

“Jean-François Cousin’s book is full of surprises—many counter-intuitive ideas that can help leaders change even the most stagnant and inflexible organizations into thriving, dynamic performers!”

— **Marshall Goldsmith**, a Thinkers50 Top Ten Global Business Thinker and top ranked executive coach

# GAME CHANGERS

at the  
**Circus**

**How Leaders Can  
Unleash Greatness in  
Their Organizations**

**BONUS**  
THE  
**GAME CHANGERS’  
LEADERSHIP  
WORKBOOK**

**JEAN-FRANÇOIS COUSIN**

*Unleashing the greatest story there may be—Yours.*



## PRAISE FOR *GAME CHANGERS AT THE CIRCUS*

“*Game Changers at the Circus* is a unique and charming story with important lessons for every leader. Jean-François Cousin’s creative energy springs from every page. Read this book and make a positive difference in your organization!”


– **Ken Blanchard**, co-author of *The New One Minute Manager*<sup>®</sup> and *Leading at a Higher Level*

“Enjoyable and compelling, this timely fable and its lessons read like a novel but serves as an important business manual. With wisdom and context from a long and successful business career, Jean-François Cousin has painted a vivid picture of how to enact change effectively, with page after page of insight!”

– **Marshall Goldsmith**, a Thinkers50 Top Ten Global Business Thinker and top ranked executive coach, author of the New York Times and global bestseller, *What Got You Here Won’t Get You There*

“Many organizations struggle to build a high-performance culture. Sometimes leaders can’t get aligned. Sometimes they disagree about what is most important. Let’s face it—sometimes it seems like a circus! Jean-François Cousin’s new book, *Game Changers at the Circus*, offers a powerful approach to change all that. Packed with easy-to-apply principles and practical action steps, this book will help you and your team achieve new levels of passion, productivity, and performance.”

– **Ron Kaufman**, New York Times bestselling author of *UPLIFTING SERVICE: The Proven Path to Delighting Your Customers, Colleagues, and Everyone Else You Meet*



“*Game Changers at the Circus* is a great story of the roles leaders can play in either limiting or accelerating greatness in an organization. The four leadership levels provide a framework for the future, as well as clarity around the essential behaviors contributing to the success of the organization.”

– **Roland B. Smith**, Vice President and Managing Director,  
Center for Creative Leadership

“Finding purpose is the ultimate life quest which most human beings are struggling with. Jean-François Cousin has found his personal purpose in growing beauty in others. He wrote an amazing fable in which the dialogues of his animal characters—similar to those of Jean de la Fontaine—allow everyone to understand how self-awareness, letting go of fears, authentic conversations, and shared purpose are the foundation of organizations’ Greatness. A *must-read* book!”

– **Loïc Tardy**, Senior Vice President, Unilever Asia Pacific

“A clever and fun way of providing insights and practical advice to leaders at all levels who wish to become stronger leaders and build greater teams.”


– **Pairoj Kaweeyanun**, President, Chevron Thailand  
Exploration and Production Ltd.

“An enlightening fable on leadership with integrated Eastern and Western views on ‘what matters most’ for an effective and successful leader in our global and complex business world. Only Jean-François Cousin’s world-wise leadership experiences in both the East and the West could make this book possible!”

– **Lu Hong**, Vice President, HR, APAC Region,  
Pfizer Inc.

“*Game Changers at the Circus* reminds us of how leaders’ behaviors may thwart positive change in organizations, and shows practical ways in which leaders can replace those behaviors with supportive ones. Leveraging his experience as a world-wide corporate executive and coach, Jean-François Cousin has produced both a compelling fable and a pragmatic leadership workbook. This book is required reading for all leaders aspiring to change their game for greater outcomes.”

– **Stefano Olmeti**, Head of Global Executive Coaching,  
World Bank Group



“Inspiring and action-oriented, this book is a game-changer. You will see yourself and people around you through a different lens—a more positive and much more powerful one. Spot on and eye-opening, the fable will also help you reveal the full potential of your organization. Just four steps and your ‘circus’ can become Le Cirque du Soleil... Clap along!”

– **Jean-François Couvé**, Head of South East Asia,  
Novartis Consumer Healthcare

“Jean-François Cousin creates a playful fable that skillfully draws us into a profound lesson on self-awareness, purpose, and leadership. *Game Changers at the Circus* reveals, in a distinct and memorable way, how our authentic leadership contributes to extraordinary outcomes.

In our increasingly-complex, technology- and task-driven business environment, building diverse high-performing teams is essential and this tale empowers leaders to reflect and focus on what matters most—their people.”

