



## *The Wizard of Oz:* Finding the Magic Wand Within

**A Management Goes to the Movies Study Guide™**  
*by Shaun O'L. Higgins & Colleen Striegel*

### **WATCH AND READ IF:**

- You doubt your own capabilities or credentials for a job.
- You expect the worst from your subordinates.
- You have difficulty delegating tasks and authority.
- You need to build up your personal presence.
- You suffer from “paralysis by analysis.”



*Photo courtesy of Photofest, New York*

You've probably seen *The Wizard of Oz* a gazillion times. (If you haven't, what planet are you from?) The American Film Institute rated *Oz* the sixth-best film ever made. We think it's also one of the Top 10 leadership training films of all time, a fact recognized years ago by Lou Tice, one of the nation's top corporate trainers. Tice, a former championship high-school football coach in the state of Washington, built The Pacific Institute by counseling companies and their managers on ways to introduce positive wizards (good mentors) into their lives, while expelling negative wizards (anyone who tries to make you feel bad about yourself or, worse, tells you that you are incapable of success). Tice argued that Dorothy was a great leader because she “took a guy with no brains, one with no heart and one with no courage” and melded them into an effective team that successfully accomplished its mission.

More recently *Oz*'s lessons were extolled in the business bestseller *The Oz Principle* by Roger Connors, Tom Smith and Craig Hickman. They base their analysis on L. Frank Baum's book rather than the movie it inspired. They used the *Oz* story as a metaphor for issues of accountability, arguing that Dorothy and her team succeeded only after they stopped blaming others for their problems, stopped waiting for someone to wave a magic wand and started taking responsibility for their own destinies. As you'll soon see, there's a lot more cake beneath *Oz*'s icing. In fact, we think there are a dozen great lessons that will serve you well. So read on and learn why Dorothy is, indeed, one of the best managers ever to hit the screen; why the Scarecrow is the best kind of idea person; and, why Glinda the Good is the best kind of CEO a manager could have.

## ***THE WIZARD OF OZ***

US (1939): Musical/Fantasy/Dance

Runtime: 2:04 hours

Color

Available in multiple digital formats

Audience Rating: NR

### **CAST LIST**

<b>PERFORMER</b>	<b>CHARACTER</b>
Judy Garland .....	Dorothy
Ray Bolger .....	Hunk/The Scarecrow
Bert Lahr .....	Zeke/The Cowardly Lion
Jack Haley .....	Hickory/The Tin Woodsman
Margaret Hamilto .....	Miss Gulch/The Wicked Witch
Charley Grapewin .....	Uncle Henry
Clara Blandick .....	Auntie Em
Pat Walsh .....	Nikko
Frank Morgan .....	Prof. Marvel/The Wizard/Guard/Coachman
The Singer Midgets .....	Munchkins
Mitchell Lewis .....	Monkey Officer
Terry the Dog .....	Toto

**Produced by Mervyn LeRoy**

**Directed by Victor Fleming (and King Vidor)**

**Written by Noel Langley**

**Based on the novel by L. Frank Baum**

## **A DOZEN GREAT LESSONS FROM *THE WIZARD OF OZ***

- 1. Great Listeners Learn from Poor Communicators**
- 2. Don't Be a "Don't Bother Me" Boss**
- 3. Become (Like the Professor) a Data-Sufficiency Expert**
- 4. Be the "I" of the Storm**
- 5. Be a Scarecrow (and Everything's a No Brainer!)**
- 6. Nothing Happens Without a Tin Man**
- 7. Cowardly Lions Often Lead the Charge**
- 8. Don't Forget the Special Effects**
- 9. Get Past the Gatekeepers**
- 10. Learn to Mentor Like CEO Glinda**
- 11. The Wicked Witch Is Always Watching**
- 12. Expect the Best and You'll Most Likely Get It**

### **# 1: GREAT LISTENERS LEARN FROM POOR COMMUNICATORS**

Opening scene: Dorothy's in a dither. Her nasty neighbor, Miss Gulch, has threatened Dorothy's dog Toto. Auntie Em and Uncle Henry are too busy to listen. They know Miss Gulch is a chronic complainer; and they dismiss Dorothy and her anxiety as an overreaction, a "little girl problem," nothing worth spending time on. So Dorothy runs to the farmhands to tell her troubles. But they also are too busy to really listen. Nonetheless, they offer Dorothy words of advice. Hunk advises Dorothy to stay away from Miss Gulch's house and avoid the possibility of antagonizing her. Zeke argues for confrontation. "Give her a piece of your mind," he says. "Spit in her eye!" Dorothy views the hands as mentors, and they have just taught her that there might be more than one way to effectively handle a situation.

