

**Welcome to the talk: The “Antifragile” Worker: Cultivating Resilience**

**Today is a GREAT Day!**



Today, we live in a world where everything seems easier and yet harder at the same time.

The workforce today has the technological means and resources needed to accomplish more in an hour than what we could achieve in a day several years ago.

**However:**



- While technology makes accomplishing tasks easier, it also distracts and deprives us of focus.<sup>1</sup>

If we're constantly shallow-diving and losing the ability to concentrate or interact deeply, we're less equipped for complex, real-world problems.

- We used to do things deliberately, carefully and correctly. Now we prioritize quantity, not quality. We pass off incomplete work expecting our managers to complete it for us.

This lack of ownership, a reduced desire for mastery, and an expectation of external rescue are all hallmarks of fragility rather than self-reliance. If people aren't driven to complete things carefully, they're less likely to push through difficult challenges.

- Artificial Intelligence is now integrated into our lives providing us with unparalleled convenience and accessibility but deprives us the experience and value of Hard work, Grit and Determination.<sup>2</sup>

If fundamental challenges are removed or outsourced to AI, the muscles for perseverance and resilience atrophy. When those challenges inevitably appear, the “fragile” response is to fold.

- Social media allows us to connect faster with huge audiences but disconnects us with the art and lessons of interacting with people face to face.<sup>3</sup>

If we're used to curated online personas and simplified interactions, real-world conflict or criticism (which is essential for learning and

1. <sup>1</sup> "Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World." Cal Newport

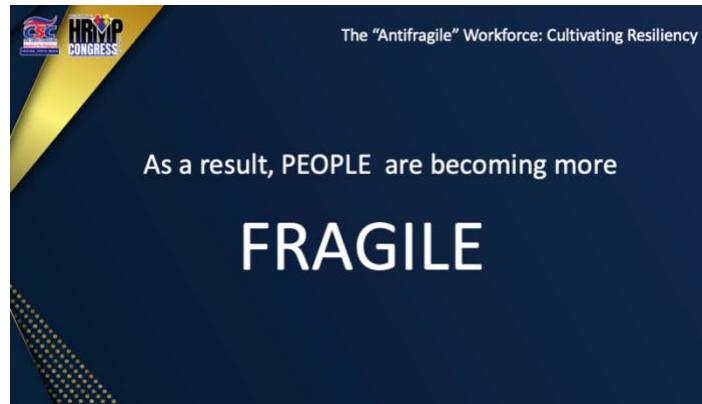
2. <sup>2</sup> "The Second Machine Age." Erik Brynjolfsson / Andrew McAfee

3. <sup>3</sup> "Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other." Sherry Turkle

growth) becomes much harder to process without feeling attacked or withdrawing.

- Mindsets are shifting. We want everything but are less willing to learn and be corrected when we make mistakes.<sup>4</sup>

If people resist feedback because of “sensitivities” and prioritize their comfort over growth, they inherently become more fragile to challenges that require adaptation and self-correction.



**As a result, we are becoming more “fragile”.**

When faced with adversity, we choose to withdraw or quit instead of confronting and learning from it. We choose to feel hurt and

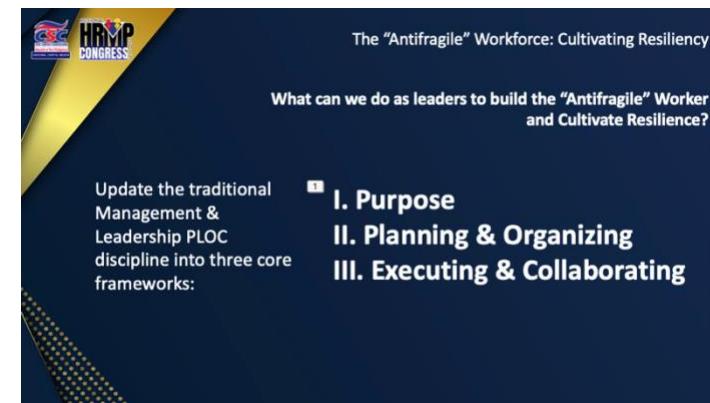
4. "Growth Mindset" vs. "Fixed Mindset." Carol Dweck

protect our ego instead of learning life lessons that make us tougher and less fragile.

