

# EXCELLENCE *in* ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

*By the National Center for Principled Leadership & Research Ethics  
at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

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## Homework

1. Review the second version of the Professor Major video posted on the cohort webpage, watching for: what did the department chair learn in this program?
2. Meet in a group to develop a list of skills you've acquired through this cohort program that you see being applied in the second version. Report at next session.
3. Meet in a Critical Friends group: either use the case study posted on the cohort webpage, or an issue you are facing.





# Becoming a Leader Who Makes a Difference





# Framing Leadership



# Leadership as Growth



**Process of  
Development**



**Practice and Learning  
from Mistakes**



**Contextual**



# Keep in Mind...

Leadership is a **socially constructed process** in which an individual is given or takes **increased accountability and responsibility** to **empower others** to collectively solve problems in alignment with the team's/organization's purpose.





## Mini Reflection

1

Create a list of 2-3 leaders who inspire you who are in a formal leadership role

2

Create a list of 2-3 leaders who inspire you who are *not* in a formal leadership role





Whether you step up to lead a team with no formal leader, or you step into a position with increased responsibility, a leader is setting an example.



“The most significant aspect of leadership is...**trust.**”



# What the Research Tells Us



Shared goals  
matter



WHY  
matters



Purpose helps us make  
better decisions



*What kind of  
leader do you  
want to be?*



When you're responsible  
for the good of the whole,  
it isn't about you:

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It's about the *role*, the *institution*,  
and the *mission*.

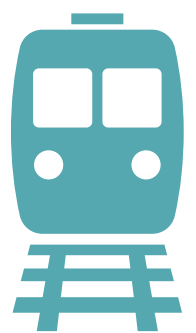


# Lead with Intention to Manage Change



**Leadership with a clear sense of purpose and direction in mind.**

\_\_\_\_\_ *and* \_\_\_\_\_



**How you get there is just as important as what you are trying to achieve; the right goal can be undermined by flawed or absent process.**



**Discard the idea that  
administration is the  
“dark side” of academia.**

*Administrators are not your adversaries.  
To effect change, they must be your allies.*



# Establish a Relationship with the Dean

*To support your mission and goals*



Chancellor

Provost

Dean

Goals and Mission  
extend vertically





# Aligning with Upper Leadership



# Overview



Be Strategic



Focus on  
Building  
*Shared Goals*



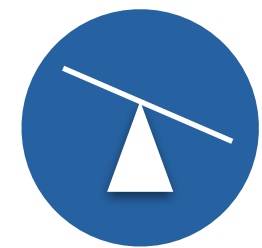
Communicate  
Thoughtfully



Be Human



# Be Strategic



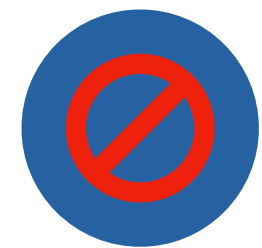
Assess, compare style & goals



Pick your battles and times carefully



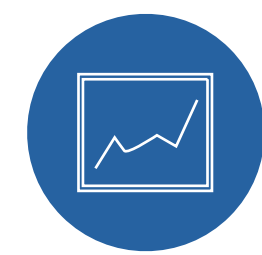
Consider why were you chosen,  
expectations when appointed



No surprises



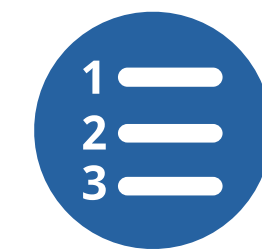
# Focus on Building Shared Goals



Understand the interests, challenges, goal of the levels above you



Do your homework: read writings, speeches for themes







Have goals; work toward them *in alignment* with institutional goals



# Communicate Intentionally, Thoughtfully



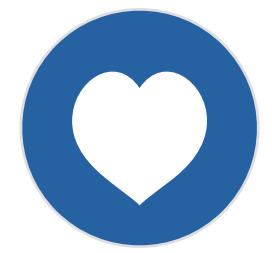
-  Listen and read carefully, deeply
-  Gather information and ask questions about communication, expectations
-  Collect and deploy evidence
-  Frame your goals in the context of the institutional purpose



# Be Human/ Be Real; Play the Long Game



Build bridges—take the time for informal interactions



Recognize our human shortcomings



Think about the pattern of interactions



To effect change,  
alignment is necessary  
and not sufficient.



