



Unit 2

Becoming a Better Learner

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the value of working as a team
- ✓ Develop team norms, ground rules, and team contracts
- ✓ Identify your team player style and how it can be used effectively with your own team
- ✓ Build team trust

Unit 2

Defining, Evaluating and Managing Teams

What is a Team?

We like Glenn Parker's definition of a team: "A group of people with a high degree of interdependence geared toward the achievement of a goal or the completion of a task." (From "Team Players and Teamwork" by Glenn Parker)

What Does That Mean?

This means that members of a team agree on a goal and agree that the only way to achieve that goal is to work together. Some groups have a common goal but they don't work together to achieve it. For example, many teams are really groups because they work independently to achieve their goal. Some groups work together but they don't have a common goal.

Types of Teams

Knowing the type of team you are in can help you choose how to plan your work and what you expect as outcomes. Teams are everywhere, and their role as part of an organizational framework continues to evolve just as businesses and marketplaces do. From a practical perspective, most of us belong to multiple teams, with sometimes competing priorities.

Let's look at some of the most common types of teams.

Natural Work Groups

This is a group of people who work together each day in the same location, using the same machines and processes. The supervisor is in charge, but they may allow other team members to take the leadership role.

Business Team

Often a cross-functional team that looks after a specific product line or service.

Management Team

A group of managers and the person they mutually report to. Within a single organization, there can be different levels of management teams (executive, middle, and front-line, for example).

Self-Managed Team

This is a group of people who manage themselves. No one person in the group has the authority to make all the decisions about the events that impact the group. This is also referred to as a **self-directed** work team because everyone has authority and responsibility for all the decisions they have to make.

Product/Service Design Teams

This is a group that comes together for a specific time to work on a special project or task. This group has traditionally been called a **task force** or **committee**. They are usually a cross-functional group assigned to design or redesign a product or service.

Virtual and Remote Teams

With this type of team, members see one another in person rarely or not at all. They connect most frequently using web portals, the Internet, telephone, and e-mail. What makes these teams different (and sometimes challenging) is that they have to work together to accomplish goals, but they may not know each other that well. They can also fit any of the models listed above.

Test your Knowledge

Into which model does your team fit?

Why do you feel that way?

How would you define your team?

What model would be the ideal one for your work together?

Why?

Establishing Team Norms

Characteristics of Teams

Advantages	Disadvantages

Ground Rules

Having ground rules helps every team to succeed. Ground rules ensure that people on the team know what is expected of them, and that they all understand where they are going.

Use the space below to list what you want and don't want in a team.

Want	Don't Want

What are the three to five rules that are most important to your group?

Team Contracts

A team contract outlines the ground rules for the team. It is created and then monitored by the team. Some people get offended by the idea of a team contract; it's not ideal in every situation. We have included a sample contract below. Each team member should sign and date the contract.

Sample Team Contract

Code of Conduct

As a team we will:

- Be proactive and positive
- Keep other team members informed
- Focus on what is best for the team as a whole

Ground Rules

We will:

- Be respectful, fair, and honest in all communications
- Encourage opinions and discussion from all members
- Be open to new approaches and listen to new ideas
- Look at conflict and change positively
- Work together to achieve maximum results
- Follow best practices for decision making, communication, and meeting management
- Celebrate accomplishments and milestones

Meeting Guidelines

- Each meeting begins and ends on time
- Team has an agenda for every meeting and sticks to it
- Team members agree to prepare for meetings
- Cell phones will be muted (or perhaps not, if you are encouraging people to openly participate, share their thoughts, and accept the prevalence of these devices in the workplace)