Dorothy's still a kid, so we can forgive her for not knowing how to communicate effectively. But Auntie Em, Uncle Henry and the farmhands have been around the block. They should know, as good managers do, that communication is a two-way process; and when the speaker is weak,

the listener must be especially strong. When Dorothy comes back in a panic, the adults fit her behavior into a pattern and jump to conclusions. The pattern looks like this: little girl, she's upset, Miss Gulch (again), nothing new, I'm busy, this can wait. Truth be known, however, Dorothy has important news and the devil is in the details, which nobody asks about: Toto didn't just "bother" Miss Gulch, he bit her; and Miss Gulch isn't just complaining, she's gone to the sheriff, she's got a warrant, and she's threatening to go to court! (Remember? When Miss Gulch peddles up to the ranch, she tells Em and Henry that if they don't turn Toto over, she'll sue them for damages and take their farm!)

## **# 2: DON'T BE A "DON'T BOTHER ME" BOSS**

By not listening effectively, Em and Henry not only miss important information, but they also train Dorothy to not bring them any information in the future. If you want to be kept informed, you have to take time to listen.

Having been shut down for trying to tell her story, Dorothy does what most people do when the boss is too busy to listen: she keeps her head down by going off where "she won't make any trouble." Were she treated that way at your office, you can bet that would be the last time she would be volunteering any information. No way! She'd head back to her cubicle, where she'd probably not even "prairie-dog" for a few days.

Auntie Em, Uncle Henry and the farmhands genuinely love Dorothy, but for our money they should be raising ostriches, not chickens. If you want to be informed, you have to encourage people to speak up. Sometimes the information won't be worth much, but sometimes it will. In either case you can't afford to be a "don't bother me" boss.

## **# 3: BECOME (LIKE THE PROFESSOR) A DATA-SUFFICIENCY EXPERT**

Professor Marvel (a.k.a. The Gatekeeper, a.k.a. The Guard, a.k.a. The Wizard) would have passed his GMAT test with flying colors. If you've taken the GMAT, you'll recall the data-sufficiency section (and probably not fondly). If you haven't taken the GMAT, here's what data sufficiency is about: you're presented with a problem in math or logic and given three pieces of information that can help you solve the problem. Then you are asked not for the solution, but whether the information you were given was: A) not enough to find the solution; B) just enough to find the solution; or C) more than you needed to find the solution. It's a very tough test partly because it's structured differently from the other sections of the exam; partly because most high schools and colleges focus on getting the right answer, not getting it most efficiently; and partly because you have to remember a lot of geometric formulas you won't have used since high school and will never use again. Nonetheless, the Data Sufficiency Test is there for a good reason: gathering information takes time and money. If you gather more than you need, you're wasting time and money. Wasting time and money is antithetical to efficient business practice—hence, the data-sufficiency section on the GMAT.

Professor Marvel has an intuitive understanding of data sufficiency. Dorothy shows up at his campsite. She has a bag of food and her dog with her. She looks tired; she's hungry; she's out in the middle of nowhere by herself. Professor Marvel doesn't need to do a focus group to determine her needs. He "guesses" it all: she's running away from home because she's misunderstood there. Amazed at his deep knowledge of her situation, Dorothy decides the Professor is a wise man, so she asks his advice (Dorothy will ask ANYBODY for advice!). His intuitive knowledge fails him, so he cuts to the chase. He consults his crystal ball. While he draws it out, he asks Dorothy to close her eyes, then searches her basket for additional data that will help him help her. (That's about as efficient as one can get!) He finds a picture of a woman (Auntie Em) standing by the gate of a picket fence. It's enough, of course. When Dorothy opens her eyes, the Professor gazes into the ball saying, "I see a woman standing beside a fence." Dorothy says the woman must be Auntie Em. The Professor, armed with this new nugget of information, applies it quickly and tells Dorothy that, yes, the woman's name "is Emily." This further impresses the highly- impressionable Dorothy. Professor Marvel notes that the woman looks sad, lonely, perhaps hurt because she's missing someone—and Dorothy, of course, spills the beans on running away and then decides, guided by the Professor, to return home.