For a great majority, disengaging and “quietly quitting” is what happens.

They are physically present but in essence have given up caring about “self-growth” within the organization.

**The question is, what can we do as leaders to build the “Antifragile” Worker and Cultivate Resilience?**



We need to update the traditional Management and Leadership PLOC discipline into three core frameworks:

- I. Purpose
- II. Planning and Organizing
- III. Executing and Collaborating

## I. Purpose

### I. PURPOSE

Your intentions must be crystal clear

1. Build up an “Antifragile” Team

2. Create “Antifragile” Leaders

**Intention setting requires effort and preparation.**

If we skip the part of deep reflection and just go ahead and execute, there is a high chance that it will be shallow and lacking in conviction

Creating an “Antifragile” workforce should first start with clear Intentionality – As a leader, you need to first be crystal clear in your mind and in your heart your purpose of creating not just “Antifragile” workers but leaders.

A lot of times, we skip the part of deep reflection and just go ahead and execute only to find yourself flapping in the wind when things don’t go your way.

Intention setting requires effort and preparation. Without it, execution will be shallow and untethered to any conviction.

## I. PURPOSE

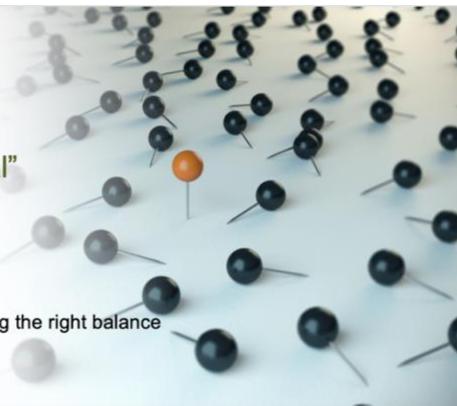
Management

➡ “Transactional”

Leadership

➡ “Emotional”

The challenge is finding the right balance



Now, more than ever, we need to redefine and clarify the purpose of Management and Leadership.

I always mention in my talks that management is “transactional” while leadership is “emotional”.

The challenge is most of us lean too heavily on one or the other. Finding that balance is tough, but it's where real impact lies.

### I. PURPOSE

**Example:**

You're producing quality output + meeting deadlines consistently.

...But your team's attrition is through the roof...

The challenge is finding the right balance

✓ Management

? Leadership

**Example:** You're producing quality output and deadlines consistently. But if your team's attrition is through the roof, maybe your leadership needs revisiting.

### I. PURPOSE

**Example 2:**

Everyone loves you, loyal as heck. Always has kind words about you

...But your department underperforms because you're doing all the heavy lifting...

The challenge is finding the right balance

? Leadership

? Management

**Example 2:** Everyone loves you, loyal as heck, always has kind words about you. But your department underperforms because you're doing

all the heavy lifting. Maybe it's time to sharpen your management skills.



**“Antifragility” is both transactional and emotional.**

**It is about finding the right balance between management and leadership**

- Building antifragility in your team is about clearly defining tasks or goals to be accomplished for the day, week, month or quarter.
- It is also about growing your team into emotionally strong “antifragile” leaders as you strive to hit your targets.



**I. PURPOSE**  
 “Antifragility” needs to be desired by your team as much as yourself and the key to achieving this is “Authenticity”.  
 It must be clear that grooming them is not a “selfless” act on your end but rather a mutually benefitting act for 3 parties, you, them, and the Organization.

**Win-Win-Win**

“Antifragility” needs to be desired by your team as much as yourself and the key to achieving this is “Authenticity”.

It has to be clear that grooming them is not a “selfless” act on your end but rather a mutually benefitting act for 3 parties, you, them, and the Organization.

This is what I often term as a **Win-Win-Win**. Authenticity will dispel any notion of hidden agendas. It is the real building block of trust and mutual respect.