Working as a Team

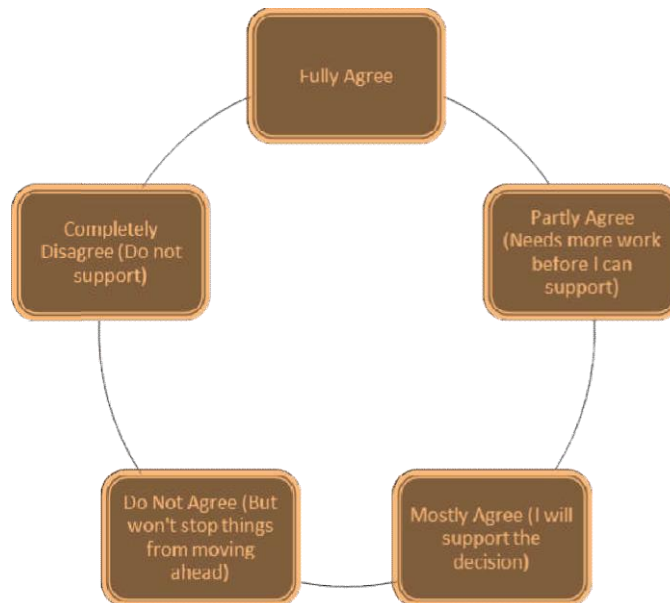
Success in the workplace depends on your ability to build a team and to interact with others on that team. Together, people can accomplish what one person alone cannot; this is called **synergy**.

However, it isn't always easy. Sometimes when we think about controversial subjects, our first response is to try to get away, or to make your involvement as short as possible. We have another way to look at agreements and disagreement, and that is to look at how strongly you feel about something instead of having to choose a firm position on one side or the other.

No Need for Black and White Thinking

As team members, we need some way to take the temperature and find out where people stand on an issue. This is a great tool to put on the flip chart, overhead, or just provide as a handout. It can help people decide where they stand on an issue. The Degrees of Support can help a team leader or member explain that consensus does not mean that everyone agrees to the same degree. The circular nature of the diagram (which reflects the symbol for degree, or °) demonstrates how we may increase or decrease the strength of our commitment to a decision in response to getting more information, considering a different perspective, and moving through the area of disagreement.

Degrees of Support



Little in life is really that clear that it needs to be discussed in terms of an absolute yes or no. Like the diagram, we really consider things in terms of degrees. Making agreements or clearing out conflict allows us to do the same thing.

The team leader can also ask questions of team members, such as “What changes to the project/task/plan do you need to have implemented in order to move toward agreement?”

Your Team Player Type

What’s Your Team Player Type?

There are many ways to discuss the personality types of people that we work and play with. Whether you use initials like the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), colors like Personality Dimensions,

edutainment like True Colors, the names of animals, or Greek philosophers, the idea is that there are base temperaments that we can relate to, and that we prefer. The science behind this kind of assessment relates back to the work of Carl Jung. It has been substantiated through tens of thousands of people who have completed and validated the questionnaires.

Scoring Example

Add the total number of points that you wrote beside each letter of the alphabet in the questionnaire. Pay close attention, since the letters are not always in order!

Scale

- 4 = Most like you
- 3 = A lot like you
- 2 = Somewhat like you
- 1 = Least like you

Terms

1. A driving need for you is:

3	C	To find meaning in life
4	A	To learn and gain knowledge
2	B	To belong
1	D	Freedom to do what you want

Scoring

A	
B	
C	
D	

Your Score

A	
B	
C	
D	

Total A's _____ Total B's _____ Total C's _____ Total D's _____

The letter with the highest total is most like you. Write it here: _____

The other letters are your next preferred styles. If your numbers are close to each other (within 5 points), you probably find it pretty easy to flex your style to those other categories. If your numbers are far apart, or one is much lower than the others, that is the area you will find it challenging to work within. You'll have the knowledge of how to do it once you work through the material below.

What Does it Mean To Have a Number?

In reality, we are a blend of all types, moving within the numbers and flexing into the other styles that our circumstances and our comfort levels dictate. This means that we are more like a blended drink than distinct ingredients. You'll recognize that you may behave one way at work (super organized, for example), and might be more relaxed at home, but return to your super organized self when stress at home increases.

As you read the descriptions below, see if they agree with how you behave as a member of your team at work, whether you are in meetings or working on a project. You'll also get some insight into how to connect with the different types in the descriptions.

Mostly A's – Inquiring Rationals

Inquiring Rationals are often **drawn to jobs like banking and engineering**. They like to figure out how things work. They consider the structure and configuration of things. They process information intuitively and look at the big picture. These are visionaries, like Albert Einstein and Bill Gates. When it is time to make decisions, they apply logic, and they don't get persuaded by emotions. If they don't respect you, you won't keep their attention. Experience and competency are very important to Inquiring Rationals.