– **Christianne Garofalo**, Senior Partner, Leadership  
Talent & Consulting, Korn Ferry International

“Jean-François Cousin’s new book resonates in unison with the leadership experiences I got in countries as different as Kenya, Japan, France, and Nigeria. It echoes my beliefs that in any company, (1) ‘everybody must feel important and in charge!’ (2) ‘lights are green unless you are told otherwise!’, and (3) ‘everyone dances to the tune of the customers!’. I found Cousin’s approach to authenticity and respect particularly compelling.”

– **Didier Tresarrieu**, Group Senior Vice President,  
Development Africa, Lafarge

“This unique animal circus fable is a refreshing spin on how to conquer those hardest things that unleash the best from yourself and others. Jean-François Cousin has done an admirable job of weaving in universal wisdom elements, and they make the learning relevant in any culture and any setting. As a very successful coach, he may also have just written a book that gives away all the best tools-of-the-trade to coach yourself and your team!”

– **Mandy Chooi**, Global Head of Talent and Learning,  
ING Bank



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## Preface

*“I would rather have a mind opened by wonder  
than one closed by belief.”*

Gerry Spence

*Game Changers at the Circus* aims to inspire and equip leaders to unleash more of their Greatness, and embark their teams on a step-by-step journey to change the game and foster a culture of Greatness and high performance in their organization.


The rewards encompass higher employee engagement and accountability, bolder and more profitable growth strategies, and a greater contribution to society.

This book offers both a fable for inspiration and a leadership workbook for action. Time-starved executives may read the workbook first and immediately reap its benefits.

### **Why this book?**

As an executive coach, I realized, through countless conversations with CEOs and cross-cultural leadership teams from Asian and Western companies, that more often than not, leaders and their teams are just a couple of steps away from reaching far greater outcomes.





In our discussions, we found out *which* further steps they needed to take to change their game and contribute their best performance, and *how* they could take those steps.

This book captures the learning from our successes and failures, and it attempts to serve leaders and teams I don't yet have the honor to meet.

Why a fable? Because we find insights about how we can best move forward when we get out of our day-to-day concerns, liberate our imagination and emotions, and look at our situation from expanded perspectives. Stories help us do so with ease and joy.

You will, however, find this fable truer-than-life, for it was inspired by very real situations in organizations.

### **How was this book written?**

Hard truths, convictions, and desire have inspired the fable's storyline and helped design practical game-changing steps for the corporate world, which are presented in The Game Changers' Leadership Workbook located after the fable.

#### *Hard truths...*

- Most change-projects stumble even when proper processes are deployed, because some of the leaders stick to unsupportive behaviors.
- Organizations fail at embedding a high-performance culture when leaders can't establish the collaborative engagement level required.



*Convictions...*

- Everyone has Greatness potential and there is a way for leaders to discover it and unleash it.
- Game changers must change themselves first.
- Elements from both Eastern and Western leadership approaches strengthen game changers' effectiveness.
- Game changers can follow straightforward steps in order to master the four leadership levels which embed a culture of Greatness and high performance in their organization.

*Desire...*


To offer inspiration *and* practical actions for...

- Leaders to spiral up across leadership levels.
- Teams to easily raise their game to the next level.

**How will you get the most from this book?**

The four *movements* of the fable will introduce you to the four Leadership Levels mastered by game changers and will illustrate their outcomes:

- Dropping the Masks
- Lifting Others Up
- Getting the Acts Together
- Unchaining Greatness



Once you have read the fable, you are invited behind the curtain to learn about its practical applications for leaders and teams in The Game Changers' Leadership Workbook.

First, you will get to know the Circus characters up close and personal.

Then, you will explore the Game Changers' Four Leadership Levels and understand the straightforward steps everyone can take to master each level. You will also find out how each of those steps leads to the next.


Next, you will exit the Circus and assess how close to Greatness you, your teams, and your organization are, through a simple questionnaire which takes less than three minutes to complete (refer to pages 238 to 241).

Finally, you will reflect further and take actions using Changing the Game in Your Organization (refer to page 237) as a guide. It offers practical exercises and tips, links to 12 real case studies, and other resources, all intended to inspire and equip you and your teams to create your master plan to change the game and execute it at your own organization.

As you read this book, write down the ideas you want to remember and the actions you want to implement. Use the Action Plan on pages 277 and 278 or download it from the book's website at: **[www.greatness.coach/book](http://www.greatness.coach/book)**.

Call on your teams to join in the reflection and get the game-changing journey started!

Just a word of caution before you start: understand that a great mess usually precedes Greatness.



You will initially mingle with seriously unsavory characters: a godfather, a zombie-boss, a doomed narcissist, a mother hen, a scary autocrat, and a self-righteous intellectual, to name a few. You might well identify some of your colleagues through these characters but don't let them know before you reach the end of the book! Instead, take time to think about which small aspects of yourself may also be illustrated through the Circus performers.