The Professor has done his good deed for the day and he hasn't wasted a fact, a word, a dollar. He has achieved maximum results from minimum research effort. When you master data sufficiency, you'll be able to do that, too.

### # 4: BE THE "I" OF THE STORM

There you are—in a good position with an established company and then—blam!—you're swept up in turmoil. No telling what cubicle you'll land in. You might even wind up at another company in a different town, maybe even in Oz. You're swept up in the corporate equivalent of a Level 5 twister if ever, there ever, a twister was. No matter how weird it gets, you have to position yourself in the eye of the storm, protecting yourself from the chaos around you. You can create your own eye. Your skills, self-confidence, observational skills and presence of mind can make you the "I" of the storm—the person who stays cool in a crisis. It works for Dorothy. Her reaction when she finds herself caught up in the tornado is not so much fear as wonder. She keeps her head, going to the window to see what's happening. When you're caught up in a storm at the office, do as Dorothy does: keep your head, gather information, watch the skies.

### # 5: BE A SCARECROW (AND EVERYTHING'S A NO BRAINER!)

If there's a recurring theme in *The Wizard of Oz*, it's that the major characters believe they lack the very traits they most possess. The Scarecrow *thinks* he lacks brains. (Clearly, if he can *think* he lacks brains, he must have some.) Not only does he have a brain, but he is always using it—and in a variety of ways. Sometimes he's reflective. For example, when Dorothy asks him how he can talk if he hasn't got a brain, he tells her he doesn't know, then adds, "some people without brains do an awful lot of talking, don't they?" Later he shows that he knows what



management is supposed to be about when he asks Dorothy if he can join her on her trip to Oz, promising that “he won’t try to manage things, because he can’t think.” If only all managers realized that thinking is the essence of their work!

When he’s not sharing his astute observations, the Scarecrow applies his brain to tactics. There’s that scene in the woods: Dorothy and Scarecrow are hungry and stop to pick some apples. But the apple trees aren’t willing to give up their fruit and order the twosome to stop picking. Scarecrow taunts the trees. He gets them so upset they start throwing their apples at him and Dorothy. They gather the apples up and head down the road. Using his brain, the Scarecrow has tricked the trees into giving him exactly what he wanted—and exactly what they most wanted to hold onto.

In addition to being a reflective and tactical thinker, the Scarecrow is a strategic thinker. He’s the one who puts together the plan to rescue Dorothy from the castle of the Wicked Witch—and it works.

Like the Scarecrow, you have a brain—and it’s probably better than you think. Of course, it needs exercise. We’ve put together a list of ten quick brain-stretcher exercises you can do on a regular basis to keep your brain in top working order.

## **# 6: NOTHING HAPPENS WITHOUT A TIN MAN**

The Tin Man *thinks* he needs a heart. Of course, the fact that he *cares* about having no heart, shows that he, in fact, has one. The Tin Man isn’t heartless as in “cruel”; he is heartless in the sense of “lacking will.” He has trouble getting his blood (or oil, if you will) pumping in the morning. Rust is only one thing that makes him lackluster; he just “doesn’t have the heart” for doing things anymore. When Dorothy and the Scarecrow invite him to join them and to ask the Wizard for a heart, the Tin Man can only question the payoff. “What,” he asks, “if the Wizard wouldn’t give me one?” By anticipating the possibility of failure, the Tin Man has managed to stay more than a little rusty. Whenever you encounter someone in your work place who asks the question, “What if it doesn’t work?”, you’ve found a Tin Man waiting to be oiled.

The Tin Man is, of course, the most caring character in the movie. The only reason he gets rusty is *because* he cares—and frets—about everything to the point of shedding tears which, when shed, cause him to rust.

In the scene prior to Dorothy’s rescue, the Scarecrow comes up with the plan, but only because the Tin Man, moved to tears of concern, says “we have to do something.” Even the best brains can be lazy and even the most courageous people can lack will. The prime movement in any organization comes because somebody gives a damn. In *The Wizard of Oz*, it’s the Tin Man. Who are the Tin Men in your organization? The ones whose hearts are in the job (even if they think they don’t have hearts and even if they don’t know their hearts are still in their jobs)? If you

don't have any Tin Men, your Scarecrows probably aren't thinking about the right things and the bravery of your Lions probably isn't being tested.

