



Do Big Things

The Simple Steps Teams Can Take to Mobilize Hearts and Minds, and Make an Epic Impact

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Based on 25 years of empirical data across as many industries from companies of all sizes, *Do Big Things* decodes a once mystifying formula — a pattern of thinking and behaving that teams have utilized in all arenas to overcome extraordinary challenges and deliver big outcomes with team members who have their whole heart in it. With this summary, your team can replicate the powerful and sustainable framework that enables team members to inherently practice the traits you know are essential to delivering transformative outcomes.

The seven steps in the Do Big Things (DBT) Framework put a tangible road map at your fingertips, so your team can use every interaction to model the thinking and actions needed to succeed in today's pressurized workplace. In clear, logical discussions, the authors explain each part of the framework with experienced insight and illuminating examples from the real world so you can seamlessly implement it with your team.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To model the self-awareness, emotional courage and integrity necessary to bring your best to every interaction.
- To demonstrate the empathy and transparency necessary to activate and bring out the best in others.
- To function with an enterprise mindset, so, as one team, you can connect across the business with other teams to deliver shared objectives.



by Craig W. Ross,
Angela V. Paccione and
Victoria L. Roberts

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: DO BIG THINGS

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Teams That Do Big Things

Is your team equipped to deliver big things? A word of caution: Many who have gone before you into uncharted territory have mistakenly thought that the key to their team's successes (survival!) was a matter of equipping themselves with a new structure, software, process or rearranging where people sit or dine. Most of those teams have not been heard from again. Their work was at best marginal and, therefore, forgotten.

That's because it is not merely how your team is structured or the equipment and resources in your hands that you'll need for success today. It's something more — much more.

Teams are increasingly desperate for knowing *how* as humans they'll achieve the *what*. We're functioning in what the U.S. military coined a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world. The disconnect is obvious: Employers are pulling employees together, calling them a team, giving them a directive and expecting them to deliver results quickly.

But such teams can't. The way teams came together before won't work in today's intense, fast-changing world. When organizations fail to grasp the wisdom that the method for teaming successfully has changed, their approach can look like the antiquated change model depicted below:

- Announce the new initiative the company needs to meet lightning-quick changes in the market.
- Form teams and assign people to roles.

- Tell people what to do and give them half of the resources needed to do it.
- Identify who is to blame for missed deliverables, milestones and budgets.

This common approach never gives teams a chance to do something significant. In moments of fatigue, as people are shuffled from project to project while enduring new demands, it's easy to think the bosses have gone mad. They can see what needs to get done yet can't find a way to get the team to operationalize the new vision.

Is Your Team's Whole Heart in It?

It's clear that there's a new requirement to succeed as a team today. The solution is refined and raw, sophisticated and practical, genius and basic, elegant and simple: It's heart. The ability for teammates to be at their human best and become bigger than anything they face — this is what many teams are starved for.

Teams significantly increase their odds of achieving big things when their whole heart is in it. Defined, this is the point at which the members of the team fully commit to bringing their full self to the team and its efforts to ensure successful outcomes — unconditionally. Now, with the personal integrity of each team member in action, the purpose of the team transcends personal position, ambition and recognition.

This whole heart is what collapses the idealistic into the realistic. Teams that possess it passionately own their plan to deliver on the big thing in front of them. These are the teams where people speak straight and remain optimistic when the data say they shouldn't — because they know what they are capable of and what's possible.



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The Do Big Things Framework

The Do Big Things (DBT) Framework is the method teams practice (whether they know it or not) to transform how they think and act together so they can deliver transformative outcomes. The DBT Framework provides the language teams use to transform and quickly elevate their power and effectiveness. It's how everyone on the team aligns to a powerful and singular focus necessary to achieve the big objective in front of them — and deliver the greatest impact to the business while seizing the opportunity to be better human beings along the way.