This temperament profile makes up approximately **5 to 7% of the population**. Other notables in this group are Walt Disney, Ben Franklin, Margaret Thatcher, and Napoleon. To connect with Inquiring Rationals on your team, demonstrate your expertise in your work.

As a member of the team, you are the person who keeps track of things, most often with checklists and guidelines. You can be counted on to know what the assignment is and when it is due. You get frustrated with team members who are not big on details, or who want to try something new. You like to follow a recipe and you know where your tools are. You probably don't like surprises very much.

Most of the time you complete assignments in a timely and efficient manner, with all the needed detail. You also share the information and materials you have with other members of the team, and provide the technical training or background that they need. People usually see you as dependable, systematic, proficient, practical, and efficient.

Too much logic might mean that you are demonstrating some rigidity. Tap into your sense of humor and try to keep other people's styles in mind, especially if you are leading a team. You may go into data overload with long reports, push for unrealistic standards, and tend to lose patience with team climate and process issues.

Mostly B's – Authentic Idealists

Authentic Idealists are **natural teachers, counselors, and leaders**. They are benevolent and intuitive, and they focus on global issues like world poverty and humanitarian issues. Idealists love metaphors, stories, and symbols, rather than statistics and figures. They make decisions that reflect their values, and rely on emotion and instinct as opposed to logic. In fact, statistics and facts bore them. They are looking for significance, and they seek the truth.

The Authentic Idealist temperament makes up about **10% of the population**. Notable members of this group include Eleanor Roosevelt, Billy Graham, Mahatma Gandhi, Jane Goodall, Oprah Winfrey, and Albert Schweitzer.

Authentic Idealists are people-oriented. They don't want to rock the boat, and their focus is on having everyone in harmony on the team. They can focus more on people's feelings than results. They will step in to resolve process problems (for example, with conflict or lack of involvement), listen attentively while withholding judgment, and offer praise and recognition to other team members.

To connect with the Authentic Idealists on your team, share your values and personal convictions. Be authentic and reach out to them by telling stories that demonstrate your empathy. Appeal to personal

ethics and a higher calling. Show that you care about them and each person in the room. Authentic Idealists are more interested in how much you care than how much you can cite statistics.

If your teamwork style is that of an Authentic Idealist, your strengths include making deep connections with your team at an emotional and personal level. You motivate and encourage. You're a good storyteller, so you find innovative ways to present your information. You have wisdom to share and are eager to do so. Your lack of ego about what you know makes you likeable. You have a sincere enthusiasm and empower people to act. People see you as encouraging, enthusiastic, supportive, humorous, and relaxed.

Areas for development include a tendency to be overly sensitive to others. You're intuitive and will interpret meaning behind everything. This also means that you can get distracted by reactions of other individual in the audience, and that can make you lose track. You may see team processes as an end to themselves and fail to challenge or contradict other team members. Make sure that you are well prepared for areas you are responsible for, and that you accommodate other members of the team by being sufficiently serious and aware of the bottom line.

Mostly C's – Organized Guardians

Organized Guardians are extremely **dependable and loyal**, and they play by the rules. They have an amazing work ethic, stay down-to-earth, and they like routine. They are thorough and orderly. At times they are too serious, but they are practically always serious. They are good at taking care of other people. They want to hear about the bottom line, and they want the facts.

Organized Guardians will consider charts and graphs and follow a well prepared presentation longer than most people, but they can shut down when too much emotion is presented and may get bored with stories. This temperament makes up **40 to 45% of the population** and includes people like Queen Elizabeth II, Mother Teresa, George Washington, and Colin Powell. With their respect for tradition, they are drawn to the military and policing. These are also the people who will pass traditions to their children and grandchildren.

To connect with Organized Guardians on your team, be concise, organized, and support statements with data. Present information in a logical sequence, and don't wander off down a tangent. Quote other experts. Expect, and encourage, them to collaborate.

If you are an Organized Guardian as a team member, you will be very logical and organized. You'll take notes, and you'll know how to find them. You're a big picture thinker, looking for the better way to do things. You can be persuasive, and you don't need to be tied down by excessive details. You see the vision, mission, and goals of the team as paramount. You are flexible to new ideas and willing to help out even in areas outside of your defined roles. You are willing to share in the limelight with the members of

the team. You work hard to meet your objectives. People usually describe you as forward-thinking, cooperative, independent, flexible, and imaginative.

