PhD, DCL (Hon)
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SECTION A

BALANCE PRIORITIES WELL



WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU IN LIFE?

YOUR HONEST ANSWER to the question of what matters most to you in life provides an essential framework for decisions on priorities.

The idea

What matters most to us will vary depending on our situation and stage of life. If we are hungry and have nowhere to live our top priorities will be about food and shelter. If we are isolated and alone what matters most might be human contact and intimacy.

We all have physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs. If one of these areas is starved we can become dissatisfied and disorientated. If our basic physical and emotional needs are met the pursuit of intellectual or spiritual ideas becomes much more important.

In the hothouse of a work environment what can matter most is being successful and being seen to be successful at work. When we are immersed in our families the most important consideration is the healthy development of our children. When we are immersed in a sport we can be completely preoccupied with doing the sport to the best of our ability.

A key starting point in thinking about what success means for us is the answer to the question, 'What matters most to me in my life?' What is the desired mix between family, community and work? What is the balance between physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing that is most important to us? Where does career success fit in relation to our community contribution, or our family wellbeing?

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Veronique grew up in a family where both her parents were very supportive of her education and were ambitious for her. With a good degree, Veronica entered Government service. She had a strong commitment to public service values and worked effectively on successive projects. Her friends did not see as much of her as they would have liked and thought that Veronique always put her work first. Veronique was reluctant to enter into deep relationships at a personal level because she did not want to be diverted from her career. When she repeatedly got home at 9 p.m. or later, after rewarding but tiring days, she began to wonder whether she had got her priorities quite right.

In practice

- What matters most to you in life at the moment?
- What do you think will be most important to you in five years' time?
- How well are you able to balance your physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs?



WHAT MATTERS MOST TO THOSE WHO ARE CLOSEST TO YOU?

BALANCING PRIORITIES WELL includes taking account of what matters most to those who are closest to you, or else they will cease to be so close to you.

The idea

If someone is in awe of you or loves you deeply they may subjugate their needs and preferences to yours. Any successful, sustained relationship will involve putting the needs of another person first, but if it is always one person's needs and preferences which are subjugated, then it is likely to be a challenge to sustain the long-term quality of the relationship.

As you seek to build your success it is important to recognise who is most precious to you and find out what is most important for their equilibrium and wellbeing. If you and a prospective partner are equally ambitious there are major questions to be answered if you are going to maintain a relationship and potentially a family whilst both continue to pursue those ambitions. If what matters most to your children is your presence at key moments in their lives, then practical decisions have to be made and stuck to.

What matters is an openness to the preferences of significant others and a willingness to plan ahead and make sacrifices, alongside a recognition that nobody's preferences are always going to be met. There may be seasons when one person's preferences are met more readily.

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What is important is that over a longer period there is an acknowledgement of what matters most to those who are closest to you.

Veronique enjoyed working closely with Ben, a colleague in another part of Government. They met for a drink after work on a couple of occasions and decided to go for a long walk one Saturday. Veronique began to explore with Ben what interests they had in common. Veronique and Ben were at an early stage of finding out what was most important to them. Veronique warmed to Ben but was wary about whether she wanted the time commitment of an intimate relationship.

In practice

- How much do you care about what matters most to members of your family?
- How do you keep up to date in appreciating what matters most to family members and close friends?
- As you build new friendships and relationships, how do you find out discreetly about the needs and preferences of new friends?



WHAT GIVES YOU MOST FULFILMENT?

IT IS IMPORTANT to be honest with yourself about what gives you most fulfilment and to use that as a touchstone in deciding on priorities.

The idea

The completion of certain activities gives us huge personal satisfaction. This might be cooking a delicious meal, or growing large carrots, or hitting a stunning return of serve in a tennis match. There are moments when we get a sense of achievement from something relatively incidental and transitory. These moments of fulfilment are essential for our day-to-day wellbeing; they can also give us clues about how best we might use our talents and preferences to the benefit of the organisations of which we are a part.

