

BE YOUR BEST

LEVEL: FOUNDATION

DIFFICULTY: HARD

Select a small number of truly important things and do those things exceptionally well. Challenge yourself to achieve more, perhaps much more, and show up to work every day as your best self.

OVERVIEW

What is Be Your Best?

The purpose of this topic is to challenge you to achieve more:

- Get Inspired
- Do Great Work
- Be a Positive Force

Do any one of these things and you will achieve more. Do all three – and you will achieve amazing things.

Why Be Your Best?

If your outlook in life is putting in time and picking up a paycheck, this topic is probably not for you. On the other hand, if you are ambitious, love new challenges, and want to leave your mark on the world – read on.

Get Inspired

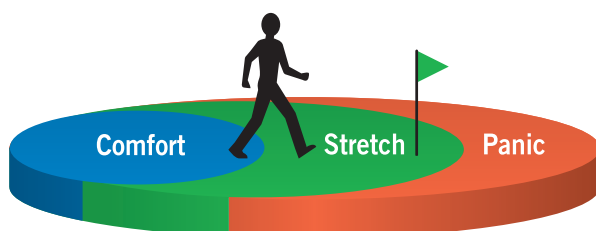
Make Your Dent in the Universe

It is extremely rewarding to make a difference – even a small difference. As Steve Jobs said: “We’re here to put a dent in the universe. Otherwise why else even be here?” What dent do you want to make?

The fastest way to progress is to know exactly what you want and to relentlessly pursue it. Take some time to reflect. What is the most exciting thing you can influence that will have significant and positive impact?

Stretch Yourself

It is invigorating and exciting to stretch ourselves. Think about what you want to achieve in terms of zones: it’s comfortable (too easy), it’s stretching (just right), or it makes you panic (too hard).



Ideally, you should set your objective at the outer edge of your stretch zone.

Do Great Work

Strive for Excellence

High standards generate great work. They transform ordinary to extraordinary. To achieve extraordinary, ask yourself:

- How can I make this even better?
- If there were no limits and I knew I could not fail, what would I do?
- Who can offer me valuable insights and feedback?
- How would someone that I really admire do this?

Leverage Your Strengths

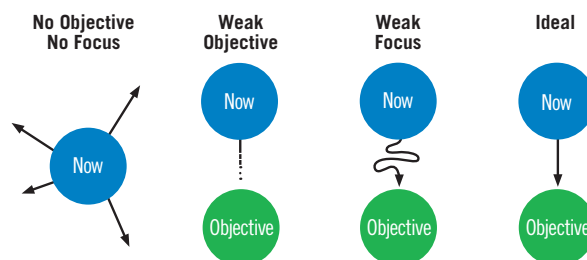
The intersection between your natural strengths and your company’s needs are where you will have the greatest impact. Make sure your work leverages your strengths *and* adds value for your company.

Maintain Focus

Focus is a powerful accelerant for progress. Practice two levels of focus:

Focus	Description
Intense	Bursts of focused time with no distractions (intense effort).
Sustained	Repeated sessions of intense effort (sustained effort).

Focus is much easier when you create space for good energy and flow. Flow describes those rare moments when we are so connected to our work that time and distractions cease to be. We do great work effortlessly. Clear your time. Clear your mind. Let go. Be in the moment. Flow.



An inspiring objective and strong focus make it far easier to stay on course.

Be a Positive Force

This topic is about much more than delivering exceptional work. It’s also about showing up to work every day as your best self. There is a excellent model, called **Red and Green** (see next page), that captures the essence of what it means to be a positive force. It’s a huge help when striving to be your very best.

BENEFITS

In the **short term**, Be Your Best challenges you to achieve more.

In the **long term**, Be Your Best provides a framework for consistently being our best and achieving much more in the things that matter most.

ROLES

Be Your Best is focused on one person – you.

Role	Description
You	Establish a burning desire to achieve more. Find an objective that inspires you and that is aligned with your role and your strengths. Embrace excellence and work from a consistently positive place.