Your weaknesses can be predictability. The data will be there, but you may have to remind yourself (repeatedly) to give the group opportunities for self-discovery and application. Draw on your compassion for others to add emotional depth to your work and an appreciation of the strengths of others. Sometimes you may be tempted to publicly complain about team failures. Resist the urge! You may overlook the mission at times by being too future oriented, or lose sight of tasks. Resist the urge to dream, and get on with the doing.

Mostly D's – Resourceful Artisans

Resourceful Artisans **crave action and live in the moment.** They are very social, confident, and persuasive. Donald Trump, Steven Spielberg, and Madonna are notable Resourceful Artisans. They're witty, playful, and fun. If they had a message to share, it would be that the world could lighten up a little. Like Organized Guardians, they can also perceive the world concretely. They can get bored with visionary tasks. They enjoy stories that they can easily relate to and imagine happening to them. This temperament makes up about **35% of the population.**

To connect with Resourceful Artisans, be real and spontaneous. Engage them with questions and discussion. Be prepared for them to challenge your ideas, and at times, authority. They will play the devil's advocate and look for weak links in anyone's argument.

If you're Resourceful Artisan, your strengths include energy, personality, and creativity. Build in some interaction when you present your work to leverage your spontaneity. You are a natural storyteller, so tell some stories. You will encourage action, and you have good listening skills, so you are responsive to your team. While most people will appreciate your candor, it may take some practice before you know when to back off an issue. You will challenge the team to take well-considered risks and push them toward high ethical standards. People usually see you as candid, honest, principled, assertive, and ethical.

Your weaknesses can show up in your organization and structure. Because you are living in the moment, you might avoid the homework that goes into the development of a brilliant report or presentation. You might avoid preparation and be willing to rely on spontaneity, but then you are less focused on content. Be careful not to be so spontaneous that you miss a good opportunity to deliver a powerful message. You can be too direct in communicating with other team members, and sometimes become rigid and inflexible. Avoid painting yourself into a corner by knowing when to back off.

What's Important?

We all have preferences for how we do things, and now we hopefully understand a bit more about them. It's also important to remember that we ALL have the range of preferences described here. You might be mostly A, but call on behaviors that are more closely associated with B, C, and/or D as needed. You might also be very close in your results to more than one type, so you'll find it easier than other people to flex your own style in response to what the group needs.

It's important to have a range of types in our workplace and on each team that we work with. The strength of having some people looking after facts and figures while others can appeal to emotions, spontaneity, or reinforce the importance of rules and tradition, makes our business effective. It's the blend, that presence of different temperaments with in a multitude of strengths, which keeps our world fascinating.

My Team Style

What are your individual strengths?

What are your individual weaknesses?

What are your team's strengths?

What are your team's weaknesses?

How can you shore up the weaknesses and leverage the strengths?

Building Team Trust

Why is Trust Important?

Trust is one of those mainstay virtues, and a hallmark of high performing teams. It is the bond that allows any kind of significant relationship to exist between people. Once broken, it is not easily, if ever, recovered.

Trust is produced in a climate that includes four elements:

- **Honesty:** Integrity, no lies, no exaggerations
- **Openness:** A willingness to share and receive information, perceptions, opinions, and ideas
- **Consistency:** Predictable behavior and responses
- Treating people with **dignity** and **fairness**

We can ask a team that is starting out to assume trust; to treat everyone as though they trust one another and to be trustworthy to each other. This is a reasonable way of sharing with the team that you are also putting your trust in them.

Just keep in mind that trust is fragile. If any one of the elements listed above is breached even once a relationship is apt to be severely compromised, even lost. With trust gone between individuals, teams have little hope of functioning well and realizing their true potential.

What happens when teams trust each other?

- They can focus on the issues at hand and get things done quickly and efficiently.
- Team members are more likely to take risks and share their thoughts and feelings.
- They can devote their energies to coming up with creative solutions and working together to solve problems.
- They experience a greater level of synergy.
- Team members often find that if they need help, others are more willing to pitch in.

Building Trust

Share a recent incident when someone (such as a parent, sibling, friend, or co-worker) violated your trust.

How did you respond?

Does the other person realize that they have lost your trust?

Brainstorm specific behaviors that tend to undermine your trust in others.