#### Properly define and clearly communicate:

- **Win1:** What's in it for them

i.e. Growth, new skills, career advancement, sense of achievement

- **Win2:** What's in it for you

i.e. A stronger, more capable team, better performance, reduced burden, leadership growth

- **Win3:** What's in it for your organization & the Citizenry you serve

i.e. Improved output, innovation, stability, better service, sustained success

#### II. Planning & Organizing



#### II. Planning & Organizing

Building an “Antifragile” workforce requires a PLAN and an authentic leader that walks the talk.

Building an “Antifragile” workforce requires motivation and inspiration but not just through words but with a believable plan and an authentic leader that walks the talk.

#### 3 Must Haves of Authentic Leadership

1. Be honest about your own Strategic and Tactical Strengths



**Big Picture Strategic:**

1. Future Readiness and Preparation
2. Talent Recognition, Development, & Placement
3. Policy Formulation

**Surgical Tactical:**

1. Timebound Objectives, KRAs, & KPIs
2. Online, Real-time Updating & Monitoring
3. People & Productivity Management

As leaders and Managers, we need to see the strategic big picture of what is happening now, what's coming, where we want to go and how exactly are we getting there.

But we also must be surgically tactical and realistic in how we organize our team to execute.

#### Big Picture Strategic:

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  2. Talent Recognition, Development, and Placement
  3. Policy Formulation
- Surgical Tactical**

4. Timebound Objectives, KRAs, & KPIs
5. Online, Real-time Updating and Monitoring
6. People and Productivity Management



#### AUTHENTICITY

Leverage your strengths and the strength of others in your team.

Where you are weaker, outsource and collaborate with your team.

You cannot do everything alone

Authenticity means you leverage your strengths and the strength of others in your team. Where you are weaker, outsource and collaborate with your team. You cannot do everything alone; find the people who fill those gaps



#### 2. Master both “Cooperation” and “Collaboration”.

Cooperation means you are able to get people to cooperate with the plans you have created. It is about complying willingly, not forcibly.

You need strong Sales, Listening, Critical thinking and Communication skills for this to happen. It is not just about forging ahead; you need to be able to objectively take in input, question and refine and then sell the final plan.

This is especially crucial in times of crisis and tough decisions have to be made and born by the leader.

Case in point, the Covid pandemic where everyone was scared and unsure of what to do, this is when leaders all over the world had to step up and do what they thought was right, regardless if the choice was popular or not.

A leader’s role is to have the team “cooperate”, even if it is an unpopular path.

Collaboration on the other hand means you need to get people get involved a lot deeper to help you plan and execute something they are better equipped than you to handle.

This requires relinquishing some form of control and trusting the team more.

Please note however, that while collaboration is valued, there are nuances to it.

Effective collaboration only happens when there is organic engagement, and a capable team.

You also need to gauge if the team has developed antifragility. If not, then build them up first.

Once ready, collaboration should go hand in hand with cooperation, crisis or not.



The gap between cooperation and collaboration can be wide or narrow, depending on your team's seasoning and antifragility.

**Work to make your team antifragile, and that gap narrows.** Your goal is to make cooperation and collaboration one and the same.

### 3. Adopt an Investment Mindset

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Before investing, you must qualify who is truly worthy.

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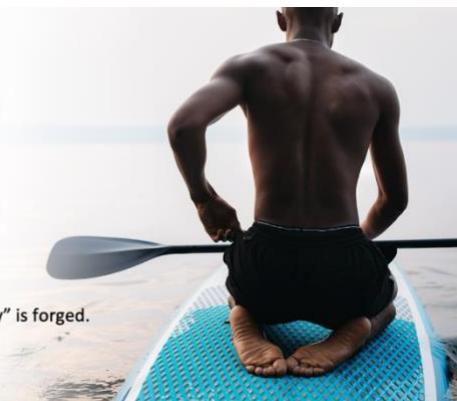
The qualification and filtering takes the most time in this long-term investment.