The DBT Framework doesn't require any of us to change who we are. Instead, it activates and amplifies the brilliance we already possess. The work of doing big things does not require *doing* more; it is a method for *being* more.

This wisdom is one of the primary reasons why the DBT Framework is so powerful: Its mechanics are always turned on, and always available to us. Here are the seven steps of the DBT Framework:

1. **Commit** to the human imperative. Identify and align as team members to the human thinking and actions essential for delivering the business imperative. Often born from a sense of caring for one another, this is the transformative manner in the way team members perceive each other that sets the stage for values to be put into action.
2. **Embody** success (and leverage failure). Team members personify the spirit of the success they seek while they pursue their lofty objectives. When excellence is who we are (rather than what we will be someday), even the hardships we encounter make us better and stronger as a team.
3. **Choose** to make three decisions: contribute, activate and connect across the business. Each team member decides to bring their best to every situation and bring out the best in those with whom they interact. Then, together, they choose to partner across the business to deliver shared objectives.
4. **Exercise** your barrier-breaking authority. The team determines what stands between them and success — both real and perceived. Then, by controlling what they can control, team members act upon their inherent authority to choose their response in daily situations.
5. **Focus** on what matters. The team uses the *3 Mind Factors* to concentrate on and deliver what causes big things to be achieved: the relationships and teamwork necessary to succeed.
6. **Energize** around a shared reality. Team members should address issues with a similar frame of mind, enable people to better tell the truth and function with authenticity. This step facilitates the needed skills of adaptability and accountability required to do big things.
7. **Mobilize** hearts and minds forward. Empower the team to own their role in delivering a stronger future. Use questions that mobilize hearts and minds forward, so everyone internalizes and delivers the team's business imperative.

The DBT Framework is how each team member can be accountable to that responsibility. By using the DBT Framework, we move beyond talk about what behaviors are important — and get busy with the how. ●

Teams That Flatline

In order for the DBT Framework to enable your team to truly make an epic impact on the business, it's critical that beliefs about how to best develop teams are checked.

What does your team believe is the best way to develop the thinking and actions necessary to do big things? For certain, the end of teamwork (as we know it) is at hand. Actually, it's been over for quite some time. How we teamed together before isn't effective in the turbulent times of today.

Teams rarely flatline and fail because they lack technical skills. Far more often, the catastrophe that occurs can be traced to outdated beliefs about what's required to develop the team's ability to effectively work together.

To develop the team, you must develop the *whole* team. Culture change occurs as the members of the team, armed with greater shared awareness and consciousness, move through daily interactions, repeating and reinforcing their new skills. Natural accountability to elevated norms takes place as individuals sense that everyone else is changing.

This often results in accelerated improvement, as every interaction drives stronger behaviors. This is another reason why the DBT Framework is so effective: It provides a holistic method for accomplishing systemic change in the team.

In order to succeed, speed and efficiency must be combined with team members' collective skill of adaptability. The planning required to do big things is more critical

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than ever, and it must include steps to equip those executing the plan with the ability to adapt to conditions that are unpredictable when the plan is conceived. And what's necessary for teams to be able to adapt? Organizations are rightly focusing on empowerment, the buzz word of this era. However, empowerment is only a part of what's necessary for teams to adapt.

When team members develop greater emotional and cognitive plasticity together (and every step in the DBT Framework supports in accomplishing this), they build the capability to adapt in a way that sticks. Increasingly, the team then stays focused on the overall plan or objective while also being able to adjust or modify their thinking and actions in that plan when they make discoveries.

Growth is caused by teams that grow stronger. When team members are intrinsically motivated and know they will be better and stronger as individuals and as a team when they reach the finish line, inspiration occurs more frequently. This causes them to grow, which means the organization will do the same. ●

Step 1:

Commit to the Human Imperative

The practice of effective teaming begins with identifying, aligning and equipping team members with the ability to model the thinking and actions essential to success for that unique team. That's why committing to the human imperative is the first step in the DBT Framework.

