There are three categories of connectionally intelligent people—Thinkers, Enablers and Connection Executors. Thinkers help spark and generate the big ideas, Enablers create the structures and forces to get big things done and Connection Executors mobilize all the people and resources needed to get big things done.

In our research, we’ve identified that these three categories of connectionally intelligent people have varying strengths amongst the 5 C’s. Thinkers have high levels of curiosity, combination and courage. Enablers have high levels of community, combination and courage. Connection Executors have high levels of combustion, community and courage.

To help you think about where you fit amongst the three categories, we will discuss the ten CxQ role models by looking at the people in this book.

Most of us play many different roles in our lives, often simultaneously. So while you may be a Dreamer in your private life, launching a business on Etsy or pitching a new invention to a platform like Quirky, you’re a Mix Master at work, bringing together disparate groups toward a common, innovative goal. With your family, you may be an Advocate, fundraising for a cause you believe in that affects someone you love dearly, while playing the Disruptor at work, creating a game-changing platform like Airbnb. When you decide to go back to school, that’s the Seeker itching to hit the books.

While you may relate to some of these CxQ roles in greater and lesser ways, we encourage you to peruse the CxQ role models that speak to you. If you look at your own stories, patterns, fears and talents, what would you say is “typical” of you? How do other people describe you? (And if you’re up for it, ask your friends for help with this. Their answers may surprise you.)

We also encourage you to look for CxQ role models closer to home. Identifying someone’s role will allow you to interact with them on the most effective level. Is your boss a number-crunching Seeker or more of an Inspired Leader? Is your child a Mix Master or an Adventurer? How many of your friends are Empathetic Entrepreneurs and how many are Activists? What about those next-door neighbors nagging you to compost—are they devoted Advocates?

Observe the CxQ role models operating in the people you encounter, whether at home or in the workplace. And what about the way people present themselves on Facebook, Twitter and other digital platforms? What CxQ role models might they be communicating, intentionally or without even realizing it? As you become more adept at identifying the CxQ role models in those around you, you will become more comfortable with spotting your own CxQ role in action.
10 CxQ Models

THINKERS
- dreamers
- adventurers
- seekers

ENABLERS
- advocates
- creative company individuals
- inspired leaders

CONNECTION EXECUTORS
- activists
- empathetic entrepreneurs
- mix masters
- disruptors
THE THINKERS

These are the people who generate the groundbreaking ideas. They help see the big picture and imagine all possibilities.

5 C’s Strengths: Curiosity, Combination, Courage
CxQ Role Models: Dreamers, Adventurers, Seekers
DESCRIPTION

Dreamers are the heart center of the connectional intelligence universe. They are the people who have the patience, the courage, the vision and the strength to imagine the impossible and get big things done. We can see these traits in Ron Wallace’s quest to grow a 2,000-pound pumpkin, in John Green’s community of Nerdfighters and in Shiza Shahid’s and Malala Yousafazi’s audacious, breathtaking goal to aid and harness the underutilized brain power of 600 million girls in the developing world who face long-held, institutional and political barriers to their education. Dreamers are almost always engaging with the future, imagining the possibilities and what might be next. They are most comfortable among imaginative people with inventive ideas and an original take on life. And they are always asking, “What if?”

TOOLS:

1. Share your ideas with different communities and networks. Sharing comes easy for a Dreamer. You’re naturally drawn to stimulating conversation, particularly with people who think differently than you do. Keep putting yourself in places where you can see life through their eyes. Spend time with new people who encourage you to see things from new perspectives and other angles. When Ron Wallace dreamed of growing a big pumpkin, he tested his ideas with leading scientists and pumpkin associations. When Shiza Shahid saw the opportunity to leverage all the energy around Malala, she quickly began to build resources beyond her traditional community—to engage innovators, doers, governments, local leaders, nonprofits and large institutions. And when John Green started creating YouTube Nerdfighter videos, he bridged a community of gays, transgender kids, teens with diseases, victims of bullies and just plain smart and sensitive teens—more than a million members.