The individual who has a sense of achievement when they have written a work proposal is likely to be fulfilled writing more complicated proposals on more substantive issues. The individual who discovers that they can motivate a team well is in a great position to offer to lead teams with increasingly demanding remits.

After completing different types of activity it can be helpful to score out of ten what level of fulfilment each activity gave you. Where the score is high there can be an inner glow which gives you the confidence that this is an activity you can build on.

Veronique was nervous when she first met a Cabinet Minister but soon found that she could relate to her easily. She was able to express her views clearly and recognise the political considerations that were

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influencing the Minister's decisions. Veronique got a buzz out of helping the Minister to crystallise her next steps.

Veronique recognised that she was getting a lot of fulfilment from working with Ministers. She volunteered to become a private secretary to a Minister. Her positive and decisive approach enabled the private office to run effectively, with the Minister being delighted with her contribution. This sense of fulfilment gave Veronique the confidence to see how she could further develop her career at senior levels within Government service.

In practice

- What activities give you the greatest levels of personal fulfilment now?
- How can you build on those activities and take your engagement with them to the next level?
- Are there some activities that give you fulfilment which if focused on too much can distort the way you want to balance your priorities?
- What is likely to give you most fulfilment in five years' time?



WHEN ARE YOU AT YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE?

KNOWING WHEN YOU ARE at your most effective provides an essential foundation for balancing priorities well in order to build longer-term success.

The idea

I am at my most effective in thinking through how to tackle a difficult issue when I travel on an early morning train to London. I am at my best in talking through complicated issues with others in the afternoon. Experience has taught me that my brain is at its most reflective and creative thinking alone in the morning, and better in dialogue with others in the afternoon. Normally the requirements of the working day do not mesh with these preferences, hence I have taught myself to operate in different ways at different times of day. But knowing my preferences allows me to allocate the most effective moments for hard thinking or difficult conversations.

It can be helpful to reflect in your current role on what are the tasks that are most important to your boss, your colleagues and your sponsors. Those tasks then need to be allocated to moments when you are in your most productive frame of mind, so you can deliver on them effectively. It is helpful to ask yourself what longer-term issues require you to be at your most effective, and then to allocate times when you can bring appropriate levels of intellectual energy to deal with those issues.

The corollary is that when you are not feeling effective in dealing with an issue it is normally best to park that issue, even for a short

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while, and return to it when you can approach it with a more engaged and positive mind-set.

Veronique knew that she was at her most effective if she could chunk up the day and the week into different activities. She dealt with e-mails in half-hour blocks. She carved out time to meet with key people in the Department for 20-minute catch-up conversations on a regular basis. She allocated difficult issues she needed to think through to a two-hour block on a Tuesday morning when she went to another part of the building to work. Veronique agreed with her Minister the times when she would be available to her and when she would be committed on other activities within the Department.

In practice

- What are the key areas where you need to be most effective in your work?
- How best do you allocate your time and energy so that they are focused on those areas where the expectations on you are highest?
- How best do you control the use of your time and energy so that you are at your most effective on the most important issues?
- What practical steps can you now take to balance your priorities so you work with the grain of your preferences?



WHAT HELPS YOU BALANCE YOUR PRIORITIES?

BEING CLEAR what and who helps you balance your priorities can provide a secure framework for making decisions.

The idea

We may sometimes wonder how we arrive at our judgements as to how we balance priorities at work with our family and community commitments. But there is often an underlying set of explanations about our instinctive decisions that are deep within us. It can be worth asking yourself why you tend to balance priorities in a particular way and how fixed that formula is. The underlying explanation might be that our automatic way of balancing priorities comes from our childhood or a particularly influential phase of life.

Ask yourself which priority you should tackle first that would best unblock other priorities or reduce the inner guilt that flows from putting things off for too long.

It can be helpful to distinguish between short-term and longer-term priorities. What do you need to invest time in to help build your credibility or expertise in a way that will best equip you to reach the type of goal that is most important to you in the longer term?

Think about who can enable you to balance your priorities. Ideally we each need trusted others with whom we can talk about priorities, who have our best interests at heart, and who are not preoccupied with their own wellbeing or interests. A wise mentor or trusted friend can be a valuable sounding-board as we talk through how our different priorities fit together.

