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Contagious Culture

Show Up, Set the Tone and Intentionally Create an Organization That Thrives

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The key to any company's success lies in its culture. This game-changing guide shows you how to shape and revitalize your culture — by setting the tone, engaging the team and creating a dynamic working environment that encourages growth, productivity and innovation. It all starts with you.

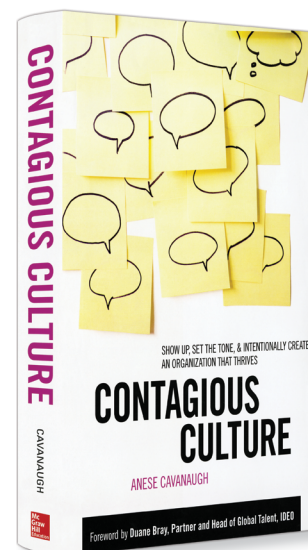
Using award-winning organizational advisor Anese Cavanaugh's unique IEP Method®, you can take control of the culture you work in and build a healthier, more functional environment — from the inside out.

You'll learn how to enhance your Intentional Energetic Presence (IEP) so you'll always be fully present, purposeful and prepared to share your vision with infectious energy and enthusiasm.

Contagious Culture is so much more than a leadership guide. It's a complete cultural mindshift that's not only exciting for you and your team — it's absolutely, positively contagious.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to craft your intention and make a real impact.
- Unleash your energy — and watch it spread like wildfire.
- Show up for others by setting yourself up for success.
- Bring out the best in everyone — including yourself.



by Anese Cavanaugh

CONTENTS

The Fundamentals of Showing Up

Page 2

Crafting Intention and Creating Impact

Page 3

Showing Up for You

Page 4

Setting Yourself Up for Success

Page 5

Showing Up for Others

Page 6

Growing Leaders

Page 7

Showing Up for Culture

Page 8

THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: CONTAGIOUS CULTURE

by Anese Cavanaugh

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Introduction

As we step into this next era of leadership, when we have more to do, more to care for and more opportunities to make impact, there is a call, a demand even, to show up bigger, better and more in service of others than ever. The more we listen and honor this call, the stronger we become. When we lean into it, we ripple. We become productively contagious.

The days of being able to lead based simply on our titles, skills, competencies and even our emotional intelligence are gone. The days of it being enough to just be a good leader and make cool stuff happen? Gone. In order for us to innovate to the next level of business and to solve the many, many problems that we want to solve, it's going to require a new kind of leadership. It's going to require that we create more leaders than ever. And it's going to require that we intentionally infect our cultures with impact-focused leadership, love and care — starting with ourselves first. ●

The Fundamentals of Showing Up

Let's talk about “showing up” in culture, regardless of whether that culture is you as an individual or your team, your organization or your family unit as a whole. How you show up will impact everything. Showing up includes your intention, your energy and your presence, which emanates from you everywhere you go. Your presence creates impact on every level. This can be a great thing.

Holding Your Fate

First, let's get one thing straight about your fate: You determine how you want to show up and what you're

going to create in your life. You have power. Your fate starts with taking accountability for what you're creating and for owning your impact.

Here's the gift: You can change your culture, your team, your family dynamics, your satisfaction with your job, the amount of energy you have in the morning, anything. Why? Because you *do* have control of *you*.

No matter how horrible your boss is, your employees, your sister, the stranger on the street who just yelled at you because he's having a really bad day, even your culture, *you* are in control of *you*. With intention, presence and action, you can shift it.

The team member who's not showing up as you like, your boss not “seeing” or acknowledging you, your culture being restrictive, your kids who are fighting constantly, your spouse not listening to you — believe it or not, you have influence in all of this. And the influence starts with your awareness, your presence, your intention and how you show up.

The fate of your culture — whatever culture we're talking about — is yours for the influencing.

You Are Contagious

Consider the leaders who inspire you most, who feel the best to be around. What makes them contagious?

Consider when you're at your best. What's present? What's going on? A likely common denominator is that there is a rich quality of energy and presence that *feels* good to be with. It's contagious. And so are you.

This is great because it means you can create the culture you want ... if you're intentional about whom and what you want to infect. It also means that you can decide whether or not to “catch” someone else's attitude. You're contagious and so are others.



