



Lucky #13:

Secrets from a Blue Angel's Boss



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What does the term culture mean to you? A positive culture serves as the life source of individuals and organizations alike. To achieve true happiness and success, it's vital to surround oneself with a culture of excellence. The elite Blue Angels have soared for more than 70 years with proven strategies and a lasting culture of excellence.

Without modifications in one's mindset and habits, a cultural transformation can't be successful. A transformation is merely an adjustment or a course correction on your life journey. Dedication and focus is required for such a life-altering change, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. Take some tips from a Blue Angels Boss and make the conscious decision to expand your frontier of human achievement.

The Transformational Mindset

Sometimes, our own way of thinking is our own worst enemy. Self-doubt, the fear of failure, the harangues and ridicules of our internal critic—it's all too easy to convince ourselves we've already achieved everything that we ever will or can. Contrary to this train of thought, your best course of action is never to accept the status quo. You must believe your contribution to this world includes more than what you've already achieved.



By *not* accepting that status quo thrust on you by your peers, and by believing in yourself, you will unlock the inner passion, drive, and confidence that it takes to reinvent yourself in a way you have never before experienced. As cliché as it may sound, transformational mindset is possible when you simply set your mind to it. Prepare yourself for this powerful, recalibrated way of thinking.

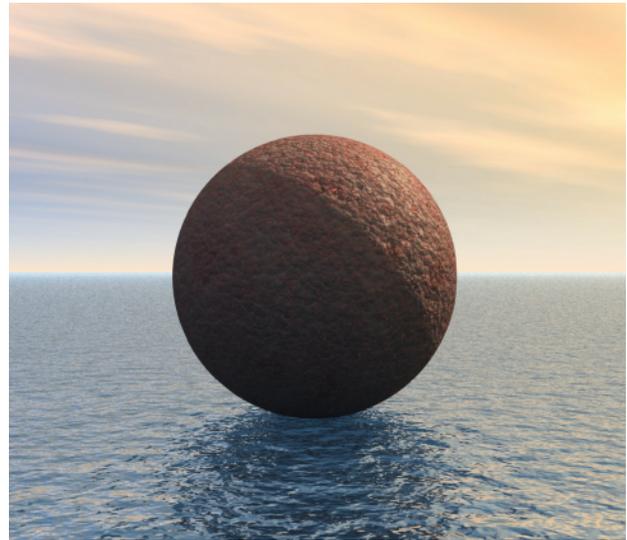
An Open Mind

The key to the transformational mindset is an open mind. The renovation of your individual outlook is no easy task. To successfully do so, you must dismantle years, maybe decades', worth of insecurities and fears as well as the self-sabotaging outlook they ultimately conjure. Additionally, you must learn to break through the mental barriers of what you've considered for so long as familiar and acceptable. To be truly successful in all that you do, begin by broadening your mental horizon and by recognizing there's a whole network of possibility in that expanded outlook. The same applies to your team and the members of your organization. Adopting an open mind begins a journey of transformation that leads to powerful innovation.

The professional space you reside in will only benefit from the expanse of your outlook. Achieving an open mind will allow you to affirm your own untapped potential, both personally and professionally. Instead of completing each day telling yourself you don't have what it takes to achieve your truest, innermost goals, BEGIN each day by telling yourself you do.

Visualization

It's amazing the useful, authentic energy you can generate simply by visualizing success for yourself. True visualization isn't idle daydreaming: It's a tool to subtly start orienting your expectations and assumptions toward the realization of your goals. Whatever your definition of success might be—wealth, full creative expression, tackling a whole new career—visualization can clarify your path toward it and naturally begin integrating the attitudes and behaviors of that successful lifestyle into your daily routine.



Visualizing goals truly paves the way toward achieving them, and it's a positively reinforcing practice. The more you think like the person or business you want to be, the closer you'll get to becoming that ideal. Assuming a transformational mindset, personal and professional growth can almost sneak up on you—that's the power of visualization.

Self-belief

Challenges and roadblocks of all varieties are bound to present themselves in your pursuit of a “culture to win.” The self-belief that comes with a transformational mindset gives you the rock-solid foundation to surmount or eliminate these obstacles—even, in some cases, to turn them into assets.