Once you are able to assemble your core team, then comes the next phase.

For any worthwhile endeavor to produce results, time and effort must again run its course. This goes back to our main theme of “antifragility”.

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The filtered team will have to face and survive trials that are above ordinary. This is how “antifragility” is forged.

Many times, we quit too early. Sometimes we quit too late. But in my experience, it is the first type of quitting that breeds “fragility” not the latter.

Creating an “Antifragile” workforce requires an investment in time, money, effort and patience.

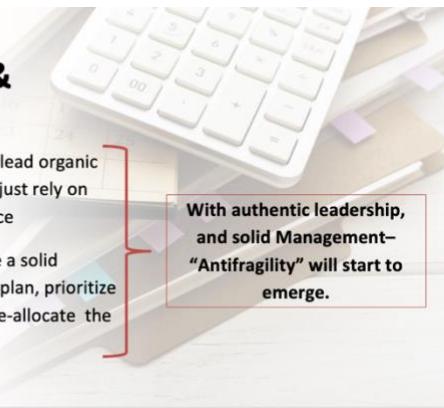
Leadership is about knowing when it is time to quit and when not to. Easier said than done.

## II. Planning & Organizing

As a Leader, you need to lead organic collaboration efforts not just rely on cooperation or compliance

As a Manager, you create a solid framework, organize the plan, prioritize the steps and allocate / re-allocate the talent.

With authentic leadership, and solid Management—“Antifragility” will start to emerge.



However, Collaboration without a Strategic or tactical framework is tough to execute.

As a Leader, you need to lead organic collaboration efforts, not just rely on cooperation or compliance.

As a manager, you create a solid framework, organize the plan, prioritize the steps and allocate / re-allocate the talent.

With authentic leadership and solid management – “Antifragility” will start to emerge.

## III. Executing and Collaborating for “Antifragility”:

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#### Being Intentional

As a leader, you need to first be crystal clear in your mind and in your heart your purpose of creating not just “Antifragile” workers but leaders.



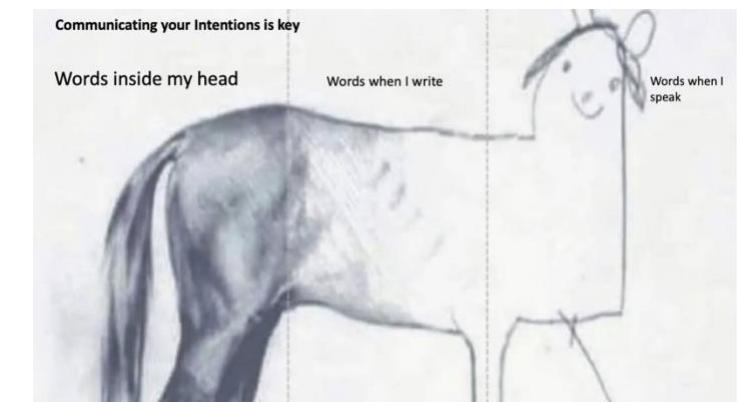
As a review, creating an “Antifragile” workforce should first start with clear Intentionality – As a leader, you need to first be crystal clear in your mind and in your heart your purpose of creating not just “Antifragile” workers but leaders.

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Intention setting requires effort and preparation. Without it, execution will be shallow and untethered to any conviction.

#### Communicating your Intentions is key

When you are ready, that intentionality should translate in writing the plan, the structure, and the framework of how you will implement it. More importantly, it has to be communicated by words, written, verbal and through actions.



#### Written Communication

People are not mind readers, don’t make them guess, tell them what you want. However, it is not just about you and the organization, it is also about what you want for them.

Translating of your intentions from thoughts to the written word that benefits everyone is a clarifying but is a necessary exercise that requires effort.

You need to put in the effort. This is where you will really have to define what you want for your team, your organization and for yourself guided by the Win-Win-Win Principle.

The strategy and the tactics need to be written down clearly to eliminate ambiguity.

More importantly, writing it down forces Accountability for everyone to see and believe in.