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Veronique trusted the perspectives of her brother and a contemporary at work. When she had difficult decisions about which post to apply for or how to use her time to best effect, Veronique would always talk to these two individuals. Their perspectives were not always identical, but always gave her valuable insights. Increasingly Veronique began to talk to her boyfriend, Ben, about priorities, but interestingly, he was never the first person she talked to as she did not think his views were completely dispassionate given the growing emotional link between them.

In practice

- What is your default way of balancing priorities and where do you think that originates from?
- How do you distinguish between short-term and long-term priorities?
- Who gives you the best advice about how you balance priorities? Can you talk to them more?
- When might emotional factors mean that the perspective of a mentor or good friend is not as dispassionate as you would like?



WHAT CAN DERAIL YOUR PRIORITIES?

KNOWING WHAT FORCES have the ability to derail our priorities gives us valuable insight into how to stay on course for success.

The idea

We may feel that we are maintaining a reasonable balance between our commitments to a longer-term career, our effectiveness in the day job, our family and our involvement in the local community. But we may be operating with no spare capacity.

If someone at home is ill our initial reaction is to work harder to get everything else done, when realism requires us to reduce our time commitment to some activities. Perhaps we have to take a break from some community activities. Perhaps we need to reduce the amount of time we give to particular work activities or delegate more to others. These steps require a conscious decision to stop doing certain things or to invest less time in certain activities. We might think that what is derailing us is a health issue in the family when in reality what is derailing us is an over-conscientious approach, with our pride getting in the way.

Sometimes our priorities do need to be derailed. We can become fixated on a particular set of priorities and not adjust them in the light of changes in circumstances. Perhaps when we are recovering from being ill or at the end of a holiday, that can be a good moment to review the way our priorities sit alongside each other and decide which ones can now be dispensed with and which should take greater prominence.

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Sometimes when our priorities are derailed our confidence is knocked. Often when we feel derailed the reasons are entirely outside our control. What matters is recognising that we have been caught by unexpected events which were not of our making.

Veronique enjoyed working as principal private secretary to her Minister. When this Minister was reshuffled a new Minister was appointed who wanted to bring her own private secretary with her. Veronique therefore found herself instantly without a post. She oscillated between being angry and distraught. She felt it entirely unfair that she was being removed from this post by a new Minister who did not know her. Veronique felt her career was being derailed.

It took the wise counsel of a colleague a few years older to help Veronique recognise that these things happen and that she needed to move forward and not feel resentful. Veronique was quickly appointed to another post, leading on a new piece of policy work. Her time as a private secretary had built her credibility, which ensured she was sought after for other demanding jobs.

In practice

- Be conscious about what might derail your priorities
- Accept that someone else derailing your priorities might be exactly what is needed
- Believe that good can come out of any situation, even when your initial feeling is that you have been derailed



WIDEN YOUR REPUTATION

IT IS WORTH THINKING deliberately about how you widen your reputation and the number of people who know about your contribution.

The idea

We feel uncomfortable about marketing ourselves and deliberately widening our reputation. The resultant risk is that others are unaware of how we can contribute. Our reputation may stay localised and our influence be much smaller than it might be.

We may be known for one particular type of contribution. Part of widening our reputation is developing a range of skills and approaches and having clear evidence of how they have been applied successfully. When I prepare people for interview I encourage them to develop a full and honest narrative about the range of contributions they have made in different situations. I encourage them to enter an interview confidently, ready to tell a range of stories giving evidence of the contributions they have made and the outcomes they have helped to deliver.

For most people the risk is their reputation is based on their last success or their last failure. It is important to have a narrative that describes more fully your contribution in a number of spheres over a number of years, and to be willing to share that experience in mentoring conversations, in groups, or speaking from a public platform.

When I work with someone who has just started a new role I encourage them to think about who are the people who will be important

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to their success. I encourage the newly appointed person to seek to build relationships with these interlocutors, listening carefully to them and sharing their own stories, expectations and aspirations. Building your reputation with people new to you needs to come across as genuine engagement and not as a means to an end.

