# Tammy Foss

"You can't chase something that doesn't exist. Perfection is not a goal. Chase the better version of yourself with every experience." ~ Tammy Foss paraphrasing Brad Gilbert as quoted in Agassi's Autobiography and in the movie "Stick it."



#### **Roadmap Summary**

**Strengths:** Tenacious, Organized, Thoughtful, Passionate

**Weaknesses:** Fear of exclusion, Emotional management: hot triggers uncontrolled

Mini Talents: I am an Observer, I am a Creator of Impactful Energy, I am an Atmosphere Designer and I Notice Physical Details.

Where I am going: I will be a leader of a successful customer centric business and a sought-after board member of a giving enterprise.

**How I will get there:** I will focus on motivating others by modeling the behaviors that empower us.

**PSS**: I will continue to use my personal powers of effort and expertise while building on my track record, which will in effect increase my autonomy and formal authority in an environment where I already have strong visibility and centrality. My challenge will be personality attractiveness and the control of a response pattern which I will continue to improve.

**Ask for help:** I will work toward processing feedback proactively and constructively to be a better version of myself. I must identify a mentor that role models this behavior elegantly.

**Give help:** While offering help, I will add clarity and context so that my intention is clear to avoid creating a perception of arrogance.

Manage my emotions: I will acknowledge my felt emotion but respond with strategic intention and practice Type 2 responses

**Manage my performance**: I will regularly assess where I am in managing my fundamental state and cycle of excellence.

Manage Risk and Adversity: With every new experience and challenge comes new risk and I face it all head on. I fully expect to win in 2018.

**Have some Fun:** I will be so content I become motivational without even trying.

#### MY ROADMAP OBJECTIVE: BE A SERVANT LEADER

This paper summarizes my roadmap to Superstar by analyzing how I got where I am, identifying where I want to go, and developing a vision of how to get there.

I will assess my status on each step listed below and review my weaknesses around Steps 5, 6 & 7 as described in the book, *The Superstar Roadmap* by Dr. Myra White. In this self analysis and action plan I will also reference the book *Beyond Reason* by Fisher and Shapiro, and a variety of articles published by Harvard Business School.

#### Path to Superstar:

Step 1) Know Myself

Step 2) Know Where I am Going

Step 3) Know how to Get There

Step 4) Know How to Create My Personal Success Syndrome

Step 5) Know How to Get Help and Give Help

Step 6) Know How to Use the Power of Your Emotions

Step 7) Know How to Manage Your Performance

Step 8) Know How to Manage Risk and Adversity

Step 9) Know How to Have Fun

Please note the diagrams illustrating these steps Dr. White summarizes in *The Superstar Roadmap*.

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 1 – Know Thyself

Beginning with elementary school I have possessed a strong sense of self awareness. Whether it be in class or on the playground, I knew I was a bit different than the rest of the girls passing notes or spinning on the monkey bars. The awareness was only emphasized to my parents and teachers when I reached 7<sup>th</sup> grade and became the target of mean girls. I experienced the typical emotional abuse with whispered insults or mysterious snickering, but also physical when my locker was ransacked and when I was shoved around on the bus. I never retaliated. I didn't really understand what was happening or why.

Later, these experiences influenced me to stay clear of packs of people. And the self-seclusion created a space where I increased my self-confidence through academics and then career. As an adult, I speak my mind and fear relatively nothing except the inability to make friends. Today's outcome is that I communicate from a place of anger when I am confused, rattled, or frustrated. I often project inauthentically both physically (through facial expressions and body language) and verbally. I know this about myself. I come across passionate, assertive, tenacious, but also arrogant, emotional and sarcastic. To be perceived positively, I must turn my natural self upside-down and concentrate to a point of physical exhaustion. As a Director, 20+ years into my career I am still receiving feedback that I am quick tempered, intolerant, tend to be condescending, and am not good at motivating others. In contrast, the positive affirmations I receive are that I am genuinely compassionate, focused, a visionary, and an implementer - someone who gets things done.