2. Build alliances with partners who have common interests and missions, but different skills, to support your goal. Dreamers require partners to turn their ideas into action. Ron Wallace worked with leading scientists who could help him test new soil samples on his pumpkins. Dreamers need to partner with CxQ role models like the Activist, Advocate or Seeker to take the next step in getting big things done. When you surround yourself by others who challenge you, you can find wisdom in the exchange of ideas, and fight your way to breakthroughs. When Dreamers like Ron, Shiza and John bring diverse groups with shared passions together, that’s when the magic happens.

3. Leverage what’s been done before. Find commonalities with your big dreams and what already exists. Be open to the various ways people are already taking action around your dream and learn to work with them in new ways. We saw this both in the Malala Fund’s partnership with the UN and women’s groups around the world and the movement Ron Wallace created teaching people how to grow bigger, healthier vegetables and his methods ultimately influencing farming in places like India. We saw this as well when John Green built partnerships with like-minded communities such as Kiva, World Vision and Save the Children, which ultimately helped his Nerdfighters increase their social impact.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:

“Without leaps of imagination or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all is a form of planning.” - Gloria Steinem

EXAMPLES

- Ron Wallace (Chapter 3)
- Shiza Shahid and Malala Yousafazi (Chapter 5)
- John Green & the Nerdfighters (Chapter 8)
DESCRIPTION:

Adventurers are people who dare to go out into the world to seek new experiences, unchartered territory and novel undertakings. They go out and discover problems: when they employ connectional intelligence, they get big things done far and wide. Adventurers reject labels, boxes or constraints of any kind, and accept risk as part of the adventure. We saw an example of this in Dusty Payne, the young surfer who studied the techniques of athletes in adjacent sports—skateboarders, windsurfers, mountain bikers and motocross champions around the world—to help him invent the “Superman motocross.” Chris Fischer, the ocean explorer, is another prime example of an Adventurer. He turned his passion for great white sharks into a collaborative, inclusive and open-source network that enabled local scientists, academics and citizens to achieve previously unattainable data on great white sharks and other endangered species.

TOOLS:

1. **Leverage your mastered skills to get out of the box.** Start with what you know well and think about how you can use it to build and test new ideas. Luis von Ahn was a leading expert in dual-purpose technology and combining human brainpower and computers to solve large scale problems, skills he used when he developed Duolingo. Chris Fischer became a media guru, then used his TV shows and media coverage to turn his media savvy into a movement for open-source research, sharing data in near real-time for free on the Shark Tracker, and enabling students and the public to learn alongside PhDs.

2. **Engage regularly with a supportive hub or community in which you can test your ideas and turn them into action.** Chris Fischer has a tight, connected team at Ocearch, made up of scientists, fishermen and media. Luis von Ahn leveraged his lab at Carnegie Mellon University to take his adventurous ideas and turn them into practical applications like reCAPTCHA and Duolingo.

3. **Study adjacencies – activities and topics loosely connected to your primary interest – to identify new ways of addressing challenges.** Dusty Payne and his surfer teammates analyzed footage of extreme sports from windsurfing to motorcycling, leading to the creation of the “Superman” the move with which he won the surfing championship. Chris Fischer spent countless days and nights exploring the ocean with fisherman and scientists, leading him to create Ocearch.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:

“One doesn’t discover new lands without consent to lose site of the shore…” - Andre Gide
DESCRIPTION:

Seekers are people who ask the big, beautiful questions that move thoughts to action. They pursue knowledge for the sake of knowledge and find truth in all its expressions. Seekers learn for the sheer love of learning. They look closely and consider all the options before acting and cultivate wisdom to improve life for themselves and others.

In a world of ubiquitous connection, Seekers thrive; they are surfing the web, doing scientific research, shopping online, writing a blog post or firing off e-mails. Seekers look for knowledge and understanding of the full spectrum of what can be grasped by the human mind. We’ve seen seekers across all walks of life in our stories, like graduate student Thomas Herndon, CrowdMed founder Jared Heyman and inventor Ed Melcarek.

