

Application Guide

RESET: HOW GREAT LEADERS GET UNSTUCK WITH DAN HEATH



BOTTOM LINE:

Great leaders don't wait for more. They reset and unlock what's already there. Same people. Same resources. Better results.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- I. When you're trying to change the way things have always worked, you can't do everything at once. Start by finding what matters most.
- II. **Find leverage points:** the places where a little bit of investment goes a long way.
 - A. **Go and see the work:** Get out of your office and observe the actual environment. Shadow a student, walk the store floor, act as a customer.
 1. You can't find leverage points sitting and looking at spreadsheets.
 2. When you go and see the work, you discover what you've been oblivious to.
 3. Doing this allows you to see things in a new way and determine what needs to change.
 - B. **Reframe the goal:** Ask, *"What is the goal of the goal?"* This helps cut through unhelpful processes and clarify purpose.
 1. Sometimes we just need to pause and evaluate if there is a simpler, better, more graceful way to accomplish the ultimate goal of the goal.
 2. Example: Veterans' student loan forgiveness was streamlined by skipping the application entirely and automating the match.
 - C. **Use the "miracle question":** *"If the issue was resolved overnight, what's the first thing you would notice?"*
 1. This question reveals practical, immediate changes that indicate leverage points. It focuses you on something concrete and gets you out of the theoretical.
 2. Within the context of a team it gives you a way to surface hidden disagreements and collectively decide on a vision to move forward with.
 - D. **Target the constraint:** Identify what your biggest limiting factor is.
 1. The constraint is the bottleneck; it's the number one thing holding you back. So how can you remove it? (For example, Chick-fil-A eliminated menu boards and used human ordering to reduce the slowest part of drive-thru service.)
 2. Bottlenecks shift—fix one, and another will emerge, but as you fix them, overall performance improves.
- III. **Restack resources:** Most leaders don't have extra money, people, or time, so you need to reallocate what you already have to support the change effort.
 - A. **Do less and more simultaneously:** Stop over-serving low-value areas and redirect to high-impact ones.
 1. Example: Companies often over-coddle unprofitable customers while under-serving their best.
 - B. **Tap motivation:** Start where energy already exists—what people *want* to do.
 1. Motivation should *shape* your strategy, not just follow it.
 2. Imagine a Venn diagram: one circle is what's required for change to succeed, the other is what is desired in the minds of all your team members. There's almost certainly an intersection between what's required to succeed and what's desired.

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C. **Celebrate the right behaviors:** Highlight and reward early wins that reflect your desired changes.

1. You get what you celebrate.
2. When you celebrate a behavior, you're signaling to the team that this is what success looks like.

D. **Accelerate learning via feedback loops:**

1. As organizations get more complicated, it takes more time for information to get to where it needs to be, but slow feedback delays change.
2. Quick, simple tools (like HappyOrNot buttons) can provide real-time insight and help optimize systems without new headcount.

IV. Even if things are working now, they won't always. Having a reset framework prepares leaders to pivot quickly and confidently—without needing to start from scratch.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION OR TEAM DISCUSSION

1. Where in your organization do you feel stuck right now?
2. When was the last time you got out of your "leader bubble" and observed the work (or product) from the front lines? What did you learn?
3. If a miracle happened overnight and the problem you're facing was resolved, what would be the first thing you'd notice?
4. Where is the bottleneck or constraint in your current process? Is it possible you've been treating symptoms instead of addressing the true constraint?

RESOURCES MENTIONED

[Reset: How to Change What's Not Working](#) by Dan Heath

[Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die](#) by Dan Heath

[The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact](#) by Dan Heath

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