"Don't let what you can't do stop you from doing what you can do." ~John Wooden

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 1 – Acknowledge & Appreciate Thyself

Outside of the work place, I love hosting parties, creating atmospheres of inclusion, and I am good at it. However, even within a fully controlled environment I fear socialization with more than 1 or 2 people at a time. At parties I host, you will see me buzzing around tending to every need of my guests, laughing, asking about their kids, or work, or school, easily being a belle of the ball, in 2-minute visits. When I attend other people's parties, you will find me parked in one spot all evening, sometimes paralyzed with social fear. Folks still approach me, but I unable to make small talk, and unable to generate a sustainable dialogue with anybody. Given the chance I find a quick exit!

I am comfortable on stage given a chance to rehearse. I have a track record of solid public speaking and entertaining small and large audiences with choreographed dance performance and even dance instruction. I have taught successful marketing classes to adults. I even MC dog events, resulting in audience laughter and dog-on fun. But, just this year when I attended a work-related two-day off site, I sat in room with 9 other colleagues and found myself paralyzed again, unable to form an eloquent sentence to save my life. The retreat was to work on the strategy of the company. I had worked hard for two years to gain the centrality, relevance and visibility with the President resulting in the invitation. There was a moment when I spoke, and when someone answered it was dismissive. All the emotions came flooding back in. *Those emotion-laden beliefs* are tied to specific social-exclusion triggers that shake my confidence, and challenge my expertise and authority.

Self-awareness is mastered.

"It is important to us that others appreciate the emotional concern we have for affiliation, autonomy, status, and role. There is a danger in relying on others to appreciate you. You do have control over the ability to appreciate yourself."

~ Beyond Reason by Fisher and Shapiro.

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 2 – Know Thy Destination

How can I master something that keeps moving? It's like getting closer and closer to a mirage.

I was born with parents telling me I could be anything I wanted to be if I worked hard and believed in myself. As a young person missions are easier since we tend to think in smaller steps at that age: get an A, graduate, get into college, graduate, find an apartment, get a job, date someone amazing. But when I look at those mini missions, I realize they were baby steps to my mission of being a successful and loved woman. My vision of a successful and loved woman as a 20-something was material based: cool car, handsome boyfriend, money saved, ability to pay rent.

In school, I focused heavily on academic success and that effort resulted in admission to a great university. At University, I focused on gaining practical experience in my chosen field, marketing. I held multiple jobs inside the school and outside the school, adding a young expertise to every semester. My focus was to graduate and get an industry position in Los Angeles. I had a plan B though. Mom and Dad were living 2000 miles away and wanted me to continue into grad school while living with them. Although I appreciated the option, I wanted to try success my own way first. By demonstrating a successful track record of hard work and commitment I obtained good references from employers which enabled me to secure a position quickly following graduation. Since then I have made my way successfully through various companies in the marketing industry, all the while climbing in status and role.

"Superstars listen to their hearts because what is in their hearts gives them the desire and drive that they need to achieve great things." — Myra White, The Superstar Roadmap

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 2 – Believe in Thyself

From 2002-2007, I exerted flexibility as I diverted my focus from being a career woman to owning my own small local businesses which I still own today. Those stories are detailed later, but suffice it to say, when I set my sights on something and am passionate about it, nothing stands in my way. My friend says I have the Midas touch, but I like to think of it as tenacious drive to simply not fail.

I diverted my focus because I had grown tired of the day in and day out grind of working for someone else and playing the expected success syndrome game at the benefit of a corporation: Be visible, be attractive, find your centrality, earn your autonomy, and don't lose your relevance as you climb that steep ladder; and oh by the way, to be a leader you must be an amazing manager (even though no one taught you how), and do not stop until you have formal authority! Phew! Who wants that rat race?