Defined, the human imperative is this: Team members identify and align to the specific thinking and the inherent behaviors necessary to deliver their business imperative. This is the act of bringing the best of humanity into the work you do. In other words, has your team answered this question: Who do we need to be as people — together — to succeed as a team?

Committing to the human imperative means the team incorporates into their business plan how they will be accountable for putting those behaviors into practice. No one can predict human behaviors until the team determines which human behaviors are a priority. Until your team's human imperative has been defined and committed to, you can predict that the thinking and behaviors of your team will be unpredictable. And this behavior can and should be expected.

No team can do big things by being passive with the human qualities we all know are essential for success. You can dramatically speed up the development of the trust

your team needs by going first: Be the one who cares even more.

It's important to note that caring for a teammate doesn't mean you have to be friends with them. Caring means you still believe each teammate has worth as a person, and therefore, it's valuable to protect and amplify their value.

In this way, the human imperative is a moral imperative. As teammates care about one another more, the resulting behaviors transform the team.

How to Determine the Team's Human Imperative

When your team commits to a unique human imperative that they identify, the team is reinforcing a reason to believe they will succeed. Here's how effective teams do this, and so can you.

After you turn off the computer, facilitate a discussion with the team using questions from three specific categories. These questions work because they tap into something that matters to us all:

- 1. Thinking** of the human imperative: How do we want to operate as a team that can do big things? What behaviors as a team do we want to represent us to the rest of the organization?
- 2. Feeling** and experiencing the human imperative: What has been your experience on teams that function with tremendous confidence even though the job in front of you is huge?
- 3. Doing** and delivering the human imperative: What specifically does the teamwork necessary to do our big thing look like in action?

Committing to the human imperative and doing big things better frees people to optimize their strengths. Team members are elevated beyond personal motives, and the entire team gains a nearly unstoppable power, in no small part because their top talent stays on the team. ●

Step 2:

Embody Success (and Leverage Failure)

Teams that possess confidence that they can achieve big things feel that way because they utilize a process to team effectively. That's what the DBT Framework is: a step-by-step approach to thinking and actions designed to enable the team to do big things in all circumstances.

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Teams that do big things don't wait for success to act like a success. They act like a success first because they have or quickly create a reliable teaming process to give them the confidence they need.

To learn how likely your team is to embody success, it's useful to ask the team this question: What are our primary motivations for succeeding that are top of mind for us? When a team is predominantly exposed to extrinsic motivators, team members are conditioned to develop an external locus of control. If this is the case for your team, act quickly.

How to Leverage Failure

Big objectives are big for a reason: They're complex, almost always entail significant amounts of change and test a team's strength in ways that are often underestimated at the beginning. Things rarely go as planned. Therefore, the best time to measure a team's ability to embody success is to observe its response in failure. When you embody success, even in times of trouble, you look like everything is going according to plan.

The teams that do big things don't blink, retreat or assume a defensive posture when a mistake is made. They possess an accountability reflex: an ability to quickly adapt to unplanned situations, respond effectively and leverage the failure.

The magic of this reflex isn't created when failure occurs. What makes the difference and determines the type of response your team demonstrates is what the team did early on, long before any failure was experienced. Specifically, development steps are accomplished that create the conditions for team members to be transparent, demonstrate ownership of their responsibilities, stay focused on solutions and mobilize themselves and others forward.

Intrinsically motivated teams won't be seen succumbing to fits of rage, defeatism, blame or other self-defense tactics. Instead, their emotions center on trust, particularly of the most important sort: trust of self and each other. ●

Step 3:

Choose to Contribute, Activate and Connect Across the Business

Every profession has seen teams flatline and slide away forgotten. Equally true, the past is full of remarkable teams, in all arenas, that didn't have exceptional talent or leadership yet still found a way to succeed in big ways.