Most importantly, incorporate your reflections from the fable into the foundation of the greatest story there may be: Yours.

Now sit back, relax, and drink coffee or tea during the rather serious first six chapters of the fable. Then the fun really starts and I invite you to sip a bubbly all the way to the *finale*.

Enjoy the Journey!





## ***Chapter 1***

# **Showtime!**

**I**n a dark amphitheater, the spotlight flicked onto a man wearing a shiny top hat, standing in the middle of the stage. His deep voice echoed throughout the main tent, “It’s showtime! Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Circus!” the man boomed, bowing to the audience with a flourish of his hat.

“Tonight, you will be taken on an incredible journey around the world. Our dazzling performers have come from almost every continent on earth to blow your minds away with their talented acts. Be amazed, be intrigued, and be entertained beyond your wildest dreams,” he intoned dramatically.

A ripple of excitement flowed through the audience as the last few of them hurried to their seats, eager for the grand show the ringmaster promised.

“Behold! The one and lonely—pardon me—the one and only, fearless King of Beasts, Yang, our majestic African lion and his pride!”



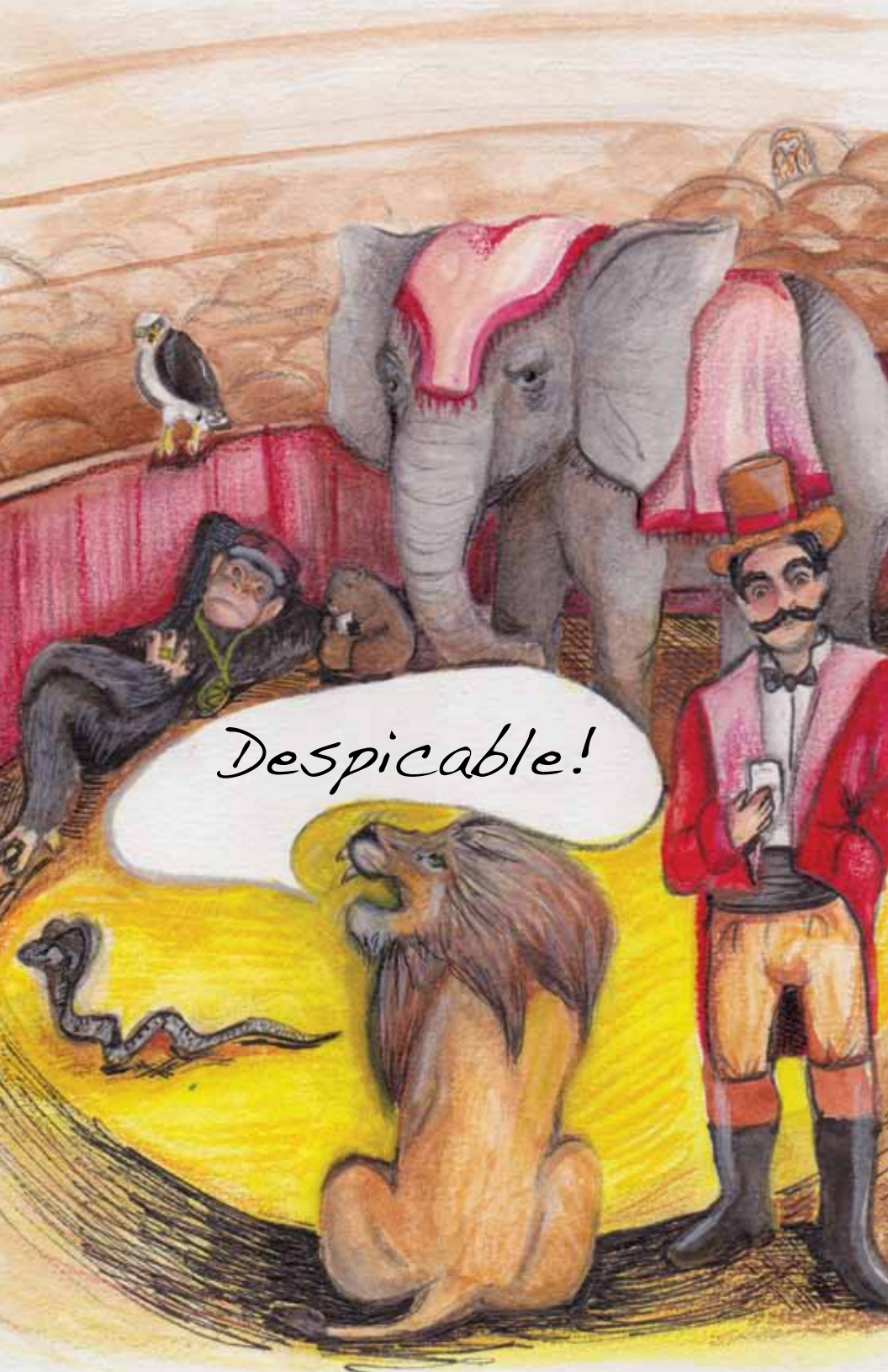
## *Chapter 2*

# Backstage Brawls

**B**elieve it or not, in this circus, animals didn't just roar, growl, hiss, or screech—they also talked! At the performance leaders' post-show debrief with the ringmaster, Yang, the lion, was first to voice his opinion, as always. He believed that as the mighty alpha male and rightful king of other beasts, he had every right to. That night, like every other performing night, he was furious.