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SUMMARY: CONTAGIOUS CULTURE

Team X, a team of eight, was having some issues with collaboration and productivity. The majority of their issues were coming from two people — let's call them Julie and George. Both were brilliant and talented; however, they were also completely committed to snarkiness, judgment, blame and basically bringing everyone down.

Here's what would happen. Everyone would get started, and the room would feel good. People would be happy, and then Julie or George would make some Debby Downer comment that would put a bit of a stink in the room. The other would climb on. And down the whole team would go.

Here's the thing: it wasn't so much what they said; it was more how they "showed up" in that meeting. Body language, tone, facial expressions were all at hand. Even more powerful, though, was their energy and intention. You could *feel* that it wasn't a positive thing. All the momentum and positivity that could have resulted in a killer meeting was deflated.

They all leave feeling less than inspired, a little or a lot frustrated, already dreading the next meeting. Not Julie and George though — they feel great and validated, "See, these meetings suck; they're a waste of time."

Julie and George are a catalyst but actually just a symptom of the bigger problem. The bigger problem is that the team and company are not taking a stand for focusing on results, being intentional and showing up well. And the leaders are not holding people accountable for doing so (or themselves in many cases).

Showing Up with Intentional Energetic Presence (IEP)

As a leader, you have a ton of people who want things from you. People needing things, pulling at you, needing nourishment and direction from you — all important. And the stronger your Intentional Energetic Presence (IEP) is, not only do you have more to give them and a better perspective to give it from, you have more of you as well.

Consider a time (maybe now), when you're feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, maybe frustrated or even resentful about a relationship or something you're leading. If you drill down, it's likely that there is a place where you are feeling depleted and you're not filling your own reserves. When we take the time to stop, breathe and look at where we ourselves need that nourishment — and we honor it — more space and patience open up to be there for others.

The art of showing up is a dance between being there for yourself and being there for others. We need to have

all the pieces of the puzzle — self-care, people impact — in order to be the most energized, healthy, vital person possible. The best way to have all the pieces is to *show up* for your life. We all have the power to show up.

Showing up is a choice. It's that moment when you're moving along in your life, or in that meeting, and you have the urge to do something, say something, to step in, to take the high road, to swing out, to be accountable, to say yes! or no! — it's that moment. And stepping in is the difference between whether your life moves forward and you drive it and big awesome things happen and you feel tuned in and turned on, or your life moves forward (or maybe backward or not at all) and it drives you, leaving you feeling left behind. Showing up and stepping in makes the difference between power and hope, passivity and hopelessness, adventure and big ... or beige. It's the difference between leadership and abdication, inspiration and force. It is the difference.

There are five components of showing up.

Intention is what you want to have happen, a desire. It's what you plan to achieve, a determination.

Energy is how you take care of yourself as well as what you bring to the table. It's how you set yourself up to be the most thriving, sustainable, powerful instrument of change possible.

Presence is how you show up, how people experience you, how present you are to your life right now and to the person in front of you. It's right here, right now, in this moment.

Action and skills are what ensures that you move forward and accomplish your goals. Action is where you make things real.

Impact is what you make happen. It's what happens overall as a result of applying great intention, energy, presence, actions and skills to what you wanted to create in the first place.

You combine action and leadership skills with your IEP, and you have a powerful force for impact.

Crafting Intention and Creating Impact

Here is a scenario. You have a big conversation coming up with your *partner* (insert: spouse, colleague, direct report, kid, parent and landlord) today. You have three ways you may be going into this; clear, clean, powerful, tuned in — you are ready to roll. *Or* nervous, unclear, defensive, scared — you'd love to postpone. *Or* you haven't even given it a thought; it's just another of 50-plus conversations you have today — you'll figure it out when you get there.

SUMMARY: CONTAGIOUS CULTURE

Think about the meetings or the conversations you have planned today. How clear are you on what you want to talk about, the impact you want to have, how you want to feel, how you want others to experience you and what you want to make sure you all walk away with? This one is totally in your control. And this is part of your leadership IEP.

How you enter your state of being entering these meetings and conversations will have a big influence on how easy and effective each conversation is. It will also influence whether or not you get the outcomes you want and whether this meeting or conversation or whatever you're up to was a great use of your time, with solid next steps and a plan, or just another thing to trudge through.

Here is the framework or formula to use to help create intentional impact. This is a core component of the IEP Method.

Step 1: Outcomes. What are the outcomes you want to get out of this interaction or meeting? What do you want to have as a result? What do *you* want to walk away with?