Then it has to be communicated to the team consistently with unwavering conviction. And that is just the beginning. The road is long and full of twists and turns. There will be those who stay the path with you and those who will not and that is okay.

Remember, Antifragility requires filtering.

### Verbal Communication

Emotions are better expressed and processed verbally.



In my case, I want to share the Covid-19 Pandemic as an example of how I translated my “Intentions” into writing a script, then verbalizing it in a video that went Viral.

But one or 2 grand messages is never enough.

Consistency and Conviction is a MUST.

Developing “Antifragility” is a long journey. There will be a lot of misunderstandings when you verbalize your intentions and your plans

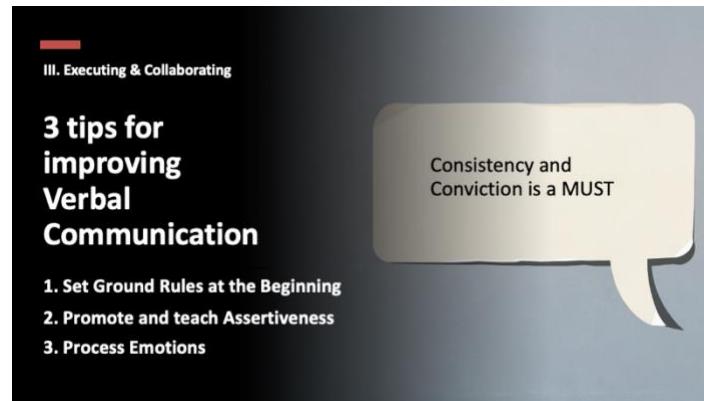


especially when the newer generation is more comfortable in communicating through non-intrusive written text.

You have to engage them, care for them through both “love” and “tough love” and that takes practice, experimenting, apologizing, processing and everything I mentioned all at the same time.

Now, while it can be overwhelming to think of all of what must be done. It doesn’t have to be.

### 3 tips for improving Verbal Communication



## 1. Setting Ground Rules

Again, people are not mind readers, so we verbally communicate what we expect from them and what they can expect from us.

Setting expectations through clear, verbal communication, provides everyone clarity of the rules and should address small misunderstandings beforehand when you communicate.

i.e. “I might get angry but know that it is because I have high expectations of you, and if I cross the line, I will be the first to apologize.”

## 2. Promoting Assertiveness

The culture of an organization changes with the generation of the workforce. The old generation in Asia, specifically in the Philippines valued quiet obedience to hierarchy and authority.

The new generation however, values speaking up. While that is key to engagement and collaboration, “how we speak up” is important.

Verbal communication especially with difficult conversations, has to promote “assertiveness” not “aggressiveness”, or “passiveness” or worse, “passive-aggressiveness”

Assertive communication is about three things. 1. Knowing your worth, 2. Knowing what you want, and 3. Communicating it respectfully.

It is striking the balance of all three that is hard to master, but that is what “antifragility” requires both from the leader and the team member.

## 3. Processing Emotions

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As leaders, we need to be the first to apologize when we step on the dignity of the person we are speaking to.

However, we should not apologize for simply raising our voice as part of showing frustration or in disciplining people when we need to.



As mentioned, the road is long because there will be a lot of misunderstandings when we start verbalizing our intentions.

As leaders, when we need to have a difficult, emotional conversations, we need to be the first to apologize when we step on the dignity of the person we are speaking to.

That is the line we need to be careful not to cross.

However, we cannot and should not apologize for simply raising our voice as part of showing frustration or in disciplining people when we need to.