Knowing that these behaviors erode your trust in others, what will you do to help others trust you? Be specific.

The Stages of Team Development

As early as the 1970's, researchers were discovering that groups of individuals working together go through four distinct stages of development. The most famous representation of this model is Tuckman and Jensen's Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing model. Over time an additional stage has been added to reflect the natural end to a group: Adjourning. The stages are similar to human development: infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age.

One of your roles as a team member or leader is to help the group grow and develop. Sometimes the team is together for a very short time, so you will try to move them to a productive stage as quickly as you can. Other times, the focus will be on relationship building.

Think of how you felt when you learned you were coming to this workshop. While that isn't a perfect example of the other stages of team development, you may see a resemblance between how you felt upon learning you would be in this workshop and how a new group or team member might feel.

Stage One: Forming

At this stage, team members:

- May be anxious, adopt wait-and-see attitude, and/or be formal
- Have no clear idea of goals or expectations
- Need to get to know one another
- May not be sure why they are there

A leader can help by:

- Planning introductions and an orientation
- Using icebreakers
- Establishing ground rules
- Determining decision making methods

Stage Two: Storming

At this stage:

- Team members are eager to get going and they may be impatient with delays
- Conflict can arise as people bring different ideas of how to accomplish goals
- People notice differences rather than similarities

- Some members may drop out mentally or physically

A leader can help by:

- Modeling appropriate behaviors
- Separating problems from people
- Enforcing ground rules and their role by maintaining control of the process
- Keeping in mind that conflict can be healthy

To move to the next stage, participants have to put the needs of the group ahead of their personal interests.

Stage Three: Norming

At this stage, team members:

- Begin to recognize ways they are alike
- Realize that they are in this together as a team
- Get more social
- May forget their focus in favor of having a good time

Many groups don't make it to this stage, where there is much more cooperation and understanding than previous stages.

During this stage, the leader should:

- Be observant of emerging group behaviors
- Encourage the team to express their differences positively
- Help the team to stay focused on their objectives

Stage Four: Performing

At this stage, team members:

- Are mature
- Understand their roles and responsibilities
- Want more input in processes
- Are self-motivated and self-trained

The transition to this phase happens as a demonstration of high levels of trust. However, the team can be susceptible to "group think," so a leader must help ensure that individual ideas are considered. The

leader must avoid intervening in the process unless the group becomes stuck and begins to flounder, or they regress to a previous stage and erupt in conflict.

Stage Five: Adjourning

At this stage, team members are:

- Winding down and saying goodbye
- Setting goals for future work independently and/or as part of new groups

Groups may adjourn because they finish a defined project or because they are no longer challenged. If there are new members, that can shift the group into a previous stage.

In this phase **leaders can support the group by:**

- Celebrating participants' participation
- Describing what's going on
- Looking for and encouraging contribution from everyone as the group winds down
- Encouraging continued productivity

Forming an Effective Team

Not all of us will take the same approach to forming a successful work team, but success may hinge on taking all of the steps we just discussed.

There is a tendency to want to surround ourselves with people who are just like us. If you get to choose a team, you'll need to look at things carefully and create a team of people with a variety of strengths. For a team that is already in place, organizing may be more subtle. For example, you might call the team together to discuss what you want to accomplish (goals) and how everybody can help.

You will find that imposing goals on people doesn't work nearly as well as having them tell you what goals they will strive for. But setting goals is hard work. Too often they end up too unrealistic, too vague, impossible to measure, or stretching into eternity with no deadline.

As well, it is important to take time for reflection and evaluation. Was that last project as successful as it might have been? What could have been done differently? Make sure that you apply these lessons learned to your next project.

Test Your Knowledge

How do you think you can create a positive team environment?

What environment do you like to work in?

How can you apply this to your team?

Team Building with TORI

Originally developed by Jack and Lorraine Gibb in 1978, the TORI principles of team building still hold true today.

- T is for **Trust**: Interpersonal confidence and absence of fear.
- O is for **Openness**: Free flow of information, ideas, perceptions, and feelings.
- R is for **Realization**: Self-determination, doing what you want to do.
- I is for **Interdependence**: Reciprocal influence, shared responsibility, and co-leadership.