While Bob was well known within his local political party, he recognised that he needed to build a reputation across a wider network. He volunteered to go to the national party conference and made contact there with a range of different politicians. He offered to take part in a national working group. He was willing to read the papers and seek a range of views before going to the meetings. He gradually built a reputation for understanding the wider perspectives within the political party and for contributing constructive points at a national level drawn from his local experience.

In practice

- Understand whether your reputation is based on others' limited understanding about what you contribute
- Think through how you want to widen your contribution in your current role so your reputation covers a wider mix of qualities
- Think through who you want to build a reputation with and seek to build a relationship with them
- Have a clear narrative about what your strengths are and the outcomes you have delivered and be ready to draw from this narrative selectively
- Be open to new and different ways in which you can contribute to causes or outcomes that are important to you



RENEW YOUR PROFILE

THERE IS A RISK that we project an outdated view of ourselves and do not catch up with the distinctive contribution that we are now able to bring.

The idea

We might brand ourselves as a good project manager and have some favourite stories about the impact we have had and the contribution we have made. A risk is that these stories brand us in a way that is out of date. At heart we are a project manager; what we do now is enable others to lead projects well. At heart we may think of ourselves as a classroom teacher; what we are particularly gifted at now is encouraging and motivating other teachers and thinking ahead in a constructive way so that we can plan the curriculum for other teachers to implement.

You have built up a wealth of experience and insight. Perhaps the time has come to take a lead in chairing a working group or speaking at a local event. It might be opportune to offer to write an article or write a blog.

Your CV or profile on a social networking website can become outdated surprisingly quickly. Refreshing the way we present ourselves orally and in writing is important. We can easily become and sound stale.

I am not encouraging you to be a chameleon, always adjusting to the colours and moods of the day, but I am encouraging you to look consistently at the interrelationship between the competences and

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insights you bring and the changing needs and circumstances of the spheres you are engaged within. If you pride yourself on being adaptable and spontaneous it helps if you are able to demonstrate your adaptability and spontaneity, and respond well to changing opportunities and expectations.

Bob was known for expressing strong local political views. Having been part of a couple of national working groups he recognised that he could bring a wider perspective. He deliberately modified the way he contributed locally so he was drawing on both his national and local experience. The consequence was that his views were taken more seriously and he became more influential, reinforcing for him the value of this approach. His reputation could now have two strands rather than one: he was a local activist and he brought national insights.

In practice

- Be mindful if your description of your strengths has not been updated for a long time
- Recognise when your description of yourself is out of date
- Celebrate how your contribution has changed and evolved in recent months
- Experiment with describing your distinctiveness in different ways with different people to see which description feels most authentic and up to date

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SECTION G

**BALANCE THE SHORT TERM
AND THE LONG TERM**



BE WILLING TO HANDLE THE IMMEDIATE

A REPUTATION FOR CAPABILITY is reliant on your being able to handle the immediate calmly and effectively.

The idea

The prevailing narrative is that a good leader is able to think strategically and bring insights relevant to the longer term. But the bedrock of success for a good leader is to be able to handle the immediate calmly and effectively. Ignoring the immediate as beneath you or boring is just as dangerous as spending all your time in the immediate.

Whatever the quality of our forward thinking, our basic reputation will depend on whether we do the day job well. Others will listen to our views on the longer term if they have confidence in our ability to keep day-to-day issues under control.

We can sometimes be thrown emotionally by expectations about the immediate that are placed upon us. We feel bombarded with questions, e-mails, and requests for five minutes of our time. We cannot ignore these pleas for help or requests for steers. It is an essential part of our role to be available and responsive to the needs of the moment.

Someone might need a quick steer on what they say to a customer. A journalist may be asking for our view on a current event. An important stakeholder has asked about a particular priority and the answer is in your head and not on a piece of paper.

