

# Rewards of the Consious Journey—

## Get Real. Get Right. Get Rolling.

by Marta Wilson, PhD

**Life is big.** *In the day to day of it all, it's easy to lose sight of this fact. But for me, every step of my journey is a reminder that the opportunity to be on this earth is an amazing thing. Now that I'm older, more times than not, I just don't want to get out of bed in the morning. But when I wake up and start to count my aches and pains, I soon remember that I'm above ground and it's another day I've been given. That's enough*

*to get my blood pumping and my joints in gear. Yes, life is big if you stop to ponder it. We start out as a little cluster of cells, then we are born, then we grow up, and where we're headed beyond here is a mystery. On my journey, I'm becoming more conscious of every experience, every encounter, every moment. It's increasingly clear to me that life is big, and no matter what the day brings,*  
**I'm a lucky soul to live it!**

**M**utation. It is the key to our evolution. It has enabled us to transform from a single celled organism into a flourishing species on this planet. This process is slow, normally taking thousands of years. But every few hundred millennia, evolution leaps forward. It is time for such a leap.

Today, we have reached explosive levels of freedom. For the first time in history, we are actively managing our own mutation. Leading our evolution has become the task of our age. What is evolution? Evolution is change in a particular direction. And, we can consciously create and direct change in our personal and professional lives.

Consciousness is awareness, awakeness, and alertness. And, we have arrived at a unique moment in time where being conscious is critical. We are at the intersection of an unprecedented abundance of capital and an explosion of ideas. Staying conscious of our state of evolution requires that we lead a difference.

Leading a difference is conscious evolution toward self, people, and enterprise mastery. On this journey, we look for and seize opportunities to expand our individual, interpersonal, and organizational knowledge. Conscious leaders integrate these three areas so that one does not get too far ahead or too far behind the other two. In the end, the key to leading our own evolution is the willingness to get real, get right, and get rolling.

*One of things I'm most grateful for is having a few people around me who seem to accept themselves totally. To me, they*

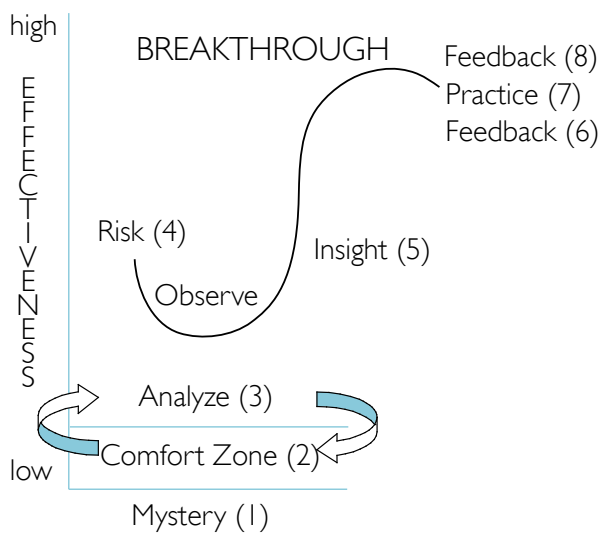
*sometimes seem shockingly honest, those people who accept their flaws as well as their dreams.....not necessarily easily, certainly sometimes awkwardly, but visibly, in front of me where I can see them. It's freed me to do the same. To say, "Hey, I'm not perfect, but whatever." Or, "Yes, I do have a huge vision for myself, and I'll tell you what it is." There's so much power for me in accepting the reality of myself. And, being open to what's true instead of what seems safest or least offensive has freed me up; it's released me. Maybe, it's even saved my life.*

## Get Real: Self Mastery

Self mastery sets apart star leaders from average leaders. Self mastery is knowledge of ourselves. It is managing our preferences, our impulses, and our goals. It requires conscious living and knowing who we are. It demands exercising mind, body, and spirit in order to live life to its fullest. Self mastery is a component of emotional intelligence, which determines at least 50% of our success at work.

### Levels of Effectiveness

The figure below shows the levels of effectiveness we move through on the self mastery journey. Starting at the bottom of the figure, when we first experience something new, we feel a sense of (1) mystery. So, we create a (2) comfort zone. Staying in our comfort zone is safe and cozy. It is easy to subjectively (3) analyze our comfort zone. This kind of circular self analysis results in little or no forward movement. Breaking free requires taking a (4) risk.