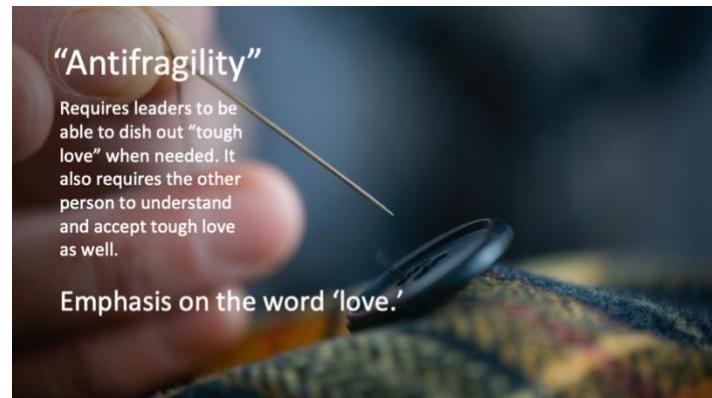


## Fragility

Happens when people feel entitled to royal treatment and allowed to skip consequences.

More importantly, their respect for the leader will erode.

Fragility happens when the other person feels entitled to royal treatment or being afforded niceties when they make mistakes. – They are allowed to skip consequences. More importantly, their respect for the leader will erode.



## “Antifragility”

Requires leaders to be able to dish out “tough love” when needed. It also requires the other person to understand and accept tough love as well.

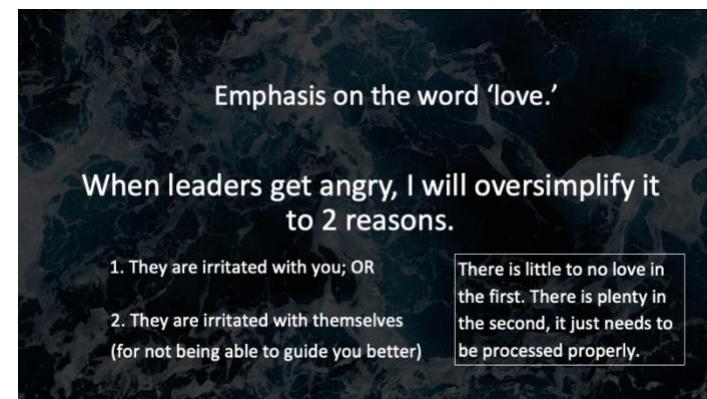
Emphasis on the word ‘love.’

Antifragility requires leaders to be able to dish out “tough love” when needed. It also requires

the other person to understand and accept tough love as well.

Emphasis on the word ‘love.’

Leaders are also human and also suffer from emotional outbursts.



When leaders get angry, I will oversimplify it to 2 reasons.

1. They are irritated with you; or
2. They are irritated with themselves for not being able to guide you better.

There is little to no love in the first.

There is plenty in the second, it just needs to be processed properly.

Emotional outbursts, if it can’t be helped is fine. What is not fine is if you leave the emotional encounter unprocessed and unresolved.

This will inevitably lead to resentment and a buildup of emotional residue which will be very hard to unclog over time.

## The goal of emotional processing

Is to bring out the emotions into the light and remove, reduce, or resolve pent up resentment and emotional residue.

It is in how well you can process emotions with your team and come to a healthy understanding of the quirks of personalities of people, and different levels of adversity that strengthens “antifragility”.

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In my experience it is in how well you are able to process emotions with your team and come to a healthy understanding of the quirks of



personalities of people, and different levels of adversity that forges “antifragility”.

If your intentions are clear, your message is clear, and you are consistent and unwavering, your team and yourself will produce not just material results but intangible ones.



- It took us 9 grueling months to pivot during the Covid Pandemic and see tangible results.
- It took us 2 more years to recover all of our losses.
- The whole team faced and survived far above the ordinary.

And as of this moment, they are all “Antifragile”



...They are as of this moment, “Antifragile”!

Thank you for downloading this student guide. I really took the time to prepare this for you so that you remember and implement some or all of the lessons in the talk.

It was a pleasure talking to you today!

-Mark So  
 Co-Founder, Chairman and CEO  
 Businessmaker Academy, Inc.

If you would like to continue your leadership journey with me, or speak at your event, I encourage you to get in touch with my Sales

Manager, Mylene Manalo at +639176590326 or email: [mbm@businessmaker-academy.com](mailto:mbm@businessmaker-academy.com)

Need training for your team?

I highly encourage you to take a look at and enroll in the leadership for managers program bundle:



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