# Shared Governance

*Effective engagement with faculty is fundamental to successful paradigm change.*



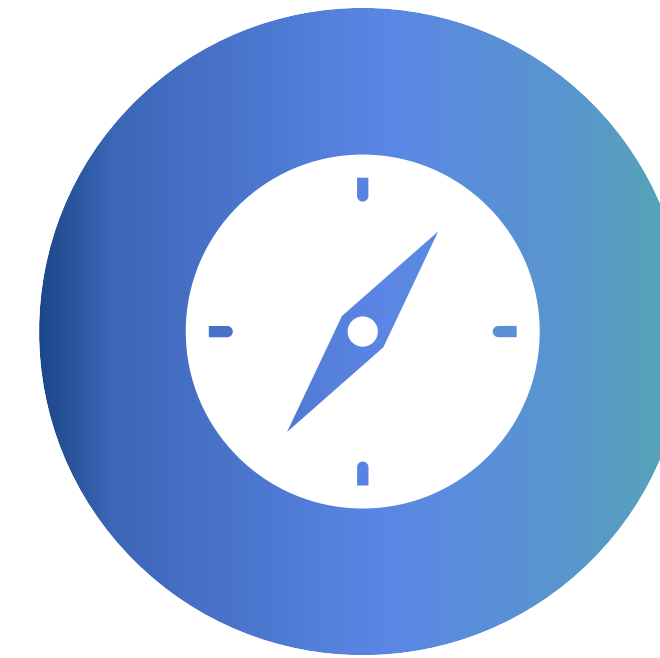
**How you get there is just as important as what you are trying to achieve; the right goal can be undermined by flawed or absent process.**



# What's the Goal?



**Scholarship is best fostered in an environment of absolute intellectual freedom.**



**The academic enterprise functions best when faculty, staff, and students have a sense of shared ownership and common purpose.**

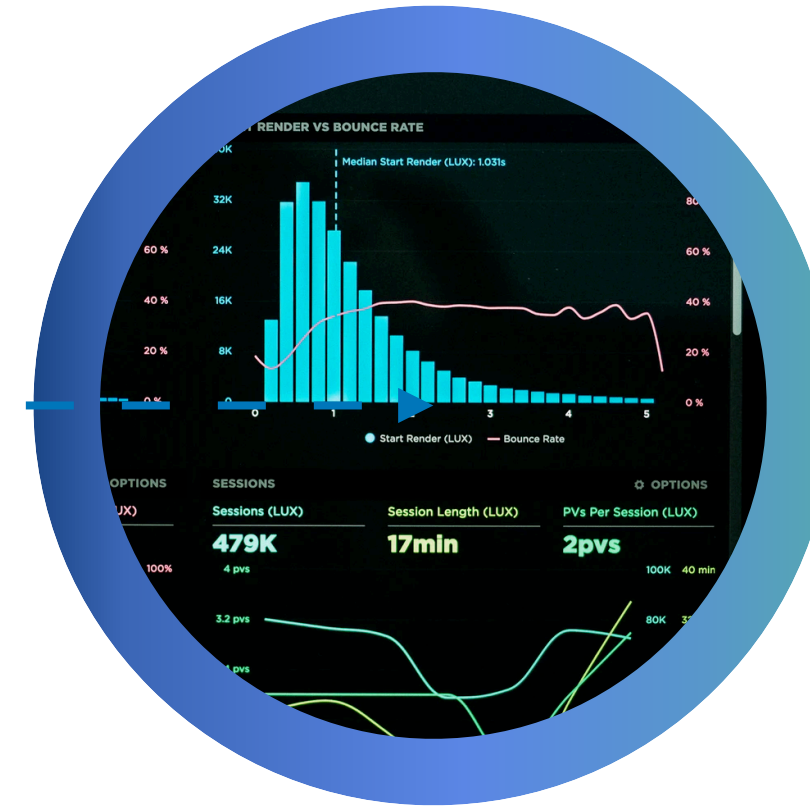


# Governance: How Decisions Are Made



## One Model

The “community of scholars” is a pure democracy and decisions are made by plebiscite.