“Despicable!” he roared, prowling up and down, glaring at the rest of the animals. “Once more, this cursed circus put on a lamentable performance. I am getting bored of holding this whole show together. How come those miserable peons installing our hoops on stage can't even do that properly? If they ever set my pedestal ablaze again, I will squash them and extinguish the fire with their blood.”

The other animals showed no sign of interest in the lion's invectives, which angered him further. He added, “Should the king remind you that he is the only one brave enough



*Despicable!*



back from doing it,” she said. “What do you want to talk about next?”

“Yin intrigues me,” Yang said thoughtfully. He sank onto his couch, pondering.

“She is extremely strong but she rarely shows it. That beats me,” he said. “I’ve criticized her nastily many times, but she always remained calm. Come to think about it, the way she treats me is quite like a mother being patient with her kid’s tricks. What does that make of me in her eyes then?”

A pensive mood fell upon Yang as he continued wondering about Yin. He pursued, “Also, Yin does not control her herd tightly, yet they’d do anything for her. Well, she cares a hell of a lot for them, I suppose, and *she* shows it. Her way with her group and my way with mine are quite opposite.”


Yang paused in his reflections and Athena probed further, “What haven’t you said yet?”

“That I should hunt for and catch some of her good ways,” he answered.

“‘Should’. Just ‘should’?” asked Athena.

“You never let go, do you?” said Yang, slightly amused. “Okay, I will do it. And you can come back and check in with me.”

“I am honored by the invitation, yet have to decline,” responded the owl. “I won’t visit you again because you already have all the might to move ahead and I trust you will honor your words and take action.”




*Yin intrigues me. She is extremely strong but she rarely shows it. That beats me.*



*Soaring to New Heights*

wish you great rewards!” With a final bow, she took flight and vanished into the night.

“I commit to keep hunting for them,” The Suit called after her. With a renewed sense of purpose, he too flew off, climbing higher and higher into the sky, effortlessly this time.



*Challenge yourself to help others think and contribute their best, unlike those who just play at being the smartest animals in the room.*



*In All Sincerity*

clear to me it was all part of a conspiracy. Can't you recognize that?"

