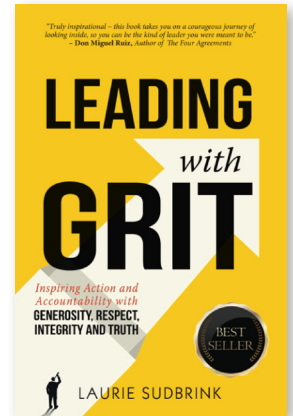


Leading with GRIT®

Inspiring Action and Accountability with Generosity, Respect, Integrity, and Truth

by **Laurie Sudbrink**



Contents

Introduction

Page 2

Integrity: Aligning Your Truth

Page 2

Respect: It's a Two-Way Street

Page 3

What Message Are You Sending?

Page 3

Just Say It!

Page 4

Conclusion: Keeping On Track

Page 4

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We've all worked at places we dreaded going to every day: jobs where we didn't feel valued, trusted, or heard; places devoid of trust, effective communication, and true motivation. In workplaces like these, loyalty goes out the window, little work gets done, and everyone looks out for themselves. Meanwhile, as we suffer, so does the quality of the product or service we're providing. Ultimately, no one is happy. We feel taken advantage of, overwhelmed, and helpless to make changes, and our employer is frustrated by the lack of productivity of his employees.

When experiencing these feelings, most of us will gossip rather than communicate openly, blame others rather than examine our own behavior, make assumptions rather than ask for clarification. These behaviors are at the root of a toxic workplace. In *Leading with GRIT®*, Laurie Sudbrink walks readers through the GRIT® system, designed to enhance communication, improve productivity, and maximize overall organizational health for any organization, large or small.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why the principles of GRIT® have been proven effective.
- How to apply GRIT® in communication for better productivity.
- How each person in an organization affects those around them in unexpected ways.
- How to cultivate a positive, constructive attitude for less stress and more growth.

Introduction

Your workplace may not be a total disaster, like some, but it could certainly be improved. Perhaps it could benefit from a decrease in complaining, or more willingness to share information, or maybe just a little less stress and a little more productivity. Whatever the level of misery, there is usually room for improvement. Sometimes a one to two-degree shift in perspective can produce a big difference. If we are mindful of some simple concepts, we can make that shift.

Leading with GRIT® provides a roadmap to improve individual and organizational health. In today's challenging times, we need tough characters to get the job done. While grit—having courage, resolution, and fortitude—is something we strive for, GRIT® provides the way. The principles of GRIT®—generosity, respect, integrity, and truth—create personal accountability, inspire ourselves and others to do our best, enhance team performance, and develop authentic leadership.

Freedom to Choose

Many of our experiences are based on the choices we make, either consciously or subconsciously. Our life is a reflection of our own beliefs and choices, and often we don't even realize that we are making choices. Sadly, it usually takes tragedies, near-death experiences, getting fired, or other forms of loss to wake us up. When these life events happen, reality hits us so hard that it makes us aware of life and the choices we have. But do we really need that kind of shock treatment to wake us up? Experiencing a tragedy is also no guarantee that we will wake up and recognize our options and choices. Just imagine if we could become aware and see the value of making positive changes in our lives without first enduring that tragedy. We could realize our plight and potentially prevent negative repercussions, all by making different choices.

We can't always control what happens in life, but we can control the way we react to it. We can blame others or bad luck, or we can ask ourselves what we can learn from our experiences.

We can use the faith we have in ourselves and other people to help us through. We can choose to live life to the fullest and do our best with the hand we're dealt. We can find humor in the situation and lighten up a little. Just making a choice to be grateful, appreciative, and happy will return joy to our lives, at work and at home.

Truth: The Core

The notion of truth, above all, connotes honesty. Are you honest with yourself? Do you really know who you are and what you believe in? Or are you wearing masks just to please others?

Can you look objectively at your situation, while still having confidence in yourself? Or are you playing victim, so others feel sorry for you? It's about being who you really are, fearlessly, rather than worrying what others think about you. When you're aligned with your truth, you don't change who you are to meet someone else's expectations; you change only to align better with your personal truth. (We'll cover aligning to your truth more in the next chapter on integrity.)

Brené Brown, in *The Gifts of Imperfection*, says, "Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we're supposed to be and embracing who we are" (Brown, 2010). In the GRIT® model, authenticity combines both truth and integrity. Authenticity is aligning to your truth. But first we must start at truth so we have something to align to. This is where we begin to examine our beliefs and what is truly important to us. Throughout our lives, other people have influenced us. Along our path, many of us have lost ourselves; we're out of touch with who we truly are and what makes us genuinely happy. We've altered our behavior or made choices to please our parents, teachers, partners, or friends. Once we come back to the core truth that defines us, we begin the path to GRIT®.

Integrity: Aligning Your Truth

Think back to a time when you did something because someone else wanted you to, even though you really didn't want to do it. You said 'yes' to a project that you didn't have time for, or you agreed to have that tough conversation with a coworker that the boss should have had. Or maybe you gave up an important personal commitment for work. What was your energy level like? What were you feeling? For most of us, our energy level is low, and there's usually some negative emotion involved. We feel overwhelmed, drained, and resentful. If we pay attention to this, we'll know when we are not in integrity.

Integrity is aligning your actions with your truth. If you look up the definition of integrity, you'll see it's about honesty and moral character, being whole or complete, and being unimpaired or perfect. In GRIT®, integrity is about being in alignment with your truth, and in that context, we

are looking at it as being whole, complete, or balanced. You are doing the things that you say are important to you, in a balanced way.