When we take a risk, our performance often gets worse at first. But, by sticking with it and making careful observations, we can gain (5) insight and have life-changing (6) breakthroughs. Afterwards, with repeated (7) practice and feedback, we can sustain our newfound knowledge. Then, the process starts all over again when we choose to master a new level of skill or grow in a new area.

When we get out of our comfort zones, we become highly creative. We become a healing presence in the world. We become a role model for others. When we take charge of our lives, we tap into our inner potential for happiness. This joy infuses us with energy. We stand on our own ground, discover our own voice, and make our own choices, regardless of the level of power and privilege we hold.

Self mastery is necessary for conscious evolution. But, it is not enough. More is required. The second component is getting right in our relationships, or people mastery.

*I am a runner. When I run alone, I have conversations in my mind with myself and with every person I care about. With myself, I do a “peace check” by reflecting my recent thoughts, words, and actions against my life’s purpose. With others, I reflect my experience of them against their stated purpose, and I try to figure out if they need or want my help. I ask myself, and imagine asking others, probing questions about awakens, choices, creations, and consequences. I listen, accept, cajole, shout, guide, and listen again. Often I feel deeply balanced and peaceful about what I say and hear. Sometimes I feel shockingly disoriented. I’ve learned to trust both feelings as I re-declare my purpose by choosing what to think, say, and do next. While running, I create magic that gives myself and others permission to manifest our fullest glory. My conscious journey is finding the courage to have the same conversations face-to-face with people that I now have with them when I run alone.*

## Get Right: People Mastery

When you think about it, all of our institutions are based on relationships: government, business, sports, marriage. But, it can be hard to get these relationships right. Effective, life-affirming relationships do not just happen. They must be initiated, sparked, nurtured, managed, created, and re-created. Some people seem to be born relationship builders. Most of us, though, have to work at it. However, whether by birth and inclination or by sheer will and perseverance, anyone can become masterful at building relationships.

People mastery is the ability to create meaningful relationships and includes awareness of others’ feelings, needs, and concerns. People mastery also involves adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. Daniel Goleman, author of *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, calls it “social competence”, which has been proven to predict who will excel in any organization. People mastery includes communication, building bonds, and influencing others.

### Communicate

Being an adept communicator is the keystone of all social skills. Among managers, communications competence strongly distinguishes stars from average or poor performers. Good communicators are effective in give-and-take. They rely on their sense of others’ emotions to fine-tune their messages. They deal with difficult issues straightforwardly. They listen well, seeking mutual understanding. Effective listening is crucial to communicating. Listening skills—asking astute questions, being open-minded, seeking to understand, not interrupting, asking for suggestions—account for a third of people’s evaluations of whether someone they work with is an effective communicator. Understandably, listening is among the most frequently taught business skills.

### Build Bonds

People who are competent at creating connections cultivate and maintain extensive informal networks. They seek out relationships that are mutually beneficial, build rapport, and keep others in the loop. They also develop personal friendships among their work associates. This talent for connecting epitomizes stars in almost every kind of job. Studies of outstanding performers in engineering, computer science, biotechnology, and other “knowledge work” fields find that building and maintaining personal networks is crucial for success. One estimate indicates that for every hour a star puts into seeking answers through a network, an average person spends three to five hours gathering the same information on their own. A network of contacts is a kind of personal capital.

### Influence Others

Making time for people and establishing bonds is not a detour but an essential step in influencing others. In a study of strategic decisions at 356 American companies, more than half were never adopted, were implemented only partially, or

were abandoned at the outset. The single most common reason for the failure of these plans was that the lead executives tried to impose their ideas instead of building a supporting consensus. When ideas were dictated, the result was failure 58 percent of the time. But when executives first conferred with colleagues to rethink their long-term priorities, strategic plans were adopted 96 percent of the time.

Together, self and people mastery make up emotional intelligence, the highest single predictor of star performance in today's work force. But, even emotional intelligence is not enough. The third requirement is enterprise mastery.