TOOLS:

1. **Keep asking the question: “what if the accepted wisdom/same old assumptions are not true?”** Seekers notice something different happening and turn it into a question, taking it in a new direction. When Thomas Herndon discovered the error in an accepted economics model, he asked: What if the leading economists are wrong? What if someone knew? How can I find the answer? If you are a Seeker, you might ask be asking similar questions and fueling your passion for exploring why things are the way they are.

2. **Look at what you already know.** Ask yourself: What do I already know that connects me to something different from what I know? Jared Heyman ran a survey company which gave him the knowledge that led to founding CrowdMed. Through his insatiable curiosity, Ed Melcarek quickly solved a major Colgate challenge by bringing what he already knew as a physicist to what had been labeled as a chemistry problem. Thomas Herndon realized that while being just a student, he had a full opportunity to take the reins to fixing a major error in economic theory that was affecting global organizations like the World Bank and the UN.

3. **Engage in forums and smaller groups that allow you to ask better questions.** For inventors like Ed Melcarek, a ‘forum’ may look more like Quirky or InnoCentive. For the digital Seeker, a ‘smaller group’ could be an update on a Facebook group, a Twitter discussion based on a hashtag, in Quora forums, or on Pinterest boards. Use smaller groups to build support structures to help you to keep asking the courageous questions, just like Thomas Herndon did by gaining support from his professors.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:

“Truth is rarely pure and never simple.” - Oscar Wilde
THE ENABLERS

These are the people who create the structures, forces and teams used to get big things done.

5 C’s Strengths: Community, Combination, Courage
CxQ Role Models: Inspired Leaders, Advocates, Creative Company Individuals
DESCRIPTION:
Inspired Leaders ask the right questions. They help employees and colleagues architect and achieve ambitious goals and use their influence to make a difference in people’s lives. They take risks and assume responsibility for the group’s risks. They also empower and enable the Creative Company Individuals on the team and are deeply comfortable with change. They take charge of situations for the sake of achieving maximum results. We’ve seen examples of inspired leaders in Ben Kaufman, who brought product development to a wider community through Quirky, and Pat Mitchell, who became a passionate mentor and leader for women around the world, thanks to the TEDxWomen movement she built.

TOOLS:
1. **Break or reverse “stupid rules” or processes that are holding back progress.** For example, Ben Kaufman, CEO of Quirky, asked: Why does it take a kitchenware company two years and seven months to design and manufacture a potato peeler? Aware that issues around financing, engineering and distribution stand in most people’s way of converting a great idea into a product that can be brought to market, Kaufman’s company, Quirky, breaks the traditional rules. Kaufman asks consumers to submit their idea for an invention, a global community votes in a winner and--twice a month-- Quirky designs and manufactures two products, everything from hip iPhone cases to electronics to kitchen gadgets to housewares. The company has transformed what the world thinks about product development.

2. **Ask new crowds and communities to help.** Encourage collaboration between communities in a way in which everyone has a voice at the table: community voting, anonymous input and gaming platforms like Quirky, CrowdMed and Foldit. Can you partner up Creative Company Individuals inside organizations or Seekers outside your organizations? For example, when the Colgate executive team reached out to a group of solvers, people they normally wouldn’t have contacted due to the constraints of the traditional hiring process, they instantly found outside physicist Ed Melcarek, who solved their packaging problem.

3. **Fail forward and fail fast.** Projects that encounter roadblocks or end in failure have great value, but only if you can identify the reasons and then learn the lessons. There are always internal factors and external conditions that will help you shape your next move.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
“You have everything you need to build something far bigger than yourself” - Seth Godin in Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us

EXAMPLES
- Ben Kaufman from Quirky (Chapter 4)
- The Colgate Executive Team (Chapter 4)
- Pat Mitchell (Chapter 6)
THE ADVOCATES
caring / supportive / empathetic: a good listener with a desire to give back

DESCRIPTION:
Advocates are motivated to act on behalf of others. They help people achieve their hopes and dreams within the fabric of their communities. Advocates have a fire that is automatically ignited when they see a way to make a difference and identify how they can bring about change. They give their all so that the lives of others will improve.