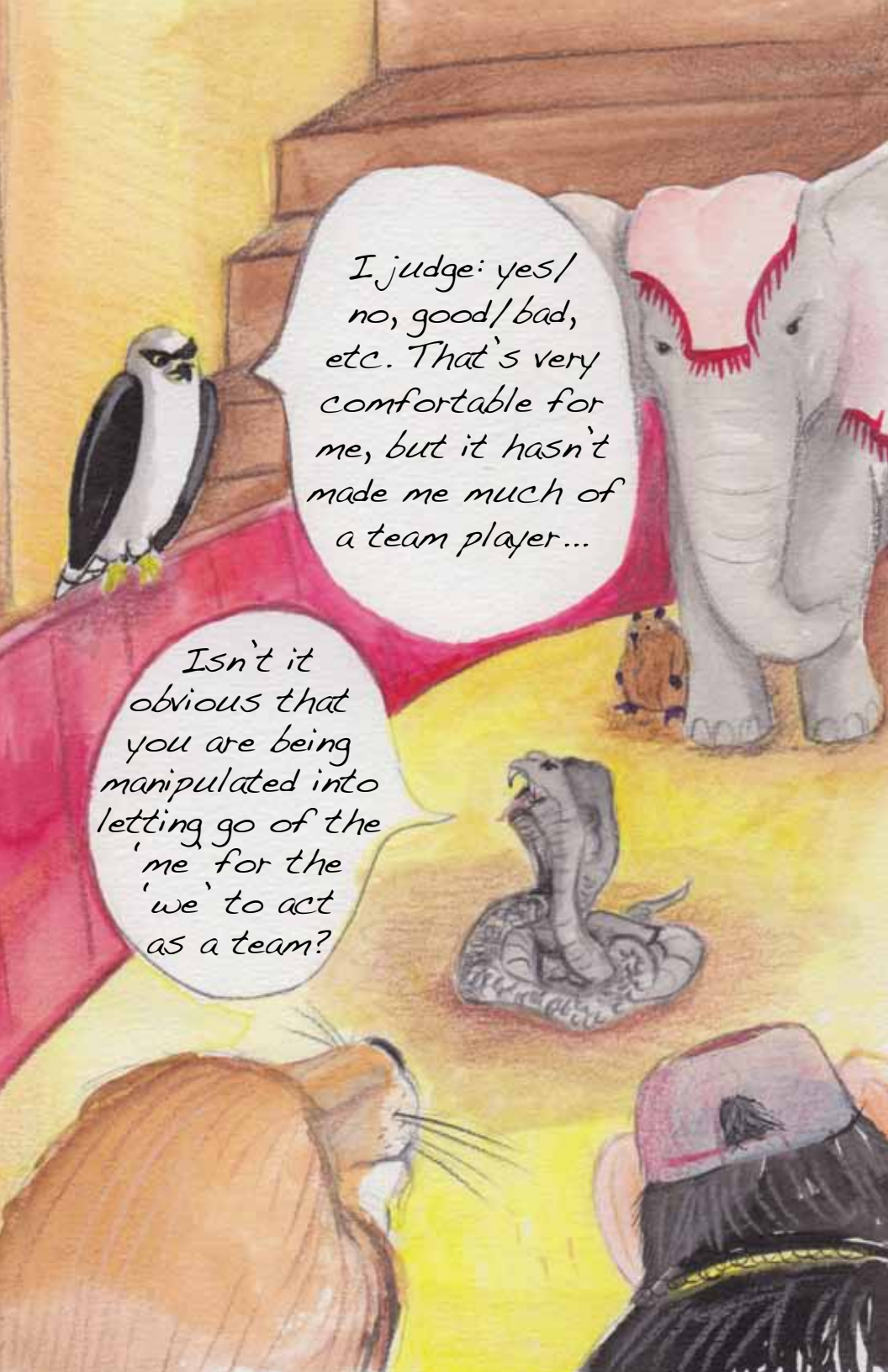
The animals stared at the snake in disbelief. He explained coldly, "You all came out of your conversations sharing some self-awareness you thought you gained, with an angelic resolve to open up to others and embrace teamwork. Isn't it obvious that you are being manipulated into letting go of the 'me' for the 'we' to act as a team? Well, that's a ridiculous waste of time, because it just won't work."

Aghast, the animals gawked at Sleeky in silence. The ringmaster jumped in, "Thanks for sharing your views, Sleeky. Please tell us more."

"You are what you are, I am what I am, period," said the snake haughtily. "That nonsense about nurture versus nature is just so farcical! How can you believe for a minute that we can do greater things together with less of our individual selves? I know the only way to fame is to expand my own genius."

"Sleeky, you may be making untested assumptions here," replied the ringmaster in a firm tone. "One is 'letting go of the me for the we'. I don't think it is anyone's intention here. But let me check this with you all. What are you letting go of?"

Yang spoke first, "All I let go of is that part of me which criticizes and controls through fear. That is no sacrifice! The most important thing is that I have to be more of who I



I judge: yes/  
no, good/bad,  
etc. That's very  
comfortable for  
me, but it hasn't  
made me much of  
a team player...

Isn't it  
obvious that  
you are being  
manipulated into  
letting go of the  
'me' for the  
'we' to act  
as a team?



*A Great Way Forward*

“It’s about helping each other find ‘Beauty in the Beasts!’” quipped Ms Betty.

All of them burst out laughing, and Chimp-Zee mused under his breath, “Could I have imagined a beaver would also define fun?”

Athena flapped her wings with a pleased smile. “Wonderful sharing, you’ve reached quite a summit in thinking here, I believe!” she told them. “One more question: Why would the circus be a place to make this all happen?”