## A Different Model

The faculty is nothing more than a work force to be managed as a business enterprise.



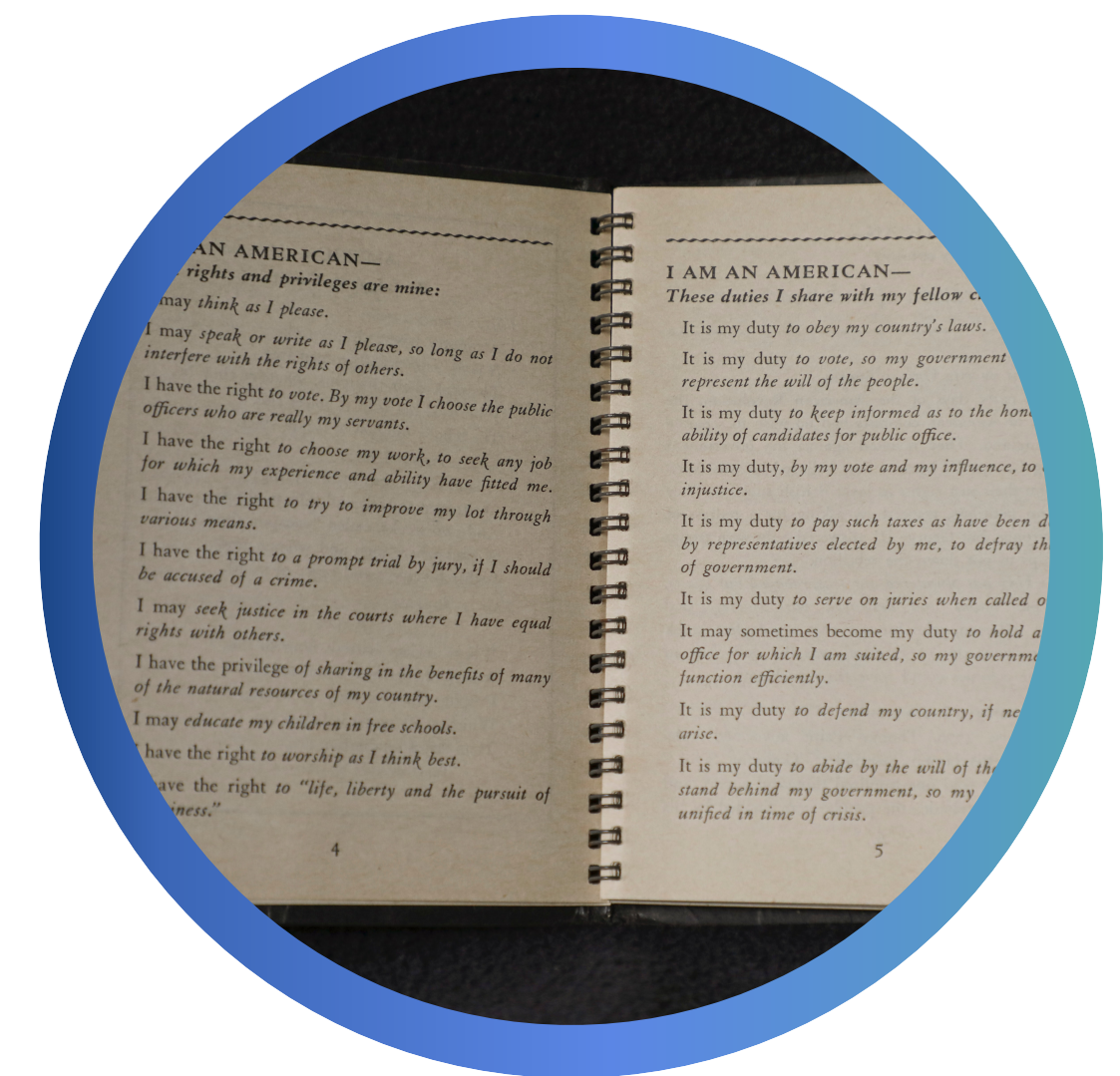
# Three Principles of Effective Shared Governance