Think about Karen Brocklebank (Noah’s mom), Jeannie Peeper, or Allana Maiden. In each case, their mission was more than a nice idea; it drove them to make a difference in a major way. An Advocate’s involvement doesn’t have to happen on a grand scale. It could be answering phones at a crisis center or guiding visitors around a community garden. Their GTBD mission may not seem to have the same scope or gravitas as other stories, but the clarity of why it matters and what they want to do is critical for Advocates.

TOOLS:
1. **Pick a cause that matters to you and focus on why it matters to the people you want to serve.** If you don’t already have an issue you are invested in, pick something that will energize you. With the Internet, it’s never been easier to find a cause to commit to. While you’re looking, listen to your gut. What issue would you like to see resolved? Is there an area that moves you—health, women’s issues or animal rights? Is there a location you’re drawn to—Darfur, perhaps, or India or Appalachia? What skills do you have that you can apply toward solving a problem? You may not be a doctor or public health expert, but perhaps you have a media or accounting background, are tech savvy, or have a way with people or words. Once you are clear on what cause you want to address, go out and figure out why it matters for the people you want to serve. Allana Maiden quickly realized that the creation of a survivor bar for her mother presented an opportunity to help many—there were thousands of petition-signers who had a common mission and were just as passionate as she was about her idea.

2. **Strategically target the communities and networks you want to reach and what you want from them.** Use the right tools to activate your networks. Noah’s mom used a Letters to Noah campaign to build a community. Allana Maiden set up a Change.org petition and asked for signatures. And Jeannie Peeper shared medical information with other FOP patients through email newsletters. Also, look for points to bring the hubs together. For example, Jeannie Peeper leveraged her FOP Connection newsletter to pool resources to fund FOP research at the University of Pennsylvania.

3. **Define your metrics for success.** As an advocate, be sure to have your own version of success. Allana Maiden’s metric for success was to become a strong advocate for her mother. Jeannie Peeper helped to shape the lives of future generations facing FOP, and helped people realize that it doesn’t cost much to make a big difference—simple bowl-a-thon and barbeques fundraisers can be an important step towards a lifetime of improvements for people suffering with FOP and other rare diseases.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
“A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.” - Mahatma Gandhi
CREATIVE COMPANY INDIVIDUALS
confident / courageous / entrepreneurial: an executor of ideas

DESCRIPTION:
These men and women aren’t (necessarily) coveting their boss’ job or dreaming about breaking off to do their own thing. What they want is the freedom to get big things done within the structure of the companies they work for. They are the entrepreneurs working inside large organizations. When they find a good idea, Creative Company Individuals know how to turn it into a full action plan. When they use the power of their creative vision, they not only contribute to society, they also take risks that could potentially impact the future of their employees, their organization and their industry. Additionally, Simon Willison from The Guardian enlisted more than 20,000 readers to shovel through over 170,000 MP expense reports in just a few days through a game-like interface that united all of the reader-reviewers in the goal of hitting the big “score.”

These men and women consistently connect with people who stimulate their out-of-the-box thinking. They reject the same old things or rarely think the same old thoughts. We see this in leaders like Bonin Bough from Mondelez, who organized his team to be prepared and relevant when it mattered most through the Oreo Super Bowl tweet, and Christie Smith, who translated “covering”, a civil rights and policy concept, into a corporate diversity conversation, helping to transform the culture at Deloitte University to one of inclusion.

TOOLS:
1. Gain trust and enlist a committed supervisor and/or mentor. In order to build trust and develop this type of relationship, start with daily tasks to show you are committed to long-term goals. For example, Bonin Bough had consistently built trust with headquarters by successfully taking smaller risks, before the big plunge. His team started by creating relevant real-time Oreo ads in Times Square a year before the Super Bowl tweet, which prepared them to be fast and relevant for Super Bowl 2013.