Crucially, self-belief allows you to draw energy and inspiration from inevitable failures, which are often more instructive than successes. Truly successful individuals learn from their failures, and in the midst never lose sight of the confidence they have in themselves. Will you stand firm in the face of naysayers and critics? With good or bad intentions, other people may try to dissuade you from your dreams—or choose outright different ones for you. The confident, focused you can ignore, parry, or even utilize these external pressures to move forward along your own path to extraordinary personal and professional achievements.

Reinvention

A transformational mindset can reshape your life no matter your age, career, or position. Think of the world's mythologies, which are replete with stories and images of transformation, metamorphosis, and rebirth. This universal symbolism suggests the life-fueling power—for people of any position—comes from reinvention starting within themselves.



The Performance Triad

We all know the satisfaction that comes with testing the limits of our abilities to attain new heights. Many of the most successful people seem to be able to harness that sense of accomplishment and the confidence it inspires moment by moment, day by day, rather than only experiencing it sporadically—as on the heels of landing a promotion or beating your personal-best record. Drawing strength from achievements, both large and small, isn't a matter of gloating; it's about appreciating a job well done, the efficient employment of your skills, and the effective allocation of resources. It's about perceiving how the execution of smaller and routine tasks ultimately undergirds larger-scale success.

Here at CATSHOT Group, we've distilled this philosophy into a model we call the Performance Triad. The three primary principles include Passion, Free Will, and Focus, which allow any individual to perform at full capacity in all aspects of life. To break these principles down, we'll compare them to the three elements necessary for a fire: fuel, oxygen, and heat.

Passion: The Fuel

Extending your drive to realize big goals into all the facets of your life motivates you whatever the moment or situation. This full-on engagement with the world, this linkage of every activity to an overarching passion, fuels your performance. Are you invested in everything you set out to accomplish? Taking genuine pleasure in completing any job or task to the best of your abilities can energize your everyday, in-the-moment state, ensuring that unique flame of yours never burns out.

Free Will: The Oxygen

People with a well-balanced Performance Triad guiding their actions have a take-the-bull-by-the-horns spirit that flows from a simple but potent conviction: that they have the freedom to be themselves, to draw on their own special strengths and their own special perspective to get done what needs doing. Particularly in a professional environment, many are convinced they don't have the right to exercise their free will. Contingencies may surface, backseat drivers may question your direction and your strategies or raise the specter of preferred conventional, inside-the-box approaches—but don't allow such complications to warp your sense of free will.

As important as it is in countering fear and eliminating distractions, free will is also the source of innovation. And innovation isn't only those flashes of big-time brilliance that revolutionize the world: It's also every small but critical instance of thinking-on-your-feet that gives you the creative agility to dance around obstructions. At CATSHOT Group, we encourage relentless innovation.

Focus: The Heat

Focus, focus, focus: It's the final ingredient—the heat—your Performance Triad fire needs to really start roaring. Here at CATSHOT, we like to say: "It's the journey and the destination." The end result is significant and all, but the route in which it took to get there is just as important—and just as rewarding. By developing a razor-sharp focus, you will appreciate the nitty-gritty and each step-by-step of your journey, because you discern in the most mundane of tasks the potential of the final outcome.

All too often, keeping "your eye on the prize" means myopic vision. The exclusively far-off view makes for an unfocused foreground: It means a rushed or sloppy approach to the legwork necessary for moving forward, and meanwhile that prize you're keeping your eye on keeps receding into ever more unreachable distance. With determined focus, though, you can bring your complete passion and free will to each task: surefooted, neglecting nothing, as attentive to the micro as to the macro, identifying potential hiccups before they arise and nipping them in the bud. That's how to follow through on big ideas and make them reality; that's how to wrap up project after project without flagging; that's how to motivate a team or a workforce to follow your lead.

A solid Performance Triad in action is a stunning and powerful thing, and provides a solid foundation that transforms your culture into one of determined proficiency and effectiveness.

Noble Calling

Identifying your true purpose in life uncovers your own Noble Calling, which knits together your natural strengths, interests, and aspirations into a powerful and continuously inspiring guiding force. It's the compass you consult whenever you feel a bit unmoored and directionless; it's the ever-present beacon, the far-off lighthouse glow, which represents a life in full pursuit of the things that make you happy.