In 2007, I found myself yearning for challenge. So back to marketing I went with no hesitation. Fast forward to 2015, into my career today, now 21 years following graduation, and my mission hasn't changed. I still want to be a successful woman, loved by some, adored my many, sought after by a few. But my *vision* of that mission is different now. The experience I have gained, good and bad, has led me to an aspiration to be a leader of a successful customer centric business and a sought-after board member of a giving enterprise. This class has taught me I don't need to be a manager to be a leader. And this class is teaching me how to assess my behaviors in a new positive way.

I will always believe in myself and because of that I have mastered this step even as it changes.

"The funny thing about destinations is that they aren't what you thought they would be when you get there. There are just too many little choices one must make along the way that can change the anticipated experience." ~ Tammy Foss, 2017 (unless I read it somewhere!)

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 3 – Getting Thyself There

(See Diagrams for my interpretation of the process)

I say with confidence that I have mastered a positive **track record** of the following personal powers:

Effort and Expertise. And I have mastered positional powers over again: Visibility, Centrality,

Autonomy, and Relevance. However, I continue to repeat a self-destructive pattern and struggle with

two important powers: Attractiveness and Formal Authority. (*Power Dynamics in Organizations* by

Professor Hill, HBS).

expertise in my field and effort day to day to gain visibility within a group. Remember that even as a small child, I have stood out of the pack without trying (this could be bad and good). There is just something about me that people notice and latch on to. Some immediately decide I am the bomb, while others resent me, while others quite literally are repelled by me, and finally some that even think I am dumb or clueless. Regardless, it is always a strong emotion or judgement that others exude.

Acquiring **centrality** has never been difficult, I am adept at quickly identifying those who can help me or hurt me up the chain, down the chain and sideways. Keep in mind that centrality could be positive or negative. By being in a central role in a former job I set myself up to fail hard and fast when a new Director was hired and didn't like me. "She touches too many spokes in the wheel for me to ignore her."

"Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory."

~ Mahatma Ghandi

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 3 – Almost There

Once I have my foot hold in these powers, I often gain **relevance** from allies I build in the leadership team, whom then empower me with **autonomy** to make decisions. This is usually my happy dance time with the company or group I am working with. I leave each day motivated, inspired, and ready to work even harder! This seems like the perfect recipe for the ultimate superstar. But, let's talk about my track record of failed **attractiveness** and failed **formal authority.** 

The haunting inability for me to make friends crosses over into the workplace in the form of others' inability to identify with me. Fact about me: I know a lot about dogs. I run a dog training business on the side. I am a formal authority. At my career-job, you and I could have dogs in common, and in a 1:1 we would have a decent conversation about dogs, impressing you with my expertise and gaining me more power of attractiveness and even gaining me the power of authority on the subject. You may even refer someone to me saying "She is a dog trainer."

But, let's say we are in a group of 9 senior level executives and someone asks me about dogs. My response, "I have two dogs, they are labradoodles." Now read that again with the voice of the main character from "The Good Doctor." My response in unrehearsed situations where more eyes are looking at me, waiting for me to fail, waiting for me to be dumb, I am paralyzed to show my expertise and formal authority. Voices in my head are snickering: "She thinks she knows everything." "She is such a show off." "Teacher's pet."

I could be wearing the most beautiful dress, look stunning and groomed, and still be unattractive to the entire room because I am not able to perform off script. I paralyze myself with fear of being rejected, being excluded, being laughed at, or being dismissed. I suddenly find myself unconfident just wanting people to like me. Confidence is my bucket of water to melt this fear.

I have not mastered this step, but I am so close.

"Being around someone who is desperate for approval is draining on everything, not least of all the person trying to beg approval of those around them."

~ A.J. Harbinger in The Art of Charm

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 4 – What Syndrome is this?