Step 2: Impact. What's the impact you want to have on these people or this person? The emotional impact? How do you want them to feel? How do you want them to experience you? How do *you* want to feel?

Step 3: Presence. How will you have to show up to create the outcomes and impact you want to create? What will your body language be, your energy, your vibe, your intention? What will others have to feel from you?

Step 4: Beliefs. What will you have to believe in order to show up this way? What will you have to believe about this person, the project, the company, the meeting, your kid, your partner, your dog?

Step 5: Action. This is often a two-parter: What will you have to *do* in the meeting or conversation? And what will you have to do afterward to move it all forward? Very often simply nurturing steps 1 through 4 will set you up beautifully for presence and impact, but more often, if you do just steps 1 through 4 but don't do any action, you are missing the good stuff that will make this all real in the world. ●

Showing Up for You

You're about to walk into a meeting, you've got to be "on," but you've got all this stuff whirling, you've just had a fight with a colleague, and now, you've got to show up. But you're in the weeds. What to do? Do a Presence Reboot.

The intention of the Presence Reboot is simply to show up intentionally. Here's a breakdown of each step in real time and what it might look like:

1. Get present and notice. As you're about to go on stage, or walk into a room, or step into a conversation, notice your posture, how you're feeling, what your energy is like, what you're putting out there and your attitude.

2. Intend and decide. If you're not where you want to be, own it. Envision what you'd like instead, and decide to shift. Notice what's in the gap between where you are and where you'd like to be instead. What's missing? What's present? What do you need to do to take care of yourself?

3. Take care and notice. You might notice that you just need to breathe and shift your posture. You might need a quick attitude adjustment. You might need to access the state of gratitude or curiosity. You're going to actually take care of those things as best you can in this moment.

4. Breathe and envision. Again envision how you'd like to feel and show up instead. What experience do you want to have? What is your desire? What is your desired experience right now? How do you want others to experience you? Envision that in your mind's eye, feel it in your body and then ...

5. Step in and reboot. Keep doing this over and over again anytime you check out or lose presence.

Fortunately, the more you practice your reboots, the easier they become.

You, Yes, You

The Essential You is *you* at the core of it all. This is the authentic you, not the you that your boss or partner or organization or society or even your mother thinks you should be. Just you.

You are at the center of the model, because leadership starts with you. Consider this "home base." This is where we dive into your core values, your purpose or "why," the vision for your life (or your culture or organization if you're applying the model to your company), your beliefs and desires, and your natural state. This is also where we explore how to work with your space as a contagious leader. We'll call this space your "bubble."

With everything you have to engage with every day, it's essential to be able to "Bubble Up" so you can create space for yourself to breathe and lead from. Your bubble is a sanctuary and an important first step in grounded leadership.

Inside the bubble is your stuff: your hopes, dreams, fears, energy, creativity, power, lightness, darkness, beliefs, presence, all of it. Outside of the bubble is the rest of the world's stuff: their hopes, dreams, fears, energy, lightness, darkness, projections, demands and to-dos for you. Their stuff is their stuff — especially the stuff they want you to do or be.

SUMMARY: CONTAGIOUS CULTURE

The main reason we want to nurture our bubble and hold our space is so that we stay clear and aware of what energy belongs to us and what doesn't.

By using the concept of the bubble, we make it easier to stay true to our own authentic energy without changing it to match someone else's.

If you find yourself not feeling clear or strong, take a moment to refill your bubble with your own energy. If there's anything holding you back, or if it feels like other people's negative energy keeps getting in there, no worries; let that stuff go. Notice it, and release it back to its rightful owner. The bubble is a practice of intention, and the more you do it, the stronger your bubble becomes.

Values and Purpose. Your values are the things that drive you. They're what's important to you, what you stand for, what you hold dear. They're you. Your purpose is why you get out of bed in the morning. It's what you want your life and your impact to be about.

When you are on track with purpose, there's energy and inspiration. Burnout does not exist. When you are disconnected from purpose, burnout and resentment build, sleepiness occurs, you hear a lot of "I'm tired. I'm in a funk. I need to be inspired." When values are dishonored, they flare and deflate and create disconnection. Feeling the ick, feeling out of integrity and getting triggered by the littlest things can all tie back to misaligned and dishonored values and purpose. It's all related.