Partnership



Stay in Your Lanes



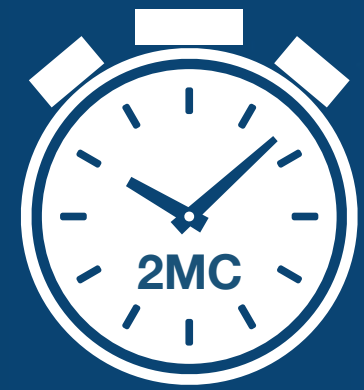
Governing Documents



# Privilege comes with responsibility

*Shared governance requires  
informed citizenship*





# Two Minute Challenge (2MC)

As the appointed head of your department, you are required by university rules to seek advice on personnel issues, including promotion and tenure (P&T) from the elected advisory committee. The department P&T committee has reviewed the portfolio for Assistant Professor Anderson and recommended them for promotion and tenure.

You are required to make your own recommendation on behalf of the department in order for the case to advance to campus level review, and you have reservations that were not surfaced by the department P&T committee.

While you agree that the record in this case is strong, you have heard from three different independent sources that Professor Anderson has been telling people, "The day after I make tenure I am putting on my slippers." You have serious reservations about the long-term commitment of this candidate and don't see how you can support it.

**How will you proceed?**



# Organizational Truth

Individuals perform best when they are *respected, valued, and trusted* by someone who through their actions demonstrates *genuine care for their well-being.*



# DEI

*We're in the midst of an important paradigm change.*



# Seeing Diversity Through a Different Lens

## Then

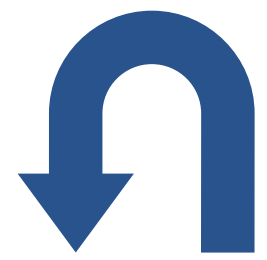
- Diversity negatively impacts academic excellence
- Institutions drive DEI change by creating awareness (e.g., implicit bias training, award programs)
- Minoritized groups assimilate into the dominant culture
- DEI goals are non-specific, ill-defined

## Now

- Diversity is integral to academic excellence
- Institutions drive DEI change by making systemic adjustments and taking sustained action
- Minoritized groups bring all of themselves and are supported equitably
- Diversity goals are intentional



# Is My Department Ready For This Crucial Conversation?



What does your unit assessment say about possibilities for change in support of DEI?



Is the environment psychologically safe for difficult conversations about DEI? How do you know?



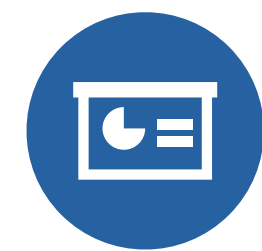
Do you have the support of a coalition of the willing?



What resources exist to support the work?



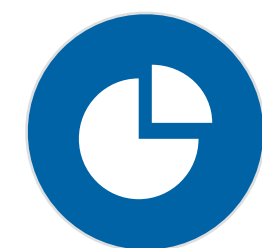
# Data Can Be a Valuable Resource



Demographics and hiring patterns



Are you *retaining* excellent faculty/staff?



Are service burdens disproportionate?  
What about undocumented forms of service  
(e.g. informal advising)?



Consider comparative data



# Respond to Changing Needs



## Current and Future Students

Implications for curriculum  
Changing metrics for success  
New forms of support



## Junior Faculty

Implications for research areas  
“Impact” vs. what’s institutionally rewarded  
Community-based research



What are *you*  
bringing to this?



# Case Study Discussion

## Case Study

The recently-appointed Department Head (a white man) of a science department nationally known for its excellence in research, is facing a challenging situation. A highly-prestigious endowed chair in the department has come open. A full professor, one of the department's most prominent researchers (a Black woman), with whom the department Head has maintained a good relationship of long-standing, has made it clear to him that she expects to be appointed to this endowed Chair, and that if she is not, she will file formal charges of racism and sexism against the department.

The appointment process for departmental endowed chairs is as follows. A committee of senior full professors nominates two candidates to the Head. The Head then submits that nomination, with his own independent evaluation of the two candidates, to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Dean then makes the final decision on the appointment in consultation with the Head; but the final decision rests with the Dean. Endowed Chairs are held for a three-year term, but can be renewed.