An Effects-based Life

Defining a Noble Calling begins with deciding that yours will be an effects-based life—one which makes a ripple in the universe, whatever form and size those ripples take. Making such a decision isn't a pompous one: It's accepting the fact that we all have something to offer, that what we do resonates in the world, and that we can choose, to a great extent, the timbre and tone of that resonance.

A Purposeful Life

Whether it's making an impact for the better on a family member's life, a team member's effectiveness, or setting out with the modest ambition to change the world, your Noble Calling harnesses all your skills and your passions to give you both momentum and direction. A clear purpose steers you when the going gets hairy; in the very moment you've achieved one goal, a clear purpose inspires your next one. It's not as if you become a slave to work or ideals: In fact, your well-earned relaxation, your appreciation of downtime with family and friends, becomes all the deeper because you're confident in your course in life. Your Noble Calling gives you poise.

A Bonus From Rob Field: Accountability

Rob's action-packed background in the Navy (as a TOPGUN instructor and Blue Angels boss) and as a decorated athlete give him unparalleled perspective on what it takes to succeed in business, as part of a team, and in life. One trait he emphasizes over and over again is accountability.

We all feel accountable to some degree—to family, to mentors, to bosses and coworkers—but what's forgotten in the mix sometimes is being accountable to ourselves. The journey we've started to lay out above—the adoption of a transformational mindset, the pursuit of a well-calibrated Performance Triad, the discovery of your Noble Calling—won't get off the ground without accepting personal responsibility.

Know Thyself

Nobody knows you as well as you do. You know what feels right and what doesn't; you know what you need to be comfortable, happy and ultimately, successful. This bears in so many ways on cultivating your own culture to win. Only you know, for example, what interim targets will authentically motivate you; there's nothing more discouraging than a goal somebody else identifies for you that rings hollow and fails to ignite your spark. You may also clear a hurdle nobody else saw as such—a bout of public speaking or a request of someone that took a little courage to make—and you should take the time to recognize that private achievement and give yourself a brief pat on the back. Conversely, others around you may declare a job well done and shower you with praise when you know, deep down, that the effort didn't meet your own standards—and you're willing to go the extra mile to make sure it does.

Knowing yourself also means sticking to the pace that suits you best. The personal and professional transformations and reinventions we've discussed aren't transitions to take lightly or to force: They're one-foot-in-front-of-the-other affairs that, depending on the individual, involve plenty of time for self-reflection. Don't rush, it's a progressive journey and your only competition is yourself.

The Follow-Through

As you stick to your own measured pace, follow through with what you've initiated. Plowing a new course in life can be terrifying, and once the initial excitement wears off

and the hard work presents itself it's easy to doubt your decision and falter a bit. That's OK. Missteps and failures are to be expected, and nothing to be ashamed about, but rather opportunities to learn and gain strength from. Accountability to yourself means giving it your all when you've decided you're not satisfied and you need to make a change. Sure, it'll be challenging, but the challenge, properly perceived and courageously met, becomes part of the reward too.

The Power of a Support Network

It is ultimately up to you to define and pursue the course of life you've mapped out. Although, that doesn't mean you're on this voyage alone. Seek help when and where you need it. Share your journey with others: your progress, your stumbling blocks and your fears. One of the amazing aspects of modifying the culture around you and taking the initiative to actively chase your goals and ambitions is that you often inspire those around you to do the same.



What we've offered up here is a blueprint of sorts for building and embracing a culture to win. The full CATSHOT 13 program comes packed with more transformational steps and in-depth details on those that we've introduced here. We'd be truly honored to guide you on this personal and professional life-altering journey. We invite you to explore the CATSHOT Group's website, where our "Living to the Extreme" articles reflect on some of the very issues we've navigated here.

Here's to embarking on your own odyssey: forging an eternal culture to win!



About CATSHOT Group

Following his passion for creating cultures of excellence, Rob Ffield founded CATSHOT Group, which is named for the Navy's catapult shot that launches an aircraft from aircraft carriers. CATSHOT serves as a symbol for how your life and business will accelerate to greater heights of achievement. Since its inception, CATSHOT Group has propelled teams and individuals to elite levels of success in both career achievement and in their personal lives through relentless innovation, executive leadership transformation, and building a culture to win. CATSHOT Group's tailored coaching, consulting, and training services utilize the same foundational culture of proven methods and processes used by the world's most elite and top performing individuals.

For more information, or to download a sample chapter from one of his compelling books, visit our website at www.catshotgroup.com.