My personal success syndrome has a virus. Apparently, and according to smart people, I have contaminated mindware due to repetitive experience and response in social groups and particularly with women going all the way back to grade school. As described in "Contaminated Mindware" by Stanovich, Topiak, and West, I need to suppress the automatic Type 1 response in favor of a conscious Type 2 response but have been lacking the tool set to do it: I have a mindware gap.

This isn't my first "ah-ha" rodeo however. I know I over-react. I know I freeze. I know I am emotional. I also have taken many personality tests that place me in "Red-Red", "High E, High I", "Director/Pilot", "3%", "Visual-Auditory." Yes, yes. I get it – I am damaged, different, un-relatable and need to fix it.

Some days I am lacking the energy to lift my bucket of water (Type 2) off the ground. If it's one of those days that I don't have the energy to summon *Type 2 processing*, then I default into a negative emotional *Type 1* response pattern. Yikes. Learning about my-side processing and belief biases makes me hopeful that I can break my response patterns with a few new tools.

I am not alone. I am normal. And, I am wishing I had majored in Psychology instead of Marketing. Wait, don't they go together? It's never too late!

I've got my success syndrome down to a science now, but not mastered. Luckily, it's not the genius-to-folly syndrome written about by Kramer in "Harder they Fall," published by HBS. I reference this because I think some folks in my career path may have judged that this is my issue, I certainly did.

My momentum is stunted by my inability to stay focused on a positive response when challenged by the presence of some individuals that I have irrationally judged as a threat to my survival.

"Acquired mindware (beliefs, opinions, repetition, personal goals, practice) can be the direct cause of irrational actions that thwart our goals. It is important to realize that the thinking errors made in all domains are more related to rationality than they are to intelligence."

Contaminated Mindware by Stanovich, Topiak, West, as published by HBS

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 5 - To Be Other Focused

To ask for help and give help, I would need to start by being other-focused, as described by Quinn in "Moments of Greatness." However, I have concluded that I would have to be connected first to others, as described by Hallowell in multiple HBS articles, including "The Human Moment at Work." As I have revealed I have a track record of not connecting at work and by not connecting it is hard to focus on others. To master this superstar step, I need to assess with whom I do connect and determine how to bring those skills into the workplace.

The actions I take every day at home would be perceived as thoughtful and caring as I clean the home, pay our bills, care for our pets, make dinner for my husband, and entertain our friends. I trust them. Connecting with them feels natural. There is an extra effort that I expend on caring for my ageing mother that carries the heaviest focus outside of what directly benefits me. The care I extend to her, the time I spend with her, is for her. I trust her. Connecting with her is easy.

As I translate this effort into the workplace, and into my career, I need to analyze multiple compartments as it relates to Manager versus Leader as described by Zaleznik to paint a clear picture of my inconsistent style of management. I clearly have issues with trust and human connection, but not in every compartment.

Perhaps driven by the underlying need to connect, I became a dancer in 1997. For 10 years I partner danced, performed, led dance teams and clubs. I inspired others and I was a leader. I was deeply connected to the people and still am today. It was a highlight chapter in my life and according to the neuroscience studies described in "What Brain Science Tells Us About How to Excel" by Hallowell, that dancing "play" was releasing all sorts of good stuff (BDNF) in my body! Lower stress, happier connections, balanced emotions, good decisions, great ideas. It was within that 10-year "Cycle of Excellence" period that the next two chapters happened.

"To become truly great, one must stand with people, not above them." ~ Charles de Montesquieu

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

~Winston Churchill

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 5 – Is Connecting Giving?

During this golden age, I was also driven to connect in 2001 and became a massage therapist. In 2004, I created a multi-practitioner business with a mission to help patients and the practitioner. It became a place enabling each member-practitioner to realize the dream of business ownership. I still own this today. However, my contribution is perceived today as a manager (structured, logistical). I am not connected to the individuals except for a few times a year. When I have tried, it has felt forced.