Respect: It's a Two-Way Street

Respect is a word we've heard a lot, from our parents telling us to respect our elders to Aretha Franklin belting out each letter, soulfully demanding respect. Respect is about having admiration for someone; it's about accepting what is without attempting to change it; it's caring about a thing or a person, having consideration, objectively looking at a person or situation; it's acknowledgment and courtesy. Respect can be both given and received, and if we don't have self-respect, it's difficult if not impossible to respect someone else—or to be respected. People will value and respect you in accordance with the value and respect that you place upon yourself.

Respect should not be confused with tolerance. Tolerance is putting up with something or someone. Your energy is more negative and focused on yourself in tolerance. With respect, you are more focused on the subject, and you feel more positive or at least neutral. For example, rather than putting up with your employees, you see them as the vital ingredient for success. Effective leadership is virtually impossible without respect: respect for yourself, respect for the people you serve, and respect for the reality of your situations.

Generosity: The More You Give, the More You Get

Can you imagine if you genuinely felt like you had plenty of time: plenty of time to do the things you wanted to do, plenty of time to listen fully to your child, plenty of time to help your coworker, plenty of time to hear what is being said? How would it feel to not be rushed, overwhelmed, stressed out; to actually feel happy and productive on a consistent basis?

When you are living in integrity with your truth, and you respect yourself and others, you will naturally feel generous; it's not forced. You'll have aligned yourself properly, so your generosity is channeled in a way that makes sense for you. You have enough to go around. You've charged your own battery, you're happy, and you care about others. You feel like you have enough time, you have enough patience, you have enough energy—you simply have enough! Generosity is the reward for the work put in with truth, integrity, and respect.

The Key to Efficient Change

Any way you look at it, change is growth. Change stretches our brains, and our brains actually love the exercise of change. It's what keeps us young and happy, if we embrace it rather than resist it. You can change your thoughts and beliefs about change. Think of change as improvement, and no matter how painful, believe that it is always leading to something better. Those first few days when you start working out and your muscles are screaming— you know it's leading to something better. It may not always feel that way, but trust in the laws of nature and remember how much our thoughts and beliefs control us. “Your life does not get better by chance, it gets better by change,” said Jim Rohn.

Okay, we all know that stuff happens! When something happens that you find yourself resisting, remember to stop and say, “I chose this; I want this,” even if you don't believe it and even if it sounds crazy. Remember, your mind is a tool. Convince your mind that you chose the change, and you will feel completely different. Since you can't change it once it's happened, you may as well accept it and move on. The only way to change the future is by changing the present.

Can You Hear Me Now?

When we are completely present and listening with our hearts, it is a gift to those on the receiving end. This is pure generosity, and it sets the law of giving and receiving in motion, as we saw with the driver. Because many people don't receive enough of this kind of listening, it's safe to say that most of us could improve our listening skills, especially within the relationships that are most important to us.

As we dug into GRIT® earlier, we discovered that when we know our priorities, and we stay aligned, we respect ourselves and others and are generous in the right places. Listening is a prime example of this, one that's crucial for any relationship.

What Message Are You Sending?

While listening skills are critical to communication, equally important is the message you send. Since beliefs are internal and invisible to the outside world, words and actions are the only tools we have to communicate these beliefs and inspire trust. When we improve our messaging, listening becomes easier for others. It's a win-win.

I find it ironic that we're supposed to have the most sophisticated communication system of all animals, and quite frankly, we're not so good at it. We avoid saying what we really should say, we don't listen with the intention of understanding, we judge what someone is saying, and we start arguing before we even understand. We don't have to like or agree with everything, but if we could just reach a level of understanding, there would be a lot less miscommunication and negative drama.

With GRIT®, we are more mindful of the messages we send. We're thinking about what the other person is receiving. We strive to provide the truth, use the best method to communicate, think of everything the person may need to know, and say it the best way we can, so they can hear it. Our intent is to help, and, hey, maybe we can lighten up and give the gift of laughter to help people relax and enjoy life a bit more.

Just Say It!

Whether it's saying no, standing up for yourself, pointing out something that needs to change, or even saying something positive, ironically, the things we need to say the most are the things we avoid saying. Or we wait until we're so frustrated or angry that we lash out with hurtful words or talk behind the person's back-damaging important relationships. Why does this happen?

There could be a number of reasons that we don't say what we need to. Sometimes we're afraid it will be taken the wrong way, or we just don't know how to say it. Often we want to avoid conflict altogether. Many of us don't want to open that can of worms. When we communicate with

GRIT®, there is no avoidance, no hesitation, no effort. It's easy to say what you need to say.

The Ripple Effect

When we feel we have no control over circumstances, it can be easy for us to then use those circumstances as an excuse to blame and complain and even become stuck, waiting for something to change. If we realize this is the reality of the situation, and then we consider how we can make an impact, we will shift to feeling that we can make a difference. Sure, maybe we don't own the company, or we feel like we don't have a high enough position to make changes, but we can still have an impact. It's been frequently reported that people don't leave companies; people leave their managers. As a manager, you have a direct influence on your team, and you can make a difference. Leaders set the stage. We are responsible for creating the culture that people are attracted to and feel committed to being a part of.

Conclusion: Keeping On Track

Transforming your workplace culture begins by envisioning a new one— one in which people can't wait to come to work. They are open, friendly, communicating clearly and directly, and helping each other stay on track. But if we want our people to step up and take ownership, we have to empower them. That's how good intentions become the GRIT® system in practice for not only the immediate present, but for the future.



Laurie Sudbrink established Unlimited Coaching Solutions, Inc. in 1999. Her proprietary system of GRIT®(Generosity, Respect, Integrity and Truth) has inspired tens of thousands of participants to take control of their own happiness and productivity at work. She is widely known as a dynamic speaker whose work ranges from small organizations to fortune 500 and has delivered workshops and keynotes at business and higher education conferences around the world.

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