There can be a varied mix of perfectly reasonable requests which, if viewed in totality, would be exhausting. Handling the immediate is

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about rationing your time, focusing your interventions, and being fully absorbed in an issue for five minutes and trusting your instinctive response. It includes deciding when it is time for you to act and when someone else should take forward the next action. Success comes through recognising that dealing with the immediate is part of your job and important to handle well, but is not the totality of your responsibility.

Lin was the administrative manager responsible for the operating theatres in a hospital. Her life was full of immediate requests. She recognised that she was dealing with life-and-death situations and relished dealing with the immediate. She recognised when she needed to intervene and when she should place clear expectation on someone else to sort a problem out. She had learnt over recent years how to be more selective in her use of time so that she handled the immediate without feeling controlled or overwhelmed by it.

In practice

- See dealing with the immediate as part of your role
- Accept that your credibility depends on doing the day job well
- Be deliberate in deciding when you handle the immediate and when you pass it to someone else
- Keep refining your approach to addressing recurring immediate issues



SEE A CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY

A CRISIS CAN BE an opportunity to learn and to suggest how an organisation can handle immediate demands better.

The idea

Crises happen. When we pretend that they do not, we do so at our peril. Our domestic circumstances often prepare us for crises, especially if we are raising young children. It can be worth reflecting on who you have observed handling a crisis well and what you learnt from them. You might reflect on how you have handled a crisis in the past and what that taught you about both your preferences and the personal risks for you in a crisis.

A crisis can be an opportunity to assess what our instinctive reactions are and how well we work with others in a fast-moving and exposed situation. It can be a valuable learning process to volunteer to be part of addressing a crisis, so that you watch leaders at close range and observe how such situations are handled. Working with other people in a crisis situation will force you to be open to suggesting ideas and to responding quickly to the suggestions and direction of others. It can be like being part of a movie that is being played 'fast forward'.

Being part of handling a crisis situation can develop qualities in you that you are not expecting. You may be transferring into this new situation adaptability and resilience you have developed as a parent or as a community volunteer.

Being part of a team handling a crisis will enable you to observe how best you keep calm and keep focused on bringing your most effective

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contribution. Keeping calm might involve a combination of being clear on what matters most in a situation, and being detached enough to observe what is unfolding, and not be overwhelmed by either the emotions or the timescale.

Lin recognised that crises happened at the hospital, such as after an explosion at a nearby factory when a number of people needed surgery urgently. There were tried and tested procedures that she was responsible for implementing. Every crisis brought its pluses in terms of enabling staff to feel as if they were contributing fully to the work of the surgeons. Lin recognised that whenever parts of the hospital were under considerable pressure, there was always learning about qualities individuals possessed and about the need to keep reviewing and refining procedures that were not working as well as they could be.

In practice

- Accept that there will always be crises
- Think through how you will keep calm and be purposeful in a crisis
- See a crisis as an opportunity to contribute at your best and draw out the best in others
- Always look for the learning in a crisis both for yourself and in the way processes, procedures and expectations need to be refined



KNOW WHEN TO USE THE LONG SCREWDRIVER

USING THE LONG SCREWDRIVER carefully is part of the repertoire of any manager or leader, but should be done selectively.

The idea

One senior leader I worked with received consistent criticism in his 360° feedback assessment that he used the long screwdriver too much. The leader accepted that most of the criticisms in the 360° feedback were fair. But he was clear that using the long screwdriver was an essential part of his leadership approach. He accepted that sometimes he could use the screwdriver more selectively, but he was not going to put the long screwdriver permanently back in the cupboard. This leader used a long screwdriver to follow up issues which he thought were particularly sensitive, and to assess on a dipstick basis how well the organisation was able to tackle some of the issues it was facing.

Critics might say that a leader using a long screwdriver is wasting their time and energy and taking away responsibility from others. Advocates might say that the ability to use a long screwdriver reinforces someone's knowledge about what is going on in an organisation and their capacity to assess how effective it is in dealing with a range of issues.