KEY INSIGHTS

Red and Green

Imagine a world where your thoughts, motives, emotions and actions are positive, productive, and constructive. Now imagine the opposite. One way to describe these two worlds is as colors:

- Red (negative, unproductive, and destructive)
- Green (positive, productive, and constructive)

Red and Green is an excellent model for being a positive force. Green is a shorthand for what to strive for as a positive force within your company and within the world as a whole. And Red quickly becomes something to recognize and avoid. Which would you rather be?

Fearful Unhealthy Healthy
Destructive Closed Open Constructive
Angry Unhappy Happy Calm Hopeful
Wary Aggressive Peaceful Powerful
Passive Distracted Focused Participative
Toxic Bullying Supportive Engaged
Weak Pessimistic Optimistic Trusting
Stressed Relaxed Active

*Which world will be happier, more productive, and more fulfilling for you?
Which world will get a better response from the people with whom you interact?*

Choose Your Influences

It's much easier to be your best when you are surrounded by positive influences. Strive to surround yourself with people that you admire and respect. People that are smart, ambitious, energetic, and positive. People with attitudes, skills, and beliefs that you want to emulate. Simply put – surround yourself with people that will help you be your best. At the same time, steer far clear of negative influences. No need to confront them – simply step away.

Choose How You Influence

Just as it's much easier for you to be your best when you are surrounded by positive influences, it is much easier for your team to be their best when you pour in lots of positive and constructive energy. It's amazing how a single person can lift an entire team by consistently being positive, constructive, and energetic. It creates an environment where the improbable becomes probable and the nearly impossible becomes possible.

Look After Yourself

Would you buy a Lamborghini and put "junk" fuel in it? Or let it rust in the driveway? Not likely. Yet so many of us do exactly that to ourselves. To be your best, take in great fuel through nutrition, rest and exercise. Take care of yourself in whatever way works best for you.

Excellence is Not Perfection

When striving for excellence it is important to recognize that it stops well short of perfection. Don't confuse the two. Excellence adds value at every step. Perfection limits our ability to progress. Strive for excellence – not perfection.

Own Your Time

Time moves relentlessly in one direction. When it's gone – it's gone. As a quick test, how much of your time is truly productive (adds significant value)? If you are not happy with the answer, look for ways to reserve and reclaim time to pursue your top objectives. Make conscious choices about the projects, activities, and interactions that deserve your time (that add value). A great place to start to reclaim time at work (and be a positive force) is **GREAT MEETINGS**[†].

Spend It Well

Ironically, it is in our nature to defer the really important things in favor of what we perceive as "urgent" in the moment. As a quick test – how much of your time is spent reacting as opposed to proactively following a plan? Do you look forward to "someday" when you will have more time for the things that are important? Do you have a mental list of things that you will do "someday"? Someday never comes – at least not on its own. Decide what is truly important and take action on those things today.

Change the World

As Seth Godin points out, there is an enormous difference between impossible and nearly impossible. A visionary sees the "nearly" in impossible and changes the world. Be ambitious and visionary. Work with people that are ambitious and visionary. Be inspired. Do great work. Change the world.

LEVEL AND DIFFICULTY

The Level is Foundation. Relentlessly pursuing inspiring objectives, consistently doing exceptional work, and being a positive force for your team will have a tremendous impact on what you achieve.

The Difficulty is Hard. For most people, being your best involves a lot of change – and change is hard. The key is firmly committing to what you want to change and establishing supporting habits through repetition.

RATE YOURSELF

How close are you to being your best? Answer ten simple questions to find out.

Question	✓
1. Do you have a well-defined and very specific objective?	
2. Is the objective inspiring? Will it create positive change?	
3. Is it ambitious enough to take you well outside of your comfort zone?	
4. Are you setting very high standards? Doing extraordinary work?	
5. Is your work leveraging your natural strengths?	
6. Have you developed habits for intense and sustained focus?	
7. Do you surround yourself with positive and constructive influences?	
8. Are you a source of positive and constructive energy for your team?	
9. Do you fuel yourself through nutrition, rest, and exercise?	
10. Are you showing up to work every day as your best self?	

[†]*This topic is also available as part of the XL Improvement Framework.*

Thanks to Tony and Nicki Vee for sharing and teaching Red and Green.

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