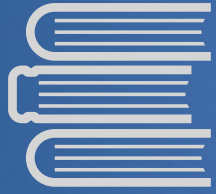


The Head has just been informed by the committee chair that the committee is not recommending the Black woman professor for the endowed chair due to her poor record of mentoring and teaching. Although she has won numerous research awards and brought substantial funding to the department, her mentoring record is subpar, with as many as half of her postdoctoral students quitting her lab within a year or two. She also has a reputation for mistreating her PhD students, yelling at them and berating them publicly for mistakes in the laboratory, and expecting them to work more than their contractually-limited number of hours per week (graduate research assistants and post-docs are unionized at this university). Her undergraduate student teaching evaluations are low; her graduate student teaching evaluations are better, but still significantly below the departmental median. She has also been heard many times telling junior faculty that the only thing the university cares about is research, and that they should therefore prioritize their research over their teaching obligations. This advice runs counter to the University's publicly-stated commitment to providing high-quality education to all of its students.

The Black woman professor has a national reputation, and so charges of racism and sexism in the selection process will undoubtedly garner national attention at a time when the department and the entire university are attempting to recruit larger cohorts of underrepresented students into their PhD programs, especially in the natural sciences. She also has a good deal of support within the department. So far, the departmental committee's recommendations are a secret; but if they become public, the department is likely to split into two camps, leading to further resentment and erosion of trust within the department and perhaps between the department and the Dean's Office.

**How should the department head proceed?**



# The Leader's Dilemma - What if I Mess Up?

-  Understand institutional DEI goals and expectations
-  Acknowledge DEI work as a legitimate part of your leadership portfolio
-  Strive for intellectual humility
-  Lead with courageous vulnerability
-  Plan for a marathon, not a sprint





# COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONS CHANGE SLOWLY

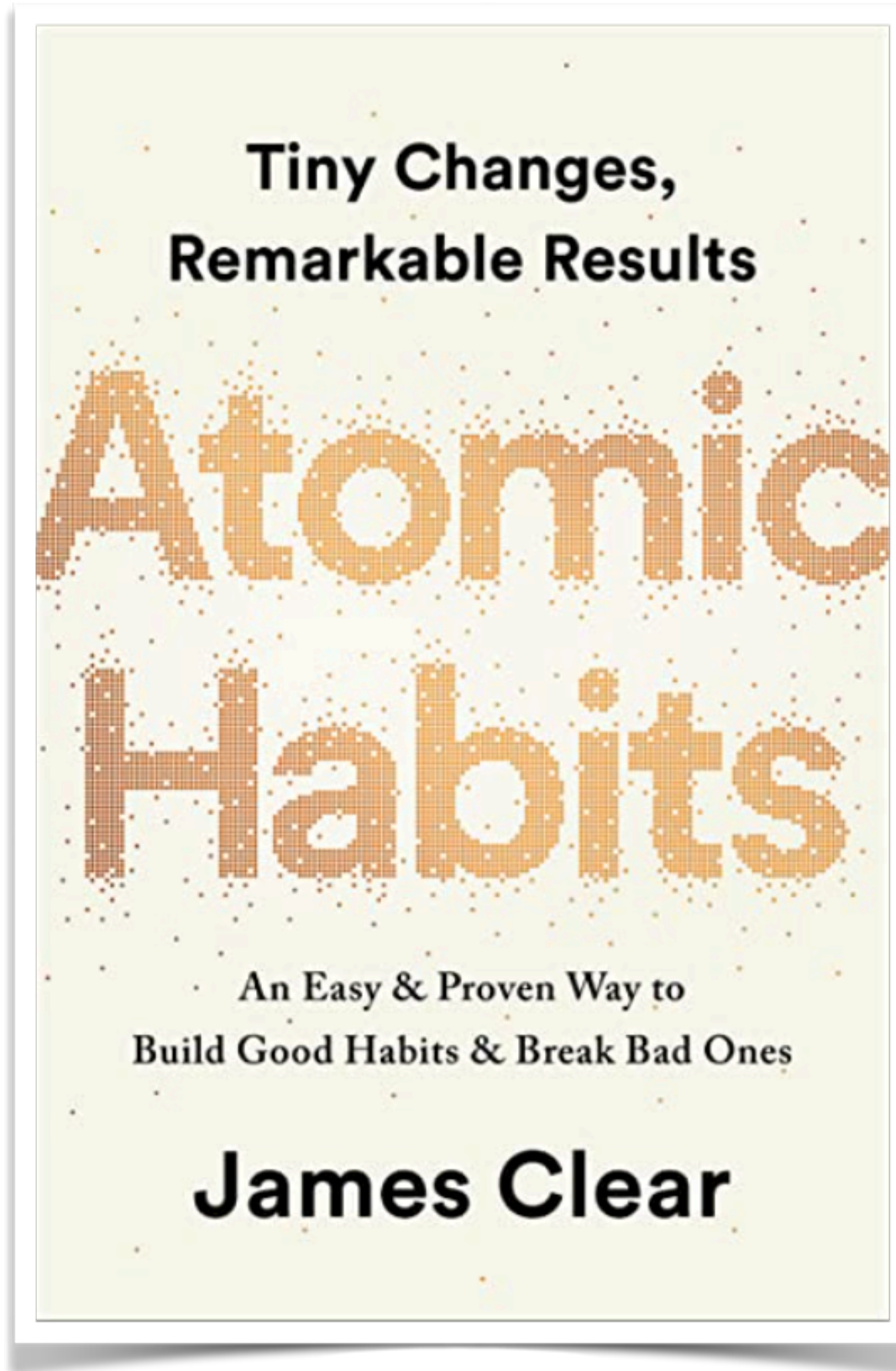


# Key to Success

*More than lofty words or impressive plans,  
the unit leader's behavior is central to success.*



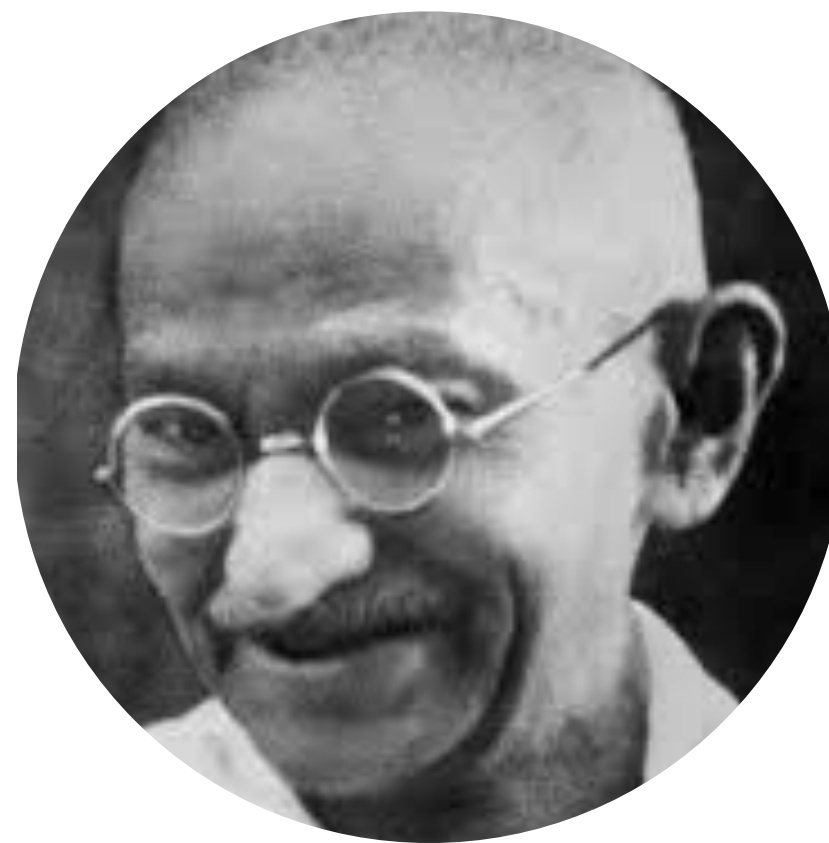
# Just Get Started!



*"Whenever you are stuck searching for the optimal plan, remember: Getting started changes everything."*



*“Action expresses priorities”*







## Homework

1. Prepare a presentation to discuss the Capstone Case at our next (final!) session.
2. Review your journal and start an Individual Development Plan for how you will continue your growth as a leader.



*Questions or concerns?*

*Key takeaways?*



*Thank You*