It is important to ration the number of occasions that you use the long screwdriver so that you do not distract yourself too much from your prime responsibilities, or let others conclude that all problems in the organisation will be solved by you. Perhaps you can ration yourself to two long screwdriver activities a month. It can be helpful for

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you to articulate why you are using a long screwdriver. For example, is it part of your continuous learning, or about seeking to understand what is happening within one part of the organisation?

Lin was uneasy about how one team was handling particular types of cases as they regularly seemed to be under major stress. She spent time talking to members of the team and observing them at work. She probed with questions about their comparative results and procedures compared with similar groups in other hospitals. Lin was polite but relentless.

Lin concluded that the level of mutual understanding amongst the team members was not as good as it should be. They could be easily thrown by the unexpected. She encouraged the team to work through how they had dealt with the unexpected in the past and how they would handle unexpected events going forward. She worked with them at procedural, emotional and behavioural levels. When she observed good progress beginning to happen, she withdrew.

In practice

- See the long screwdriver as part of your toolkit, but use it selectively
- Say why you are using the long screwdriver when you use it
- When you have made the progress you want to see happen, remove the long screwdriver quickly and see this as what you have done
- Watch if you get a reputation for using the long screwdriver too much
- Be conscious if some people want you to use the long screwdriver because it moves responsibility from them to you



ALWAYS BE ALERT TO CONSEQUENCES

WHATEVER ACTIONS YOU TAKE or are part of, always be alert to the consequences for other people and to potential next steps.

The idea

We finish a task and move on to the next one. We feel relieved or liberated that a task has been completed and want to hurry on to meet the next challenge. But what might be the consequences of the work we have done? How might it affect the lives of other people? How might the consequences feed into our description of the contribution we are making? Sometimes we can be so task-oriented that we see the completion of a task as its end rather than observing how the outcome of that task is changing lives and the expectations of others.

We might have participated in a project establishing a new community or church hall, but that is just the first stage. What matters now is how the facility is used for the good of the whole community. The process of maximising the benefit of the hall for the community is only just beginning.

Whatever action you take has consequences for your reputation. From the range of different interventions you make, a picture will develop in the minds of others about the distinctiveness of your contribution. If you are seen to intervene in a timely fashion, the consequence will be a reputation for intervening in the right way at the right time.

If you look stressed on more than a limited number of occasions the consequence will be a reputation that you are easily stressed. The law of consequences means that whatever behaviours you exhibit, your

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reputation will always be an exaggerated description of those behaviours. Positive behaviour can be turned over time into a strongly positive reputation, but just one or two moments of negative behaviour can have the immediate consequence of leading to a negative reputation.

Lin was conscious that whatever she said was taken seriously. If she questioned a particular activity the consequence was that this activity would be scrutinised thoroughly. She recognised that she could drop into conversations words of praise or questions that would be considered carefully. She knew that if she was sloppy in addressing an issue the consequence would be that others would be sloppy too.

Lin recognised that whenever she dealt with a short-term issue she had to think through what would be the consequences for the longer term. She asked herself regularly what would be the consequential behaviours of the consultant surgeons that would flow from the decisions she took.

In practice

- Always think through the longer-term consequences of actions you take in the short term
- Recognise that the comments you make and the questions you ask sow the seeds for subsequent substantive conversations
- Recognise that your attitude and approach will be mirrored by others so that the consequences of your approach will be felt more widely than you might anticipate



KNOW WHAT HELPS YOU TO THINK LONG TERM

WE ALL RECOGNISE THE importance of thinking long-term but we need prompts to ensure we do the necessary long-term thinking.

The idea

Some people long to be in the long-term thinking space, while others prefer to remain permanently sorting out the short term. Understanding our preferences and working with the grain of those preferences is a necessary step to getting the balance right between the short term and the long term.

It can be worth thinking through what captures our imagination about the longer term? What are long-term outcomes we particularly want to work towards? What will we and others feel is success in one or two years' time? Once we have clarity about desired outcomes it is easier to prioritise what to address in the short and medium term.

Steps that can help us think through longer-term issues might include talking with people who have dealt with similar issues before, and thinking through possibilities with others outside a formal meeting context. It might involve visiting other organisations and places where innovative approaches have led to constructive long-term outcomes and where we can have stimulating conversations about a range of possibilities.