What's the common denominator? What is it those teams do, regardless of talent and leadership levels, that enables them to do big things? Nearly every team that's achieved something extraordinary had team members that made three specific decisions. And in doing so, they amplified the leadership and talent they had, which put them in a far better position to succeed.

The 3 Do Big Things (DBT) Decisions enable team members to cut through the noise and do what's right and best for the team. Once teams are enabled to make the 3 DBT Decisions, a large volume of those decisions are made more effectively, quickly and in ways that improve a person's ability to do what they want to do: Demonstrate the greatness they have within them.

The Contributor Decision

Choosing to bring your best to the situation you're in is making the choice to give yourself. It's selflessness in action, knowing you're a part of something bigger than you. For many, this decision is the act of determining that you won't compromise your values — that you will be true to yourself and live authentically. This is when you resolve to be who you know you are, where you put your whole heart into the matter at hand.

The Activator Decision

Choosing to bring out the best in others means you're making the choice to activate their greater potential. It's a decision that begins with an understanding that others have stored or unrealized greatness. This sort of belief is in high demand in workplaces today, as it is a powerful mechanism to ensure the team becomes far greater than the sum of the people on the team.

The Connector Decision

The choice to partner across the business is the collective decision by the team to form a broader team that delivers a shared goal. It's a decision that communicates to others certain beliefs: We are confident in who we are as a team. We won't play a zero-sum game. We are stronger together. This decision requires an enterprise mindset in which the team can see its role in the larger organization.

Your Most Important Role

What's the most important role you play at work? Is it an individual contributor? A manager? Executive? The finance go-to? A project management guy?

The most critical role you play is teammate. When a majority of team members embrace this mindset, the research shows that the team sets the conditions for

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optimizing its collective talents. Team members impact the business far more, and they elevate their personal contributions (and, ironically, usually elevate their careers, too).

To be certain, then, the 3 DBT Decisions are not roles. They're decisions. Delivering on your functional role is the responsibility of your job. Yet, it is the duty of each teammate, regardless of role, to use their power to bring their best, bring out the best in others and ensure the team is connected to the whole. ●

Step 4:

Exercise Your Barrier-Breaking Authority

Step 4 in the DBT Framework — exercise your barrier-breaking authority — is powerful because it quickly translates into action what so many teams know in their guts. When a team is disciplined in identifying what stands between them and success and concentrates solely on what it can control rather than what it can't, success comes faster. And it's a far more fulfilling process for all involved.

The Barriers to Success

Your team will break through barriers much faster when it can see and understand them. Therefore, teams that do big things ask important questions, such as the following: Are we focused on what the business most needs us to influence? Can we identify what's between us and success? Are all team members equipped to take effective action?

Here are three steps for teams to take to begin breaking through the barriers they face:

1. Name the barrier. Discuss whether a barrier is real, perceived or symptomatic. By naming it, the team better understands a shared reality and is enabled to focus on what matters.
2. Address real barriers by identifying the thinking and actions themed across all of the barriers.
3. Focus on what you can control and rewrite the team's narrative. Identify the necessary thinking and actions to do big things. Partner with others in the organization who can support your team in influencing processes and decision-making.

Regardless of the type of barrier, in order to succeed in these three steps, the members of the team must then exercise their barrier-breaking authority.

Authority: Take It or Leave It

As teams work toward their business objective, conditions and circumstances appear that present themselves as barriers: obstacles that restrain or obstruct the team from progress. This is when teams that do big things model this truth: Each person on the team possesses and exercises their barrier-breaking authority.

This isn't, of course, the authority to make strategy, planning, budgetary or other decisions. That's largely determined by roles people have on the team. This barrier-breaking authority is formed in the wisdom that we are all autonomous beings and therefore can make the human decision to do our best, regardless of our circumstances.