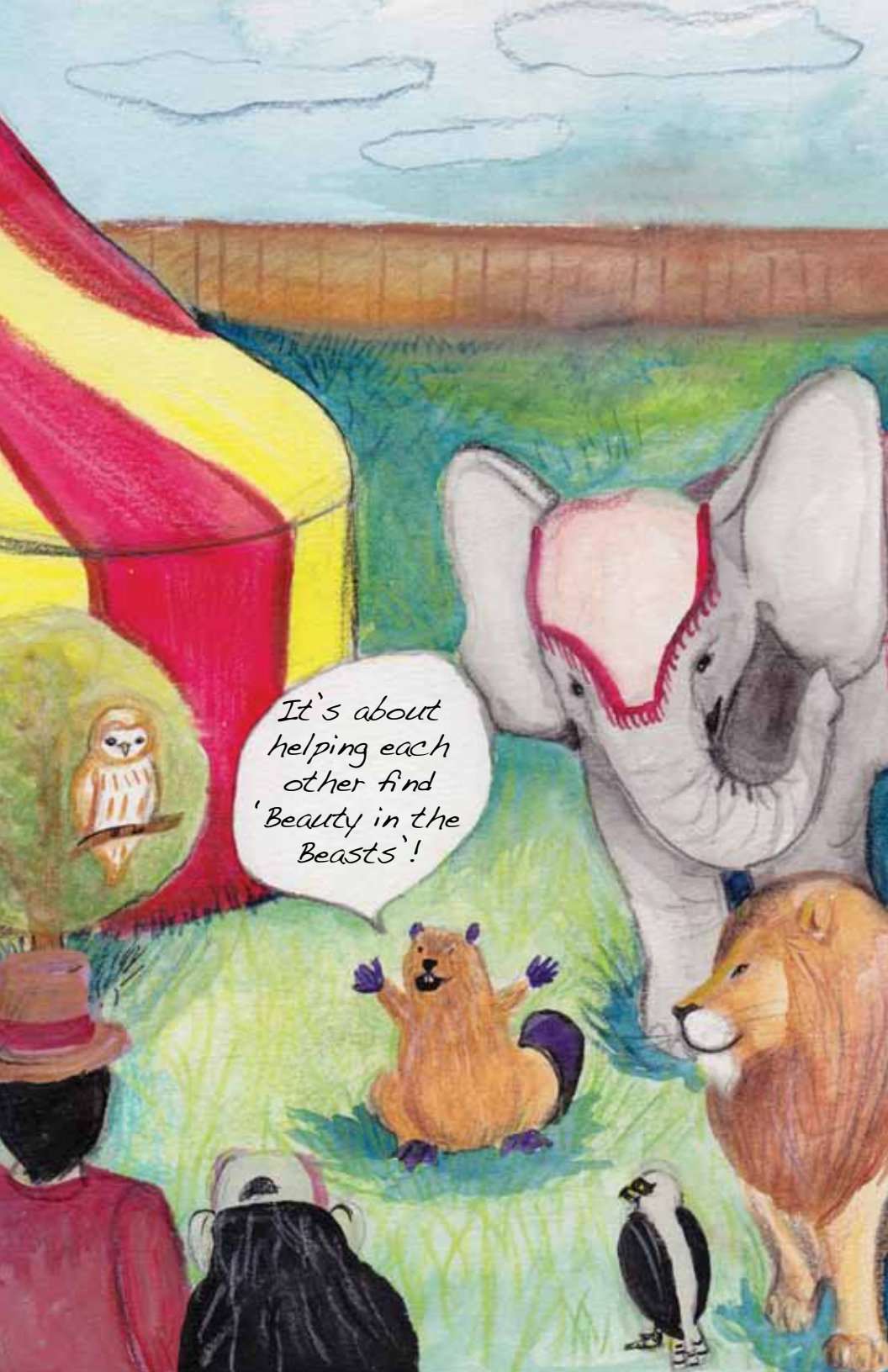
On a witty roll, Ms Betty giggled, “Because we had the idea first!” And a new round of guffaws erupted. She continued, “More seriously, because it’s a place where we can experiment with doing things... and being what others don’t expect.”

Yang nodded and added, “And you, Athena, have helped us find new facets of ourselves and others, so it’s easy for us to replicate the process.”

Grinning at his colleagues, who were looking livelier than he had seen them in years, Chimp-Zee suddenly felt a rush of affection for each one of them. “You guys rock, man,” he shouted, waving his arms wildly to include the ringmaster and Athena. “C’est magnifique!”

Surprised but touched, the ringmaster asked him, “In English please, Monsieur Chimp-Zee?”

“It means ‘it’s magnificent’, from a song by Cole Porter,” explained the chimpanzee. “It starts with ‘When love comes



*It's about  
helping each  
other find  
'Beauty in the  
Beasts'!*



## *A Culture of Greatness*

A drum *machine*, a sequencer, and a sampler. Now we say *you* can dance! And that's not all, bros and sistas! Look what else we've got here for you! Trendy accessories for a lifetime! Who wants this gold chain? Real gold, man! And these wads of cash? A million dollars in ironed, brand-new untraceable banknotes—more real than real! How about these dreadlocks? And these headbands? Bandanas, anyone? Pick your own while stock lasts! Hey, bros and sistas, to whom will these sneakers and Timberlands go? How about these luxury sunglasses here?"