### # 7: COWARDLY LIONS OFTEN LEAD THE CHARGE

He blusters and poses; he's a big talker who puts up a good front—until Dorothy whacks him on the nose. Then we see the Lion for what he thinks he is: a 'fraidy cat or, as he describes himself in his first song, a "dandy lion." But the lion doesn't understand that while it's often okay to be afraid, it is almost never right to let fear stop you from taking the necessary action. In the opening scenes of the movie we find the Lion's human counterpart, farmhand Zeke, telling Dorothy she has to stand up to Miss Gulch and "spit in her eye." Then Dorothy falls into the pigpen where she's likely to be trampled and bitten by the hogs. Zeke doesn't stop to think—he dives into the pen and rescues her. But when he brings her out, he's visibly shaken, trembling with fear about what might have happened and realizing that he, too, could have fallen victim to the rampaging pigs. The other farmhands tease him about being afraid. Fact is, Zeke was the only one brave enough to jump into the sty. A similar thing happens when the three rescuers assault the castle: the Tin Man urges action; the Scarecrow comes up with a plan; but it's the Lion who leads the way.

### # 8: DON'T FORGET THE SPECIAL EFFECTS

The Wizard is a humbug, but he humbugs well. His "office" exudes authority and power. Who can doubt, in that setting, with the Wizard's over-sized head floating in space, that this character knows all and can do anything? Ideally, you are not a humbug and really know your stuff. But that's no reason to show up at meetings without wearing your best business outfit and making your presentation as exciting, clear and well-organized as possible. *How* you present is often as important as *what* you present.

#### Special Effects: Eleven Keys to Great Speeches and Presentations

1. **Follow Aristotle.** The art of rhetoric has advanced a lot since Aristotle's time, but most of the new stuff is purely academic. Aristotle wrote a manual, *The Rhetoric*, that has served generations of speakers well, particularly in terms of organizing presentations. Each presentation, he argued, has a beginning, a middle and an end. The best way to start is by telling your audience what you are going to cover ("tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em"). The middle is the heart of the matter and conveys your message and the reasons behind it (this is where you "tell 'em"). The end reiterates what you said and, if appropriate, urges action in response to your message ("tell 'em what you told 'em" and ask for the order).



2. **Don't let your appearance or behavior get in the way of your message.** Be clean, dress appropriately for your audience (better to be overdressed than underdressed), polish those shoes, and make sure your hair's combed. Sounds basic, but it's surprising how often we have heard a good speaker make a great presentation and then overheard folks in the lobby chuckling about the spot on his tie. Of course, it shouldn't matter, but it does.
3. **Show up on time.** Nobel Prize-winning author Sinclair Lewis once described an ideal speaker as anyone "who showed up ten minutes early and sober." 'Nuf said. When you show up late, you wind up in apologetic mode and that impedes your ability to get fired up. The audience and program chairman have already started focusing on whether you'll arrive instead of how great your remarks will be. Showing up at least ten minutes early also gives you a chance to adjust to the room, to make sure your equipment is properly set up, and to answer any last-minute questions from the person who will introduce you.
4. **Never count on visual aids.** More than one presentation has been spoiled because the speaker's slides got spilled or mangled, or because a computer connection failed, a projector bulb blew, or a computer wouldn't power up. We've seen American speakers arrive in foreign countries with VHS tapes, only to find the country has no VHS players. Always have a back-up plan if your visual aids fail. Sometimes presentations are canceled on the spot because the speaker was planning to ad lib around the notes on her lost/damaged slides. Have printed copies of your slides with you, as well as a set of transparencies for use with overhead projectors.
5. **Use humor sparingly and appropriately.** One person's humor is another person's faux pas.

Humor is especially dangerous in international speaking where your favorite joke may not make sense, may be mistranslated, or may lose its timing-dependent impact due to delays in translation. One of the most frightening moments in international speaking comes when you tell a joke, hit the punch line and look befuddled when the audience doesn't laugh. A moment later, just as you are starting to resume your speech, the translation is completed and you are interrupted by delayed laughter from the audience! This "laugh gap" is always a problem in sequential translation, where you speak and then wait for the translation; but even simultaneous interpretation can wreck your timing. Best bet: avoid humor when abroad and use it sparingly when you're stateside.