By exercising your barrier-breaking authority, your team is free to do what you've wanted to do all along: deliver great work. The next step then, is to focus on what matters most. ●

Step 5:

Focus on What Matters

How do we focus on what matters? Oddly enough, the answer is the same as the answer to the question, "How do we focus on those things that distract, hopelessly stress and disconnect us?" That sounds strange, but it's true. The solution, therefore, is not for us to change our brains; it is to train our brains to do what we want them to do instead of what our brains want to do.

Mind Factor #1: The Mind Can Only Focus on One Thought at a Time

You can do different things at once, such as walk, chew gum and have a discussion with another person. But facts are facts: As you move through the day, your mind can only focus on one thought at a time.

We may be able to physically do multiple things at once, but we only hold one concentrated thought at a time. And when we continually switch from one focus to another, it saps the attention needed for full and concentrated engagement.

Mind Factor #2: The Mind Cannot Avoid a *Don't*

Our brains are wired to scan our surroundings for risks. Constantly and often unconsciously, we are searching for threats to our well-being. This wiring, however, comes with an ironic twist: When we identify that which can cause us harm, we focus on it.

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The brain can't resist thinking about the "don't" messages it receives. The very thing we don't want to think, say, feel or do occurs with a frequency triggered by how distracted and stressed we are.

Ultimately, teams that do big things are far more productive because they stay focused on what they want instead of what they don't want.

Mind Factor #3: The Mind Goes Toward Its Focus

Since we can only focus on one thought at a time, when the brain receives new information, it checks it against the current beliefs in our frame of reality. "Does this information fit in my truth?" the brain asks. If not, it has a tendency to quickly dismiss the new information.

When teammates meet another team member who holds different beliefs, perspectives and experiences, a tragedy occurs: The difference of ideas (which the company desperately needs to succeed) slides to judgments about each other. And suddenly, really good people with big hearts begin to care less about one another. Trust, collaboration, communication — the behaviors we all know are essential to succeed — disappear.

But these teams can get their whole heart back in it. Teams committed to the human imperative can do so quickly as long as they're equipped with a method to better master their focus. With the 3 Mind Factors, team members are better enabled to deliver the imperatives rather than letting their brains deliver something far more dreadful: a team that flatlines. ●

Step 6:

Energize Around a Shared Reality

No matter whether for profit or not, education or government — teams that consistently do big things have an undeniable ability to frame a shared reality and then approach events, issues or problems in a common and energizing way. In other words, it's less about what these teams do. It's how they do it that makes the difference.

Your brain has established neural pathways, mechanisms by which information travels, that with repetition become deep grooves of thinking. The result is an autopilot effect: You don't have to think much about what you're doing.

As a result, the behaviors of team members become predictable due to the formation and reinforcement of neural pathways in the brain; repeated focus results in replicated thinking that drives the same behaviors.

When members of a team default to outdated or destructed neural pathways, the focus — and therefore thinking and actions — drives unhealthy conflict due to always following the same lines of concentration. And to be certain: A team that can't process and exchange information together can't work together.

Teams that are high achieving have constructed distinct and powerful norms when it comes to how they process information together. Specifically, they establish similar neural pathways together that are productive and effective at navigating and aligning the team forward far more collaboratively. Collectively, the intelligence of the team, along with its ability to work together, measurably increases.

This is when a phenomenon occurs. As team members focus forward together, it translates into the experience of expanding and bigger energy. As a result, rather than developing a narrative or way of thinking that diminishes the team's effectiveness, a team can purposefully stimulate and energize itself in seconds. Now, individually and collectively, people are elevating the best of who they are in a new, shared reality.

The Power of a Shared Reality

In teams that do big things, at some point in the team's maturation, something clicks. They move from pitting realities against one another and leave behind old frames of the way things used to be. And they form, see and function from a reality they created together. Most often, this occurs when there's a frequent focus on a shared objective or motive.