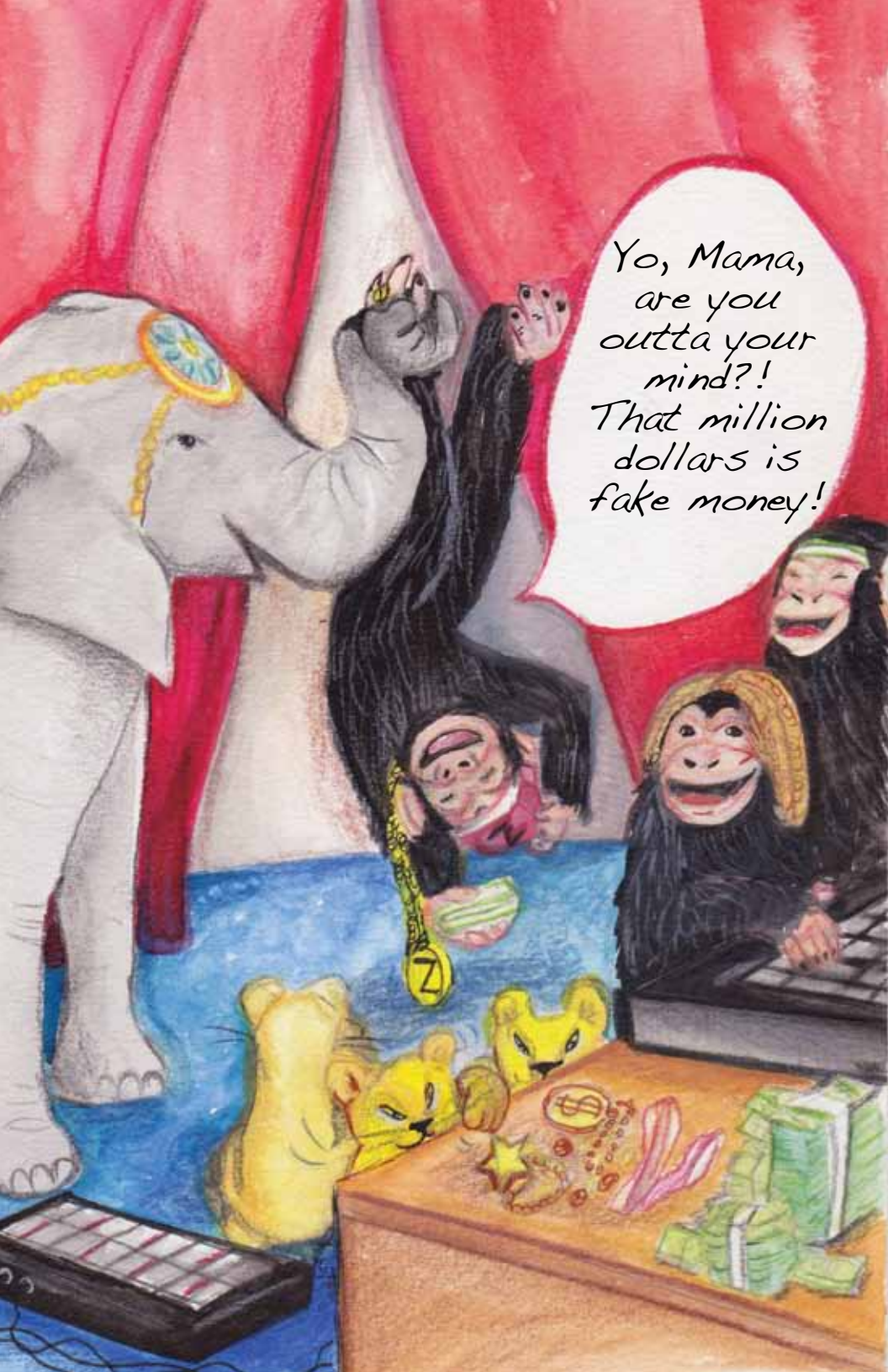
The lions were excitedly pawing through the accessories when Daddy Chimp-Zee was abruptly swept off his feet and dangled three meters above the ground, Yin's trunk curling tightly around his leg. The elephant trumpeted, "That's *my* million dollars, you bad boy! You had no right to give 'em away! I'm taking you prisoner." Unfazed, the chimpanzee retorted, "Yo, Mama, are you outta your mind?! That million dollars is fake money! Your real million, I used yesterday to buy me a private yacht and go party in the Caribbean!"

Yin gave the chimpanzee a little shake and said, "You're up to no good, I'm tellin' you. And I'm gonna steal from you big time too, unless we make a bargain."

"Define bargain," Chimp-Zee asked, still comically trapped in mid-air.