You need to be present and pay attention to what's true for you. Your body and intuition, your friends' reflections, the questions you ask yourself, the stories you tell and what you do all point to your values and purpose every day. The more aware you are of your core values and the more in alignment you are with them, the better, clearer, stronger and more grounded you'll feel — and the more solid your leadership and message. It doesn't mean you're honoring them perfectly — it means you know where you are, and you take full ownership for them.

When you're present and grounded in the Essential You (your bubble, your vision, your values, your purpose), you're working your Internal and External IEP to set yourself up for success, and you're working your leadership skills and competencies to get done what you want to get done, you're better set up for impact.

Setting Yourself Up for Success

There are two quadrants of Internal IEP: Physical and Environmental Energy and Mental and Emotional Energy. They are often the most foundational, offering the quickest and highest leverage in optimizing one's presence and impact.

The Physical and Environmental Energy Quadrant includes things like self-care, food, hydration, closets, calendars, wellness practices, health care, travel wellness, hygiene, the people you hang out with, your home, your office space and other things that have a huge impact on your internal energy.

Anything you put into your body, do with your body or surround your body with has an impact on your Physical and Environmental Energy. You have a ton of control here.

If you think of your body as an instrument for impact and as a partner that you are in a very important relationship with, things open up. You can be more intentional with eating food that fuels you, supports the relationship and gives you a stronger energetic field.

You must be your own advocate and driver for feeling good.

Intentionally nourishing your Mental and Emotional Energy field is another quick and high leverage way to build a strong Internal IEP foundation.

The Mental and Emotional Energy Quadrant includes things like your thoughts, assumptions and beliefs, your focus, your complaints and how much space you leave for authentic emotion. Anything you think, feel or make up has an impact on your Mental and Emotional Energy. You also have a ton of control here.

Mental and Emotional Energy bleeds into everything: your level of productivity, how you show up, how you feel, your presence, how you navigate conflict, even the tone in which you respond to email. What you think impacts how you feel, which impacts how you show up.

Showing Up for Success

Just like Internal IEP, External IEP has its own two quadrants. The third quadrant, Vibrational Energy, is about the energy you bring to the table and how people experience you. The final and fourth quadrant, Relational Energy, is about how you show up in relationships and how you create healthy relationships.

Vibrational Energy is your third quadrant for nourishing and optimizing your Energetic Presence. While you have little control over how others "experience you," you have a ton of influence in how you set yourself up to show well. When it comes to presence, know this:

- You are always having an impact, and that impact is entirely up to you.
- What you put out there is constantly being cycled and reflected right back to you. You create your impact and experience.
- People may forget what you say and do, but they'll remember forever how you make them feel.

SUMMARY: CONTAGIOUS CULTURE

- The minute you walk into a room, onto a stage or into a meeting, you're being assessed for your presence: how you look, how you feel and how you make people feel.
- If you think Vibrational Energy and Presence don't apply to you, it's highly possible you have the most to gain from playing with it.

It's helpful to notice what you default to when it comes to presence. We all have a default presence; it's the presence we hold when we're not being intentional, when we think no one is paying attention to us, when we're simply not present. Furrowed brows, crossed arms, slumped shoulders — they all portray irritation or disinterest, and so often this is not reflective of what's going on. It's the default. Just being aware of it can often change it.

Your Vibrational Energy is contagious. Remember, the lowest vibration will win, unless you lead it.

Relational Energy is your fourth quadrant for nourishing and optimizing your Energetic Presence. Just as you have your own unique energetic field and presence, so do your relationships. Your IEP plays a big role in the energy of your relationships. You set the tone.

Every relationship you're in qualifies as a "system" — your team, your organizational culture, your partnerships, your marriage, family relationships and friendships. Each system has its own energy and dynamics.

Consider the relationships you have that make you soar; you feel amazing when you leave a conversation; you feel seen. Feel into *that* energy. Now consider the relationships that, when they pop up on caller ID or they walk into the room, you feel your heart sink. Feel into *that* energy.

While you have people who have that impact on you, you are also that person for others. Which person are you?

Remediating the challenging relationships starts with awareness and the desire to make it better. To address this by going straight to "fixing the culture" is a spiritual bypass. We want to address this individually and in the different relationships that make up the culture. As always, it starts with you.

If the relationship is rocking it, name it, thank it and let your person or team know how much it means to you. If the relationship is not rocking it, it needs more TLC, more intention, more truth telling and self-reflection, and ultimately more work. This will be as easy or as difficult as you choose to make it.