Teams that do big things can make an epic impact. They know that changing and elevating behaviors is not an intellectual exercise. It's the business of the heart. Teams that bring only intellectual energy to their efforts will increasingly struggle in today's data-rich world. It doesn't matter so much what any of us see; it matters more how we experience what we see together. The more meaning we have in our work, the more energy we have for our work. The more meaning we have when we're together, the more meaningful the impact we make together. ●

Step 7:

Mobilize Hearts and Minds Forward

Teams with their whole heart in it ultimately succeed because they take great care to manage their focus and the direction of their energy. Therefore, they are compelled to take action and mobilize themselves

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forward. This means that, individually, teammates use their self-awareness to summon the emotional courage necessary to actuate their potential. The team then comes together and puts in motion a forward-focused energy that has the power necessary to achieve the significant objective in front of them.

A team's ability to succeed today is directly correlated to a team's ability to cocreate an image of where they're going and how to get there.

Teams that are serious about achieving their objectives execute brilliantly on the seventh step of the DBT Framework. The fact is there are a lot of ways to mobilize hearts and minds, including telling inspiring stories, appealing to a shared world view and leveraging what motivates others.

There is only one technique, however, that enables you to leverage any of the methods listed and make certain that an intrinsic response is activated within teammates. It's a fact: The human mind cannot resist a well-timed or well-phrased inquiry. The moment any of us hear or think of a question, our focus is concentrated on the thought that was triggered by the question. And whatever direction your focus goes, so does your energy.

It's not enough for just the leader to ask questions. If teams are going to do big things, then every team member must be equipped to ask the types of questions that mobilize hearts and minds forward.

Teams that masterfully execute are those whose members find more meaning in their work. Their hearts and minds have been mobilized. This is accomplished by asking higher classes of questions that activate a greater consciousness. ●

Is Your Team Ready to Do Big Things?

You can effectively predict how well prepared your team is to do big things by measuring the level of technical and aligned capabilities the team possesses in proportion to how much the team's whole heart is in the matter at hand. The device to do this is the Team Heart Quotient (THQ), which measures the essential elements that contribute to teams that Do Big Things as compared with teams that have only heart or only high capability — or teams that lack either one.

At this moment, your team is one of four types of teams:

- 1. DBT Teams:** Capable of sustained, robust and regularly improving results. Teams are aligned with strong technical skills, *and* they have the ability to
- 2. High-Performing Teams:** Capable of short bursts of high performance. The team has top talent that is aligned, *yet* team members too infrequently have their hearts and minds mobilized. Consequently, the team is at a high risk of being overwhelmed by negative human behaviors in the working environment.
- 3. Heart Attack Teams:** Capable of small spurts in results. Such teams possess a lack of skill or aligned talent, *yet* they demonstrate huge amounts of heroic courage, passion and commitment.
- 4. Despondent Teams:** Capable of only mediocre outcomes, at best. This team lacks skill, or the talent they do have is not aligned, *and* they are generally disheartened. Team members often conceal reality by focusing only on what they will do someday with little attention to how they will effectively improve.

The THQ assessment equips teams to measure the current state for your team and builds the awareness necessary for your team to take constructive steps forward.

Once your team has assessed where it stands with regard to THQ, it's important to take the next step of improving. And to be sure, no matter where your team is on the THQ assessment, you can improve — and do so quickly.

The most effective way to change behaviors of any team is not by training the team about targeted values, but by equipping teams to use their values to deliver on the human imperative. The difference between these two approaches is subtle; teams that regularly do big things understand that difference. ●

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Summary: *Committed Teams* by Derek Newberry, Madeline Boyer and Mario Moussa. Based on research at the Wharton School of Business, the authors provide tools for aligning members of your team behind a motivating vision, making team meetings efficient and productive and closing the gap between stated goals and actual behaviors.

Webinar: *How to Turn Problem People Into Productive Team Players* by Alan Willett. The control freak, the narcissist, the slacker, the cynic... Difficult people are the worst part of a manager's job. These troublesome behaviors need to be dealt with. Alan Willett turns this dreaded chore into a process that doesn't just improve behaviors but provides the opportunity to energize the whole team.