2. Create space and regular opportunities to practice innovation in ways that don’t heavily affect the company’s bottom line and/or threaten its position. As a Creative Company Individual you can assess the company’s culture and limits and work in a manner that helps the organization take a risk, but in a way that the company is willing to try. Engage groups with whom you have a natural affinity (cultures, hobbies, passions, generations) inside and outside your organization and identify how you can leverage these groups to solve problems across existing silos. The result may be radical change, but the approach will feel organic. At the same time, don’t become burdened with consensus. Make sure to incorporate broad ideas and team members while preserving the core mission.

3. Gain access to groundbreaking innovation inside and outside your field. This could be everything from watching TEDx conferences at your desk to negotiating for an expense budget that allows you to attend three conferences a year. For example, Christie Smith consistently found ways to learn new concepts, which led to her application of the idea of “covering” to enhance diversity and inclusion at Deloitte. She intentionally spent time meeting with external experts on a monthly basis and attended conferences with innovators outside her industry. When Simon Willison at The Guardian built a “game-like” interface to reveal MPs expenses, the project was built on Django, an open source web framework Simon and other developers had created four years earlier. Django required three years of open source development and was one of the key reasons The Guardian was able to act with speed when the British MP expenses were released.

EXAMPLES
- Bonin Bough and the Oreo tweet (Chapter 4)
- Christie Smith (Chapter 8)
- Simon Willison and The Guardian (Chapter 7)

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
“A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.”
- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
THE CONNECTION
EXECUTORS

These are the individuals who mobilize all the people, ideas and resources needed to get big things done.

5 C’s Strengths: Combustion, Community, Courage
Role Models: Mix Masters, Activists, Empathetic Entrepreneurs, Disruptors
THE MIX MASTERS
open-minded / creative / synergistic: a cross-pollinator of ideas

DESCRIPTION:
Mix Masters thrive when they reach out and connect intelligently beyond their particular fields. Drawing upon varied skills, Mix Masters are able to spot patterns, make connections and help facilitate multiple opportunities and intersection points. They take existing pieces of knowledge, ideas and memories and coalesce them into new concepts, products, ideas or arguments. They often approach life like scientists, testing hypotheses and reaching reasoned conclusions. We saw this in Hunter Hoffman who connected to other PhDs, gaming applications and therapy methods which led him to understand how to talk about distractions in a way to identify how to use gaming to help burn victims. Also, MIT Little Devices group was filled with Mix Masters who devised a cooler called “CoolComply” which can run on electric power or solar cells, saving daily ice deliveries that cost $600 per year.

TOOLS:
1. Observe the types of people and ideas that you let into your life. You can pick our teachers, our friends, the books we read, the music we listen to and the movies we watch. You are a mashup of what you let into your life; you can see differently by connecting with new types of people, ideas and knowledge. Hunter Hoffman spent his days connecting with PhDs across disciplines, leading to his integration of gaming and burn therapy.

2. Hold an hour of exploration time, or “play” each week. As a Mix Master, you need time to conceive and combine ideas, and to engage long enough to follow through. Sometimes this time is spent to grow new skills (e.g., blogging, singing, playing a sport, programming). Sometimes this time is spent connecting to people in different disciplines or backgrounds. Notice how you apply connectional intelligence in what you are learning. At MIT Little Devices lab, José Gómez Márquez and his team consistently spent time exploring DIY ideas by traveling to place like Honduras and India; they followed up these travels with “dedicated” time back at the lab where they incorporated the ideas they had discovered into DIY health technologies that could solve pressing needs in many environments.