6. **Keep within your allotted time.** Don't overstay your welcome. If you've agreed to speak for 20 minutes, don't speak for more than that. There's only one way to do this. Practice and time your speech until you've edited it to fit the allotted time. Don't expect an audience to understand that you are rambling on because you didn't respect their time enough to go over your remarks in advance. It's rude and it's a killer for your speaking career.
7. **Keep slides simple.** A good slide is like a good billboard: it features a great graphic and has fewer than ten words. If you're doing a series of thoughts, display them in sequence, adding and highlighting a line at a time as you "build" the series. Keep each line short and to the point.
8. **Have a strong close.** Always write out the last three sentences of your presentation and commit them to memory. Great presentations are often destroyed when the speaker's thoughts trail off and end in a weak "thank you." Close with a bang! (By the way, it's okay to say "thank you," but your close needs to first bring things home in a way that invites applause.) Never leave the audience wondering if you are finished. Writing out your close in advance makes sure you have a close.
9. **Project energy.** If you seem tired or bored, your audience will be, too. Speakers use a variety of techniques to pump themselves up before a presentation. One speaker we know listens to a favorite Vivaldi tape. When appropriate, she asks that it be played as background music at luncheons before she takes the podium. Another insists upon taking a vigorous 15-minute walk just before meeting the audience. Another excuses himself from the podium for five minutes just before he's introduced. (He implies that he's going to the restroom, but he actually finds a quiet corner in a lobby and gives himself a pep talk!) Another speaker parks a picture of his beloved wife on the podium next to his notes and speaks to please her, his best critic. These or other techniques may work for you. Whatever you do, don't be boring. Speak as if you give a damn!
10. **It's better to read than to ramble.** If you're not a professional speaker, it's okay to read your speech (as long as you're not reading it for the first time). Reading a speech has several advantages: first, if you can read it, it means you (or someone) had to write it. Consequently, the speech can be structured and timed. Second, if you're reading the speech, you have a record of what you said. Third, if you're reading a speech, you are less likely to flub a quotation or a number. There are, of course, pitfalls to reading speeches. You can't just sight read. You need to read through your remarks a couple of times before you deliver them. That will enable you to look up from your remarks occasionally and maintain eye contact with the audience. It also means the audience will know you've read it before and thought about what you were going to say. That's a sign of respect and audiences like it.

11. **Collect examples of great speeches from the movies.** The movies are filled with examples of great motivational speeches. Watch the awards scene in *The Wizard of Oz*. Pay attention to how the Wizard presents the diploma, watch and medal. Listen to the way he structures the presentation. Watch *Executive Suite* and note how Donald Walling secures the presidency of Tredway company with a speech that would do any CEO proud. Listen to Coach Dale outline his thoughts on how teams work in *Hoosiers*. Listen to Sigourney Weaver explain her work rules to Tess McGill in *Working Girl*. These are just a few examples from movies that can help you be a more articulate speaker.

## # 9: GET PAST THE GATEKEEPERS

At the gates of Oz, Dorothy and her friends meet the Gatekeeper, a pettifogging bureaucratic nebbish. First, he chastises the quartet for failing to read a sign he has forgotten to post. Then, when Dorothy and her friends ask to see the Wizard, he tells them “nobody can see the Great Oz” and expects them to go away. Dorothy says she *must* see the Wizard and cites her authority (she tells him she’s been sent by Glinda and she wears the red slippers to prove it). But the Gatekeeper doesn’t open the door. Then the Wicked Witch flies over and sky-writes a request that Dorothy be turned over to her. The Gatekeeper wonders who the witch wants and Dorothy tells him her name. “The Witch’s Dorothy,” he says. “That’s different.” But it’s really not and he still won’t let her in. Neither the Good Witch’s authority nor Dorothy’s own notoriety has worked. In frustration, Dorothy breaks into tears, sobbing about how she’ll never get back to the farm and to her Uncle Henry and Auntie Em. Hearing her sobs, the Gatekeeper admits Dorothy, wiping tears from his own eyes and noting that he “had an Auntie Em himself once.”

Getting past gatekeepers is an art and Dorothy’s pretty good at it. She opens the gate by being persistent and by trying several approaches.

Gatekeepers are everywhere and they are there for a reason. Busy, successful people don’t have time to waste. Gatekeepers are paid to keep time wasters away. Be sure if you do get around them, that you’ll be worth spending time with. Otherwise, both you and the gatekeeper will find yourselves outside the door.