On the waning cusp of my dancing period, in 2009, I created a local, indoor, dog sports club with a mission to enrich the lives of dogs and their handlers by offering inclusive participation and training in athletic dog sports. Its purpose is for enhancing the lives of dogs and for building camaraderie among participants with organized participation in a skillful, athletic activity. I still run this today and is my pride and joy every week. My contribution to this club is perceived as a leader: passionate, compassionate, inspiring. It is play, but it is also hard work. I think that it epitomizes *The Cycle of Excellence* described by Hallowell. I selected it, I connect with the people consciously and thoughtfully, it is play, I learn something every week and grow from it, and we all shine together as a club.

So, back to the issue: how do I create this at work? Am I a manager or leader? As the Director of Operations am I giving people stupid things to do? Organizations require structure, but how am I contributing to play? Work seems to bring with it a stigma for me of distrust. I believe because it is filled with people I did not select, I am behaving based on biases and practiced patterns.

In every challenging situation I need to dig in and ignite a type 2 response. But how do I make it a new practice? If I focus on the other's core concerns as described in "Beyond Reason" by Fisher and Shapiro: Appreciation, Affiliation, Status, Autonomy, and Role, and create a bucket of responses around these, I could diffuse my biased emotion while creating a connection with the other – increasing attractiveness. I will master this step in 2018 – I must, or bust.

"Recognition completes the cycle of excellence, encouraging you to work even harder to achieve your best."

~ Edward M. Hallowell

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 6 & 7 – Emotional or Passionate? Manage your attractiveness.

In our Test of Imagination papers, I tested high in affiliation. In each story I created a relationship conflict of some nature, but all with happy endings. I grew up as a Disney kid watching all the movies many times over. I never watched scary movies with friends, and even today I prefer to watch shows that allow me to simply relax and enjoy myself.

Affiliation is important to me and I have triggers around that core concern not being met. My social judgement in situations at work is creating a false or exaggerated sense of conflict. Due to past experiences, I see these conflicts as challenging my sense of belonging, acceptance, respect, and value. (Beyond Reason by Fisher & Shapiro and Errors in Social Judgment by Robinson).

The perception of appearing emotional or appearing passionate is all about the connection with the perceiver. I believe I am passionate because that is how I want others to see me. I am passionate about my goals and beliefs and in my quest to be liked I want others to see how passionate I am and about what topics. I need to take the time to get to know others' objectives and goals and be less concerned about them knowing about my own.

My mini talent of filling a room with my energy can be detrimental or motivating. I hear too often, "She's so emotional." How others see me has an impact on me. I want to be liked, but I don't necessarily understand how to be liked. "So, then be yourself," they counsel. Somewhere along the way I taught myself to be myself even at the casualty of another. To truly reach superstar status I need to connect with people so that I empathize more naturally, motivate them by being happy myself and content in what I am doing day to day, play and have fun. But I can't do this while worrying about how they see me. I need to, as they say: "get out of my own way!"

As I mentioned previously, to manage my performance and improve my career trajectory I need to manage my haphazard emotional responses in situations. With enough effort and focused intention in 2018 on these two steps I will naturally begin motivating others which will provide me a new momentum for launching the next phase of my career in leadership.

"The way we treat each other has a direct effect on our performance short term and long term. Respect garners power."

~ No Time to be Nice at Work by Christine Porathjune as published by HBS

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 8 – Believe in the Magic!

I am not risk adverse. But I am calculating. Through creating fundraising parties and new businesses, leading clubs and climbing through my career, I show courage and grit. I have never needed road signs to forge ahead. I create my own.

But the road signs I've received this term are critical to my success. I admit failure in critical social skills, and as quoted by Eisner by White, "If people don't fail, they probably will never succeed." This class is indeed a pivotal moment I will not ignore.

Tammy Foss, you are magical. You have the Midas touch. You create beautiful things. No one wants to hold you down and make you feel small. It's rubbish! Those beliefs are decades old. Ask them what they meant. Show curiosity. Don't judge their intent before understanding. Although there are toxic people that you must watch out for, you do not need to engage further. Move on and surround yourself with positive people.