If you hang out with mission-driven people who take care of themselves, you're more likely to be mission driven and taking fine care of yourself. Hang out with people

who complain, focus on the "ick" and don't take care of themselves, and you're more likely to follow suit.

Consider the five people you spend the most time with, personally and professionally. Think of this core group of people as your "Posse." There are two things to consider: first, who you're spending your time with. Are these people a good influence on who you're becoming, or not? And second, you have an opportunity to be incredibly intentional and craft a professional Posse or advisory board. Whom do you want to surround yourself with?

The right Posse will provide you with the following benefits:

Community. Being a leader or an entrepreneur (or parent, teacher, human being, etc.) can be a very lonely venture; don't do it alone.

Support. Having people around you to champion what you're up to and believe in you will be priceless, providing wisdom and courage when you need it most.

Possibility. Seeing what your peers and colleagues do, how they generate, how they lead and how they navigate obstacles exposes you to new possibilities, ideas and opportunities you won't see alone.

Growth. Having people in your sphere committed to your being your best and rocking it with your work in the world provides you with great feedback and acceleration.

Care. Your Posse will love and support you through thick and thin. They'll see you as big, even when you're falling down. And they'll catch you, help you brush yourself off and then send you back out there to get bigger.

Having a Posse is a two-way street of reciprocity; the power is in connection, complementing skill sets and learning together.

You don't have to ditch anyone. Proactively search out people you want to surround yourself with. And with this new level of intention, enjoy as you find people serendipitously start to drift in and out of your sphere. ●

Showing Up for Others

Now that we've built your own personal internal foundation, we shift our focus to leading and Showing Up for others.

Out-Gracing "Busy" and Burnout

What's your organization's relationship with busy? We buy into this idea of being busy like it's a badge of honor. We've turned busy into the new "fine." Often we don't even realize we've been infected until someone, in a moment of care, presence and curiosity, asks, "Really?"

SUMMARY: CONTAGIOUS CULTURE

What are you so busy with?” And then we get to get present to what really is.

Having a lot going on is not going to go away. You likely have more to do than ever. And you can do it — maybe even all of it. It’s not about being less busy; it’s about being more intentional.

Personalize “busy,” and treat her as a friend. She’s here to inform you of when you’re feeling overwhelmed, when you need a reboot, when you need to be more intentional, and when you need to re-evaluate if you’re spending your time and leveraging yourself as optimally as possible. Busy can teach you to ask for help, to delegate and to intend better.

Burnout usually gets attributed to people working too hard or too long. But that’s just a piece of the puzzle. There are bigger factors at play, and all of them are addressable. More often, burnout comes from one or a combination of the following:

- Lack of connection to purpose in what one’s working on, resulting in boredom, disinterest and apathy.
- Lack of connection to people, not feeling seen or cared for and not having a shared sense of purpose.
- Lack of celebration, appreciation and acknowledgment for wins (little or big).
- Lack of safety for vulnerability, creative expression and authenticity.
- Lack of a reboot and recovery between projects or trips.
- Lack of empowerment and accountability, and not being and feeling well used.
- Lack of intention, presence and, therefore, boundaries.

These components alone are powerful, but put them all together and you have an epic recipe for disaster: burnout, attrition and losing your best people. If you see your people approaching burnout, don’t just write it off to working hard. Get curious — what else is going on? Get in there.

Growing Leaders

Your job is not just to lead; it’s to make others around you even better leaders than you are. Besides looking at a leader’s skills, presence and “hunger,” leadership can be assessed on three primary things: 1) How do you make people feel? Do they follow you because they want to or because they have to? 2) How effective are you at forwarding the vision and purpose of your charter? Are you and your people creating positive impact? 3) How many leaders are you creating and activating? Are you catalyzing and nurturing growth, setting people up to be even more successful than yourself?

In today’s business climate, doing good work, growing cool companies and putting good stuff out into the world is not enough anymore. In order to lead, innovate and create impact like we want and need to, we have to be growing even stronger and more purpose-driven leaders.

This means you have a tremendous opportunity — and responsibility — to Show Up, create space and hold a powerful “container of potential” for the leaders you lead. With strong and positive intent, solid energy and self-care, and an authentic and powerful presence to lead people with, people will want to follow you. You can grow them.