## **# 10: LEARN TO MENTOR LIKE CEO GLINDA**

Consider the geo-politics of Oz. It's a world of contrast and conflict. There are pleasant, well-run countries in the North and South, presided over by benevolent queens (okay, good witches). The Munchkins live just within their borders, singing, dancing and frolicking beside the Yellow Brick Road. Then there are the Witchdoms of the East and West, ruled by evil sisters controlling armies of ape-like beings held in thrall. The Munchkins are caught up in a border war involving Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, and the surviving Wicked Witch of the West.

Glinda needs to protect her borders and her Munchkins and, good as her magic wand is, she needs help if she's to overcome the Wicked Witch, establish a New World Order, and free herself from having to intervene personally in every little crisis. She's been there, done that and she isn't getting any younger. Time to delegate. But to whom? Fortunately, Dorothy drops in just in time—and in just the right place—to be a real help, assuming, of course, that Dorothy's not a witch, too. (Glinda's been in a two-witch war; she doesn't need any new opponents.) Glinda also knows that her allies must be capable and that Dorothy has a lot to learn.

Glinda, noting that Dorothy has killed the Witch of the East and made an enemy of the Witch of the West, advises the girl to leave Oz. But, says Glinda, she doesn't know how Dorothy can do that. Glinda is telling a little white lie here. She knows the secret to leaving, but she's not telling because she needs Dorothy to go to Oz. She needs help from both Dorothy and the Wizard if she is to rid Oz of the remaining Wicked Witch.

Glinda will get what she wants, but Dorothy will also grow as a result, learning valuable lessons. Glinda will take credit for being a great teacher—and it's not undeserved. The first lesson she teaches is one of delegation. She tells Dorothy the Wizard might be able to help her get home, but that the journey to Oz is a long one. Dorothy needs more data and asks for it (she's very good at asking). Glinda tells her to follow the Yellow Brick Road, that the Munchkins will help her get started, and that she should never take the ruby slippers off her feet. Dorothy seeks more information, but Glinda is a master delegator: she waves her wand and disappears! Remind you of any managers you've worked for?

The more we learn about Glinda, the more we see how effective she is in getting what she wants by helping her aides learn. Despite the fact that they don't see Glinda, she's clearly behind the scenes keeping watch. We learn this in the scene in which Glinda sends snow to counteract the effects of the sleep-inducing poppies. Glinda never rushes in dramatically to fix everything herself and, in the process, undermine Dorothy's self-confidence as a manager. Even when Glinda reappears at the end of the movie, it is only to make sure that Dorothy has learned the lessons of the ruby slippers for herself.

**Glinda T. Good, CEO Managerial Affirmations**

- Cheerfully welcome all new Dorothys.
- Defend your turf. (*Bad witches not allowed!*)
- Suggest, don't tell.
- Provide adequate support. (*Enough Munchkins.*)
- Empowerment means “get out of their way.” (*Wave wand and disappear!*)
- Don't micromanage. If you must intervene, be invisible.
- Don't do, teach!
- Show up .at the end .and praise everyone.
- Make sure they knew YOU taught them.



Photo courtesy of Photofest, New York

## # 11: THE WICKED WITCH IS ALWAYS WATCHING

Your competition may not have a crystal ball but, like the Wicked Witch of the West, they have an eye out for what you're doing—and it pays to keep an eye on them as well. Throughout the movie, the Wicked Witch knows where Dorothy is, what Dorothy is doing and can assess the prospects for Dorothy's success. When she sees Dorothy making progress, she throws up obstacles. (“Poppies! Poppies will put them to sleep!”)

Short of illegal wiretaps (if crystal balls *really* worked, they'd be outlawed, too), how do you keep tabs on your competitors? Sure, it's easy to read annual reports, but they only tell you where the company's been, not necessarily what it's up to now. You can pump vendors, former employees and customers for information, too; but that's a dangerous game. These sources often supply good information, but they can be channels of misinformation and disinformation as well. In developing your own crystal ball you must first ask yourself what you really need to know. Gossip about a competitor may be interesting, but is it really useful? Ask yourself, “If I know this, what will I do?” If you don't know what you'd do with a piece of information, don't seek it out; it will only distract you. And since the Wicked Witch—your competitor—is always watching, you need to think of the information you would least like

him or her to have and make sure you have the mechanisms in place to give it maximum protection from leaks, squeaks and sneak-thieves.