I fully *expect to win* in 2018. The proof will be along the lines of someone telling me that I am motivating or inspiring or have simply changed. I will become that leader of a successful customer centric business and a sought-after board member of a giving enterprise.

I believe this step is mastered. With every new experience and challenge comes new risk and I face it all head on.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating." ~ Someone funny

#### My Roadmap Journey – Step 9 – Take the Stage & Have Fun!

Morse tells us in *Science Behind the Smile* that *we can control our minds and therefore our happiness*.

When I am happy my mini talent of emotive-connection draws people in and I become motivational without even trying. Conversely when I am sad or worry-some, my obnoxious energy is absorbed by those around me. I've learned in these readings that if I am not content in my work, my mind will wander, I will worry, I will grow paranoid, and ultimately lose focus on my mission. "*Toxic Worry is among the most debilitating consequences of vanishing human moments, but much more common are the little misunderstandings.*" The Human Moment at Work by Hallowell.

I am on the right yellow brick road to controlling my emotions, managing that performance, understanding other's strengths and magnifying them, understanding weaknesses and letting people be themselves without judgment, acknowledging the goals of others and helping them achieve those, being flexible with different work styles, allowing for inter-dependencies, identifying motives by asking questions, showing interest in others, *handing over the marker*, sharing power, embracing stretch assignments, exchanging emotional and relationship currency and investing in what others want. I am learning there is a science behind much of what I feel.

I have proven myself as a leader in some compartments of my life and have experienced having fun naturally. My career mission is in jeopardy, but I believe in myself and I am enjoying the process.

To master this step in my career, I will need to make some conscious changes in how I show up.

"We can control our minds and therefore our happiness"

~ Science behind the Smile by Gardiner Morse as published by HBS

#### My Roadmap Journey – My Fundamental State for 2018

To obtain Superstar status in 2018 as defined by Myra White, I need to focus on a few unmastered steps. These steps are not simple. The blockers go deep within my character, biases and practices.

However, I have a pile of articles to reference all year and a couple of books now. So, I am armed for success if I revisit the advice. As for concrete actions I can take in 2018, there are a few:

Step 5&6) Align my Butterflies! I need to manage my anxiety socially at work and connect. I need to be other focused and externally open (Moments of Greatness by Quinn)

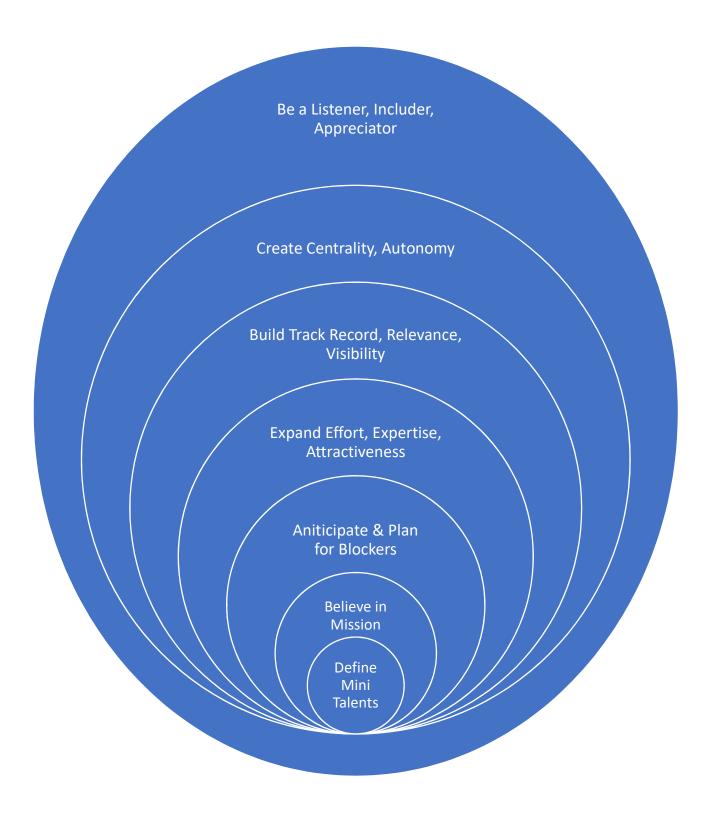
- a. Invite someone different and new to lunch each week, Ask them guestions to get to know them.
- b. Invite friends over to the house more often to offset the lack of friendship at work.