3. Use different types of connection tools to test your ideas. When mixing new ideas, try using different tools to connect with new communities and networks (video, audio, gaming, Twitter, FB, Vine, Pinterest). Use these tools to bring communities together. For example, the Granny Cloud uses Skype videos to connect grandmothers with Indian children, thus helping grandmothers to make meaning in their own lives and play a critical role in the lives of young people.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
“Nothing is entirely original – everything builds on what came before. Creativity is a combinatorial process – we create by taking existing pieces of knowledge, ideas, influences, memories, and experiences collected in the course of being alive and awake to the world, and fusing those together into new combinations that we call our own “original” ideas.” - Maria Popova

EXAMPLES
- Hunter Hoffman (Chapter 6)
- Sugata Mitra (Chapter 6)
- José Gómez Márquez and the MIT Little Devices group (Chapter 4)
THE ACTIVISTS
courageous, committed, organized: a change agent

DESCRIPTION:
Activists are committed to righting wrongs; they are justice-oriented. When they employ connectional intelligence, Activists get really big things done, solving problems, saving lives and changing the world. Activists are good at forging alliances and connecting disparate groups. We saw an example of this in the story of Patrick Meier, who first learned of Ushahidi while in Kenya and jumped at the opportunity to use the mapping tool when the Haiti earthquake hit. And Activist Martha Payne, the nine-year-old school girl who called foul on her school district’s pitifully unhealthy and criminally expensive school lunches, is a prime example of how someone can begin with an issue that is personal and then go global. Martha diverted donations generated by her blog to a charity called Mary’s Meal, helping to build a new kitchen and fund healthy meals at a primary school in Malawi.

TOOLS:
1. Cultivate your networks, striving for as much diversity as possible, before you really need them. Identify ties that help you engage and connect to new crowds and organizations. Forge relationships with people who are different from you in age, view, political perspective, educational background, career role and geographic location. For example, it was Patrick Meier’s prior connection to Ushahidi in Kenya that led him to launch the Haiti Ushahidi effort while at graduate school in Cambridge, MA. You never know when prior knowledge could turn into a tool for saving lives half way across the world.

2. Create spaces for new constituencies to join forces with you. Reach beyond the usual suspects. Ahmed Abulhassan from Tahrir Supplies begged Egyptian celebrities via Twitter to support and re-tweet @TahrirSupplies, quickly gaining over ten thousand followers in days. Patrick Meier partnered with a new network—the Haitian diaspora—in Cambridge, MA when he realized translating Haitian Creole into English was among the most pressing need during his Haiti Ushahidi efforts.

3. Find ways to give back once you’ve broadened your networks and built your movement. It’s important to envision sweeping change, but when it comes to getting something accomplished, start small and give back to your local networks. Starting with a familiar issue can help. By mobilizing thousands of people through the NeverSeconds platform around a local issue, over time Martha was able to connect globally and donate 100,000 dollars to Mary’s Meals in Malawi. Through Let’s Do It cleanup campaigns in over 110 countries, Rainer Nõlvak and his co-founders have created an “open virtual world waste map” and are launching a social network for mappers to find each other, see what their friends have mapped and update their data.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.” - Nelson Mandela

EXAMPLES
- Patrick Meier and Ory Okolloh from Ushahidi (Chapter 5)
- Martha Payne (Chapter 6)
- Ahmed Abulhassan from Tahrir Supplies (Chapter 5)
- Rainer Nõlvak from Let’s Do it! Campaign (Chapter 7)
DESCRIPTION:
This person wants to be his own boss, but also wants to fill a real need. Empathetic Entrepreneurs are creative and driven; they are authentic salespeople, not hustlers. They are those who stop and listen to connect with their customers and fans on an emotional level, putting themselves in service to others. They collect data before they make a big move, building the fuel needed to push past challenges that arise and bring something creative and new to the world. Most importantly, they really listen, all along the way, making sure that the work they are doing is delivering something that people actually want. We’ve seen this in entrepreneurs like burqini creator Aheda Zanetti, lifestyle blogger and YouTube celebrity Michelle Phan and rapper-turned-change-agent Pharrell.

TOOLS:
1. **Broaden the possibilities of who you might serve.** If you spend time talking to people and observing their needs, creative ideas start to appear, but often they can help more constituencies than you might imagine. For example, Aheda Zanetti’s move to Australia led her to create the world’s first two-piece burqini, made of lycra and with a hijab-style head covering, which allow Muslim women to be active on the beach and now serve non-Muslim women who want to be fully covered for many different reasons. Michelle Phan deeply listens closely to her fans and has cultivated viewers from all around the world by discussing different styles from different cultures--from Korean celebrities to French teenagers.