## **# 12: EXPECT THE BEST AND YOU'LL MOST LIKELY GET IT**

The Wizard's ultimate secret is summed up in a lyric: "I never did give nothin' to the Tin Man that he didn't already have." The Tin Man has a heart; he just thinks he doesn't. The Lion is courageous, but thinks he's a coward. The Scarecrow is a genius, but thinks he's a dolt. Shakespeare once said, "There is nothing either good or bad; but thinking makes it so." Management wizards get the most from their staffs by helping staff members better use the brains, passion and courage they already have. Wizards do this by helping people see themselves as able, by praising success, by helping them visualize themselves in new ways. Remember when the Scarecrow gets his diploma? Now he thinks of himself as smart. Knowledge he has been suppressing comes spewing forth! If you want smart people, expect them to be smart. If you want brave people, set expectations of bravery; and if you want people to be passionate in their work, to have heart, start with the assumption that they *are* committed. You'll be surprised how often people will respond to the expectations you have of them. You might even start seeing yourself as a wizard!



## TEN GREAT WAYS TO EXERCISE YOUR MIND

1. **Take up a new mental pursuit at least once a year.** Try to make it something entirely different from things you've done before. Learn a foreign language. Take up bird-watching. Master a video game. If you play chess, try the oriental game Go. If you play poker, try bridge or chess. Work your way through the basics of a type of math you've not done before, calculus, for example.
2. **Move up a level in your normal pursuits.** We know lots of people who work the daily crossword puzzles in their newspapers. If you're still having trouble getting through yours, stick with it until it becomes easy; but if you're regularly getting through the puzzle and your completion time is improving, find a new puzzle. If you easily completing most regular crosswords, take up diagramless or cryptic puzzles. Stretch that brain!
3. **Take a different route to work every day,** even if you only vary your routine by a few blocks. Habit is the death of thinking.
4. **Don't just read; read something different.** Make sure at least 40 percent of the books you read are non-fiction books unrelated to your business - great books on popular science, history, biographies. If you never read science fiction, force yourself to try some; same with a mystery or two. And make time to re-read at least one book you liked when you read it in college. Rethinking is as important as thinking.
5. **Exercise your memory.** Force yourself to learn a list of something: Presidents of the United States, in order; capitals of African nations; the value of pi to the 50th place; the first lines of Shakespeare's plays; the first sentences of Dickens' novels; the birthdays of all your direct reports. Sure you could look them up, but memory works your brain. Once you've got one list down, challenge yourself with another.
6. **Write your autobiography.** Or consider writing a history of your company or a brief biography of someone you admire. William Zinnser, an expert on writing, argues that writing helps us think, makes us organize our thoughts, helps us sort out what we really know and believe. Write to think!
7. **Practice speed math.** Face it, you are impressed when someone who's just heard the same series of numbers you've heard, immediately announces that their cumulative effect will be, say, a 60% improvement in revenues. She does this while you're still putting the numbers into your H-P Business Consultant. Your head for numbers is better than you think, but you have to exercise it and you have to master the tricks of mental computation. As an alternative, try brainteasers. Bet you haven't done them since you were a kid.

8. **Cultivate people who ask “smart” stupid questions.** If you have kids, you’ve already got them close by. Kids ask questions and require explanations that force you to get into the details of things. Why is the day divided into 24 hours? Why do currents flow one direction in the northern half of the globe and the opposite direction in the southern half? Why do we need profit? The main questions and the followups can quickly send you back to the books to seek good ways to explain things like this. Answering “dumb” questions will make you smarter.
  9. **Switch hands.** If you’re left-handed, try doing things with your right hand; if your right-handed, try doing things with your left. You probably are familiar with all of that “right-brain/left-brain” stuff so you know that the right-side of the brain generally controls the left side of the body and vice versa. You also know that the right-brain is credited with creative processes. We know one person who, when he is in a brainstorming session, always holds his pencil in his left hand, makes a point of rotating his left foot and makes other movements designed to work the left side of his body in order to stimulate the right side of his brain. In budget meetings, he favors the right side of his body to stimulate the “logic” of his left brain. He swears it helps him shift his thinking patterns and match them to the issues at hand.
  10. **Keep notes or a diary of things that capture your attention.** If you’re reading a book and like a quotation in it, don’t just dog-ear the page, write it down. If you see a painting you like, make a note of who painted it, its medium, when it was painted and where you saw it. Like that wine? Make a note of it. When you write these things down, you further embed them in your memory.
- \* **Special Note:** Don’t forget your body. Your mind functions best when your body functions best. Get enough sleep and don’t forget the exercise.

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