Step 5&7) Eliminate the Fog of War! I need to take time outs, ask for feedback, expect to win.

- a. I love gardening and I will use that moving forward during the summer after work
- b. When faced with conflict, I am going to practice *Type 2* responses like, "Sorry, I don't think I understand. Can you explain what you mean?"
- c. When I am not having fun, I am going to go up to the Skydeck in our building and write down positive affirmations. If I don't have time to go upstairs, I will go into a conference room and write them down there.
- d. I will stop my negative talk. I will share only positive stories and if I do share challenging stories I will ask for help for a solution.

The outcome of mastering these will result in more confidence, reset my patterns, increase my fun and thereby more attractiveness. In my 2018 fundamental state (per Quinn in Moments of Greatness), *I will venture beyond the familiar, behave according to my values, put the collective good first, learn from my environment, and recognize when there's a need for change*. I will hone my personal and collaborative leadership style (per Pagonis in The Combat Zone) by building on what I am naturally good at (impacting others with my energy), knowing how to communicate when I am feeling at my most vulnerable, give and receive feedback without judgment, and find ways to informally communicate (my weakest skill). And finally, per the father of competencies, David McClelland, I will focus my quest for superpowers on serving others freely.

"You may be a business man or some high degree thief. They may call you Doctor or they may call you Chief. But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed. You're gonna have to serve somebody." ~ Bob Dylan



### **Know Yourself**

Mini Talents
Strengths Weaknesses

# **Know Where you are Going**

Mission Believe Focus Ahead Be Flexible Baby Steps

### **Know How to Get There**

### **Strategic Thinking**

Plan & Execute for A, B, C Anticipate and Weigh Outcomes

Get on the Playing Field (Personal Power)

**Effort Expertise Attractiveness** 

**Get Noticed** (Positional Power)

Visibility Relevance Track Record

Have a Strong Power Base (Positional Power)

Centrality Autonomy Formal Authority Motivate Others

**Listen Inclusion Show Appreciation** 

# **Know How to Get & Give Help**

Remove Pride Attract Others Admit to Weakness

Seek Talent Listen with Humility

Find Mentors Give Freely Acknowledge Others

# **Know How to Manage Your Emotions**

Manage Anxiety First Alert Do Great Things

Manage Anger Avoid Toxic People

Connect with Positive People

# **Know How to Manage Your Performance**

See Pivotal Moments Focus Seek Feedback

Give 110% Expect to Win Take Time Outs

Manage Yourself

Emotions Biases Performance
Contentment Responses Reasoning
Mindwear gaps Vulnerability

# **Know How to Manage Risk & Adversity**

Take Risks Never Give Up

Learn to Fail Believe in Yourself

### **Know How to Have Fun**

Enjoy the Process Do What You Love

Play Enhance the Lives of Others

<sup>&</sup>quot;Management is an art requiring a mix of talents. Managers who are able to grow beyond their initial strengths and develop a broad repertoire of talents are more likely to progress in their careers."

<sup>~</sup> Managing Your Career by Professor Hill, as published by HBS

My superstar journey is full of life, love, family and friends. My ambitions are not driven by a desire to be perfect, but a desire to be the best I can be in this life and to have memorable experiences along the way. I am chasing interpersonal demons, but I am having fun while doing it.