2. **Fail fast and fail forward.** If you are an Empathetic Entrepreneur, you must dabble, play, mess around and experiment. It hardly matters if you are good at it or not at first. You can move on to another form or genre without having to worry about humiliation of failure. For example, Pharrell took a big risk when he moved away from the typical music persona of most famous rappers. He tied everything he was working on back to that sustaining purpose of being proud and genuine in his nerdiness (as opposed to the cool music industry persona he sometimes adopted) and the desire to make a difference in the lives of young people who were outsiders, like himself. This internal compass led to the greatest breakthrough of this career.

3. **Set up a system of incremental rewards to sustain your business over the long term.** Being an Empathetic Entrepreneur takes guts and requires structures that fuel your passion and energy. For example, the daily support and input Michelle Phan receives from her fans helps her to connect more deeply with her community and create new videos based on what her fans are asking for, and fuels her for her work. Take the time to build structures to re-energize and keep connecting with the deepest needs of who you serve.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
“Believe in your idea, trust your instincts, and don’t be afraid to fail.” - Sara Blakely

EXAMPLES
- Aheda Zanetti (Chapter 8)
- Michelle Phan (Chapter 3)
- Pharrell (Chapter 8)
THE DISRUPTORS
audacious / forward-thinking / fearless: a risk-taking leader

DESCRIPTION:
Disruptors are groundbreaking pioneers who upend traditional wisdom and find new ways of solving problems. Disruptors live in a world of “yes, and” as opposed to “no, but.” They don’t play by society’s rules; in fact, they often feel that rules are made to be broken. Disruptors have a fearless willingness to plunge into the unknown. They are first to market or first to take action for anything that is new. Innovators like Apple’s Steve Jobs and Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg perfectly embody the Disruptor model, creating whole new worlds in the most cutting-edge fields—technology and the Internet. Disruptors do things in nontraditional ways and introduce radically new ideas into the culture. They gravitate toward people with active minds and stimulating conversation. We saw many disruptive leaders in this book: Salman Khan, who is changing how students learn in an “inverted classroom”; Gamal Sadek, the CEO of Bey2ollak who is transforming the traditional idea that if you can’t fix the roads, you can’t fix the traffic; and David Baker, who created a computer application to run protein folding combinations. Disrupters know that when we are all connected, we can ask questions that we couldn’t have asked before.

TOOLS:
1. Notice patterns that upend current wisdom and then break or reverse “stupid rules” or processes. Gamal Sadek reversed the belief that radio is the only way to track traffic and address transportation issues by launching Bey2ollak, using the #cairotraffic hashtag to source information. His mobile application is now revolutionizing how citizens in Cairo tackle traffic issues and fix road infrastructure.

2. Create a separate, informal space that is exclusively devoted to creative thinking and brainstorming. Schedule a regular time at which you bring your colleagues to brainstorm new ideas, discuss long-term projects, or set strategy. The best Disruptors have a tight-knit team, but also prioritize carving out an adequate amount of “personal time” to test ideas. Salman Khan’s personal “hobby,” creating math videos for his cousin on YouTube, turned into an international nonprofit that is “flipping the classroom” by changing when and how students learn and interact with teachers and educational institutions.

3. Build open platforms on which problems can be solved. When you are tackling a big challenge, design the problem in a way that lets many people pitch in to solve it. In a matter of ten days, 60,000 Foldit gamers were able to do what biochemists had been trying to do for a decade: they deciphered the structure of a protein called retroviral protease, an enzyme that is key to the way HIV multiplies.

WORDS TO LIVE BY
“If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun.” - Katharine Hepburn

EXAMPLES
- Salman Khan (Chapter 3)
- Gamal Sadek (Chapter 7)
- David Baker (Chapter 7)
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