●
Scoring Sheet

Criterion	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Distance of Flight					
Hang Time (Length of Flight)					
Visual Appeal					
Creativity					
Teamwork					
Total					

Communication

Defining Communication

What is communication?

Here are you, the audience: here am I, the speaker. What kinds of barriers can come between us?

One thing most people do is make a lot of assumptions about the people they come into contact with. Team members often assume they have interpreted others' comments correctly, and they assume that others understand perfectly what they are trying to say. They also assume that others will react as they would to different situations.

Listening Skills

Two of the most powerful communication skills are our ability to listen and to ask questions.

Good listening skills are crucial to team building. Remember the saying, "God gave us two ears and one mouth so we can listen twice as much as we talk."

Active listening means that we try to understand things from the speaker's point of view. It includes letting the speaker know that we are listening and that we have understood what was said. This is not the same as **hearing**, which is a physical process, where sound enters the eardrum and messages are passed to the brain. **Active listening** can be described as an attitude that leads to listening for shared understanding.

When we make a decision to listen for total meaning, we listen for the content of what is being said as well as the attitude behind what is being said. Is the speaker happy, angry, excited, sad...or something else entirely?

Responding to Feelings

The content (the words spoken) is one thing, but the way that people feel really gives full value to the message. Responding to the speaker's feelings adds an extra dimension to listening. Are they disgusted and angry or in love and excited? Perhaps they are ambivalent! These are all feelings that you can reply to in your part of the conversation.

Reading Cues

Really listening means that we are also very conscious of the non-verbal aspects of the conversation.

- What are the speaker's facial expressions, hand gestures, and posture telling us?
- Is their voice loud or shaky?
- Are they stressing certain points?
- Are they mumbling or having difficulty finding the words they want to say?

Demonstration Cues

When you are listening to someone, these techniques will show a speaker that you are paying attention, provided you are genuine in using them.

Physical indicators include making eye contact, nodding your head from time to time, and leaning into the conversation.

You can also give **verbal cues** or use phrases such as "Uh-huh," "Go on," "Really!" and, "Then what?"

You can use **questions** for clarification or **summarizing statements**. Examples:

- "Do you mean they were charging \$4.00 for just a cup of coffee?"
- "So after you got a cab, got to the store, and found the right sales clerk, what happened then?"

Tips for Becoming a Better Listener

- **Make a decision to listen.** Close your mind to clutter and noise and look at the person speaking with you. Give them your undivided attention.
- **Don't interrupt** people. Make it a habit to let them finish what they are saying. Respect that they have thoughts they are processing and speaking about, and wait to ask questions or make comments until they have finished.
- Keep your **eyes** focused on the speaker and your **ears** tuned to their voice. Don't let your eyes wander around the room, just in case your attention does too.
- Carry a **notebook** or start a conversation file on your computer. Write down all the discussions that you have in a day. Capture the subject, who spoke more (were you listening or doing a lot of the talking?), what you learned in the discussion, as well as the who, what, when, where, why, and how aspects of it. Once you have conducted this exercise 8-10 times, you will be able to see what level your listening skills are currently at.
- Ask a few **questions** throughout the conversation. When you ask, people will know that you are listening to them, and that you are interested in what they have to say. Your ability to summarize and paraphrase will also demonstrate that you heard them.

- When you demonstrate good listening skills, they tend to be **infectious**. If you want people to communicate well, you have to set a high example.

Becoming a Good Team Player

No matter what you do or where you live, the quality of your attitude determines the quality of your relationships, not to mention just about everything else in your life.

In his book **Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us** (2008), Seth Godin encourages everyone to be a leader. Leadership doesn't belong to someone who has "leader" in their job description: it's really up to all of us.

If we all take a leading role, that means there are people who will follow.

Generate a list of things that you can do to increase interaction among your team, build trust, or otherwise get the group being productive.

Further Reading:

- ✓ Couros, George. **The Innovator's Mindset: Empowering Learning, Unleashing Talent, and Lead a Culture of Creativity**, Dave Burgess Consulting Inc., 2015.
- ✓ Kahneman, Daniel, **Thinking, Fast and Slow**, Doubleday Canada, 2011.
- ✓ Staats, Bradley, **Never Stop Learning: Stay Relevant, Reinvent Yourself and Thrive**, Harvard Business Review Press, 2018.