The size of the container you hold for people you lead is a big deal. It influences who they become, what they believe, what they’ll step into and how they’ll show up.

The container is what you believe is possible for this person (people often can’t see it for themselves) and the energetic space of potential you hold for him or her to step into. It’s an intention. When you point people to what you see is possible and the intention you hold for them, they get the gift of seeing their reflection in your eyes. They’re seeing what you believe they’re capable of.

What’s the size of the container you hold for your people? What’s the size of the container you hold for yourself? If you’re having a hard time holding a container for yourself, hold one for someone else. Nine times out of ten, when we’re struggling with our own stuff, the best way to move through it is to go and contribute to another human being.

Life-Giving Engagements, Agreements and Meetings

In the land of impact and culture, meetings and live engagements are some of the most powerful places we have to ensure that our interactions are life-giving, forward-moving and, at a minimum, meaningful. Even a two-minute encounter can have positive ripple effects on someone else’s day — if it’s done intentionally and you Show Up.

You can have the best agenda and the best presence, but if the environment is weak, the food is not nourishing or you all show up exhausted, you’ve lost a huge energetic opportunity.

Before you even plan the meeting, get clear on the why, the what, the how and the who. What do you want to get out of this meeting? Who should be at it — truly?

The point of having agreements set up is so that everyone can show up well, be safe and do their best work together. There are several types of agreements. Cultural agreements are implicit in your cultural values.

SUMMARY: CONTAGIOUS CULTURE

Organizational or relational agreements are generally set as a location, as a team or in partnership and are operating at all times. And special agreements may be set for a specific meeting or conversation.

Team agreements will often change over time. The agreements are generally a reflection of what the team values and also any challenges or tensions the team may be experiencing. For example, if the team creates an agreement for *direct engagement*, it means no talking behind one another's backs and taking issues to one another directly. If a team has an agreement of *time integrity*, it may be because they all value timeliness, or often it's because lateness has been an issue in the organization.

Work with your team to figure out which agreements will serve you most. And then revisit them. Agreements are living partners to help us connect, learn and do our best work together. Agreements grow as you do. ●

Showing Up for Culture

Culture can be seen on two levels: what the company is *doing* for culture and who leaders are *being*.

The doing can include things like how leaders manage schedules, do training and feedback, set up their environment, manage HR policies, conduct onboarding and exiting processes, and lead meetings, how much fun they have, how they support connection, what kind of food and perks they have in place. What you do is important. All of it provides structure and support for your culture.

The being includes things like organizational values and purpose and how a leader shares them (or not). It also can include how each person shows up as a leader, how leaders regard one another, how they deal with conflict or challenges, and whether they assume good in one another or the worst. The being is in how every single person (especially you) Shows Up.

You can feel the being in the energy of the culture as well: the energy you feel when you get off the elevator or walk in the front door, the amount of care, comfort and integrity you feel just sitting in the room. The feeling people get from the vibe is the culture. The unspoken agreements and ways of being that people have with each other is the culture. How people feel is the culture.

Organizational Needs for a Healthy Culture

The seven core components to build trust, create positive energy, and create an environment where people

can show up authentically and powerfully (at work, at home and in any of your relationships) are

- Shared values, vision and purpose
- The intention of contribution and service
- Safety to show up, speak the truth and take risks
- Curiosity and vulnerability
- Accountability and ownership
- Reciprocity
- Conscious measurement and rewards

Creating a Culture People *Want* to Catch

What's the difference between a company that creates positive contagions and one that creates negative contagions? Here are five main indicators to consider:

1. The degree to which people feel they can honor their core values and pursue meaningful, purposeful work.
2. The degree to which people feel seen, heard, valued and connected.
3. The degree to which people feel they can make an impact.
4. The degree to which they can grow and be challenged and the size of the "container" people hold for themselves, their clients and one another.
5. The level of intentionality of every leader (and employee) in that company in how they show up and lead.

People want to contribute, they want to know their life matters, they want to get really good at stuff, they want to grow, they want freedom and they want to have an impact. Nurture these desires — these needs — in your organization, and you'll have a self-propelling culture driven by happy impact agents. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Contagious Culture*, you'll also like:

1. ***The High-Speed Company* by Laurence Haughton, Jason Jennings.** Jennings shares strategies demonstrated by businesses with proven records of creating cultures with strong purpose, trust and follow-through.
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