It is unhelpful to view long-term thinking as something you do in spare moments. The risk is you then turn to longer-term subjects only when you are tired or when you feel guilty that you have not addressed them before. Allocating time to reflect on the longer term

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is crucial to success. How you spend that time depends on your preferences. For some people the best use of that time is in dialogue with others who are in similar worlds. For others the most stimulating approach is to talk with people in different worlds and addressing similar issues. For some what matters most is quiet self-reflection. For most of us it is a combination of activities in different proportions.

Lin recognised that there were fundamental issues to tackle about the use of consultant time and operating theatre space. If she tried to think through the issues in the margins of other things she got down-hearted. She visited some neighbouring hospitals that had addressed similar issues. She knew she had to allocate dedicated space with other interested people to work through the longer-term possibilities.

Lin worked co-operatively with a few thoughtful consultants, engaging them on what might be long-term options. She organised a couple of half-day workshops which enabled lively conversation about longer-term possibilities. She insisted on dedicated time being set aside for her and her team to think through options and test out scenarios.

In practice

- See addressing the long term as just as important as solving short-term problems
- Be clear what context enables you to think through long-term issues effectively
- Find conversation partners in people who are addressing or have addressed similar issues
- Accept that you and your team will be better equipped to think about the longer term on some days than on others, but when you are in the right frame of mind do grasp the opportunity wholeheartedly

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR PETER SHAW works with individuals, teams and groups to help them grow their strengths and tackle demanding issues confidently. His objective is to help individuals and teams clarify the vision of who they want to be, the values that are driving them, the value-added they want to bring and their sources of vitality.

His work on how leaders step up successfully into demanding leadership roles and sustain that success was recognised with the award of a Doctorate by Publication from the University of Chester in 2011.

Peter is a founding partner of Praesta Partners, an international specialist coaching business. His clients enjoy frank, challenging conversations leading to fresh thinking and new insights. It is the dynamic nature of the conversations that provides a stimulus for creating reflection and new action. He often works with Chief Executives and Board Members taking on new roles and leading major organisational change. Peter has worked with a wide range of leadership teams as they tackle new challenges.

Peter has worked with Chief Executives and senior teams in a range of different sectors and countries. He has led workshops on such themes as 'Riding the Rapids', 'Seizing the Future', 'Thriving in your Work', 'Being an Agile Leader' and 'Building Resilience' across six continents.

Peter has held a wide range of Board posts covering finance, personnel, policy, communications and delivery. He worked in five UK Government Departments (Treasury, Education, Employment, Environment and Transport). He delivered major national changes such as radically different pay arrangements for teachers, a huge expansion in nursery education and employment initiatives which helped bring unemployment below a million.

He led the work on the merger of the UK Government Departments of Education and Employment. As Finance Director General he

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managed a £40bn budget and introduced radical changes in funding and accountability arrangements. In three Director General posts he led strategic development and implementation in major policy areas. In 2000 he was awarded a CB by the Queen for his contribution to public service.

Peter has written a sequence of 22 influential leadership books. He is a Visiting Professor of Leadership Development at Newcastle University Business School and a Visiting Professor in the Business, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department at the University of Chester. He has worked with senior staff at Brighton University and postgraduate students at Warwick University Business School and lectures regularly at Regent College in Vancouver. He is a Professorial Fellow at St John's College, Durham University. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate (Doctor of Civil Law) by Durham University in 2015 for 'outstanding service to public life and the Council of St John's College'.

Peter is a Reader (licensed lay minister) in the Anglican Church and has worked with senior church leaders in the UK, North America and Asia. His inspiration comes from long-distance walks: he has completed 21 long-distance walks in the UK, including the St Cuthbert's Way, the South Downs Way, the Yorkshire Wolds Way, the Yorkshire Dales Way, the Ribble Way, the Speyside Way, the St Oswald's Way and the Great Glen Way. Peter and his wife, Frances, have three grown-up children who are all married, and a growing number of grandchildren.