*During the 1980s, I had the privilege of serving in the administration of President George Bush. At an early meeting with one of my staff directors, I suggested some ways to improve a process I thought to be particularly cumbersome. The director looked at me and said, "I am sorry, but you can't do that." When I asked why, he responded "because there's a regulation, which outlines this process." When I asked who issues the regulation, he said, "you do." Aside from feeling pretty stupid, I learned a critical lesson that day. Agents of change need to know how to use their current systems to create better ones. Likewise, leaders need to know how their organizations work. You just never know when you might have to improve something.*

## Get Rolling: Enterprise Mastery

There are two definitions of enterprise. One is "a business organization", and the second is "readiness for daring action." In these times of rapid change, it is difficult to imagine a sustainable organization that is not ready to take risks. Enterprise mastery is 1) knowledge of how our organization works and 2) how to improve it. Critical behaviors exhibited by enterprise masters include dissolving boundaries, promoting self confidence, increasing speed, and stretching.

### Dissolve Boundaries

Boundaries can slow down an organization. They complicate matters. They get in the way. Dissolving boundaries can create an open, informal organization where employees can move swiftly and effortlessly and where they can connect to the outside world just as quickly and effectively. Enterprise masters nurture environments in which all employees are permitted to participate in decision making and have full access to vital information needed to make those decisions.

### Promote Self Confidence

Many of bureaucracy's ills—the bitterness, the turf battles, the in-fighting, and the pettiness can be attributed to one root cause: insecurity. Insecurity makes people resist change because they see change only as a threat, never as an opportunity. Self-confident people don't need to wrap themselves in complexity, "business" speech, or all the clutter that passes for sophistication in business. Instead,

self-confident leaders produce simple plans, speak simply, and propose big, clear targets.

## Increase Speed

The key to survival for today's organizations will be their ability to boost productivity well beyond the traditional levels of the past. In order to get speed, real speed, decisions at virtually every level would have to be made in minutes, not days or weeks. And, decisions have to be made face-to-face, not memo-to-memo. This means that people need to think on their feet, and that the forests of meaningless paper trails and approvals—so common in large organizations—need to be eliminated.

## Stretch

"Stretching" means (1) figuring out performance targets—on everything from profitability to new product introductions—that are achievable, reasonable, and within capabilities; and (2) then raising sights higher—much higher—toward targets that seem almost beyond reach. Reach for what appears to be the impossible, you might actually do the impossible; and even when we don't quite make it, we inevitably wind up doing much better than we would have done.

## Call to Action

You can have everything going for you—the brightest mind, the best credentials, and access to resources—but still fail without knowledge of self, people, and enterprise. So what can you do to move ahead in these three areas? Here are some ideas for consideration.

- Set aside time for yourself each week to learn something new.
- Create a life plan (mission, vision, and goals), and keep it updated.
- Ask yourself what risk you need to take to move forward, and take it.
- Take a co-worker to lunch, ask what's going on with him/her, and listen.
- Introduce yourself to a new person every week and get to know him/her.
- Learn how to use your organization's scorecard to gauge its performance.
- Look for one improvement you can make in your organization, and make it.

## SUMMARY

- Self mastery: Get real with ourselves.
- People mastery: Get right in our relationships.

- ❑ Enterprise mastery: Get rolling with organizational improvement.
- ❑ Lead a difference: Conscious evolution toward self, people, and enterprise mastery.
- ❑ Take risks, communicate, build bonds, and influence others as we dissolve boundaries, promote self confidence, increase speed, and stretch to achieve personal, interpersonal, and organizational breakthroughs.
- ❑ Life is big...enjoy it!

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Marta Wilson is chief executive officer of Transformation Systems Incorporated ([www.transformationsystems.com](http://www.transformationsystems.com)). Marta promotes integration of self, people, and enterprise mastery around the world. In her work, she plays many roles including coach, facilitator, speaker, and trainer. Marta's books include *Work Miracles: Transform Yourself and Your Organization*; *Balanced Leadership: Stretch for Self, People, and Enterprise Mastery*; and *Live a Difference*. Her credentials include a Ph.D. in organizational psychology from Virginia Tech, a graduate internship in human resources research with BellSouth Corporation, and a post-doctoral apprenticeship in industrial engineering with Dr. D. Scott Sink, president, World Confederation of Productivity Science.

## Contact Us:

Transformation Systems, Inc.  
2011 Crystal Drive Ste 400  
Arlington, VA 22202  
[www.transformationsystems.com](http://www.transformationsystems.com)

*Questions for Marta?*  
703.682.6853  
[info@transformationsystems.com](mailto:info@transformationsystems.com)