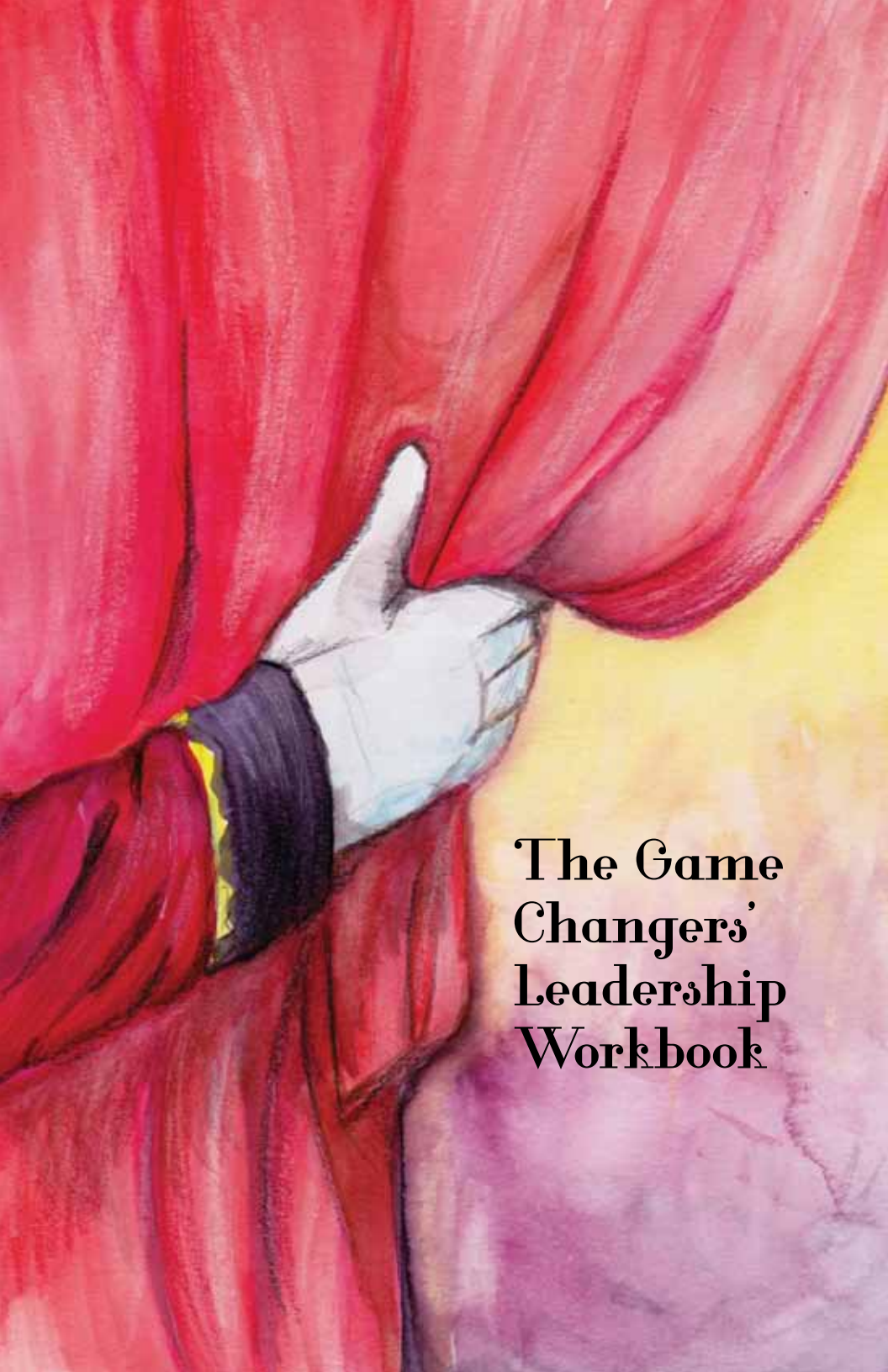
"I'll settle for no less than two trapezists," Yin announced.





Yo, Mama,  
are you  
outta your  
mind?!  
That million  
dollars is  
fake money!





**The Game  
Changers'  
Leadership  
Workbook**

## **SLEEKY: THE DOOMED NARCISSIST**

- Doesn't think he ever failed
- Believes that continuing to do the same will serve him best
- Believes he is smart enough to succeed all by himself
- Is selfish
- Is boastful (shows excessive pride in his achievements)
- Is totally uninterested in others and avoids any connection with them



### **A challenge for Sleeky:**

Embrace the idea that it is better to go “further, with others” than go “faster, alone”.



## The Game Changers' Four Leadership Levels

The main characters in the fable are neither predisposed nor inclined to become game changers.

Yet, they allow themselves to be entrained into a developmental spiral within the *four movements* of the fable, to master four leadership levels, and enjoy rewarding outcomes:

<b>Fable's Movements</b>	<b>Leadership Levels</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
1. Dropping the Masks	Self Leadership	Authenticity
2. Lifting Others Up	Relational Leadership	Productive relationships
3. Getting the Acts Together	Team Leadership	Collaborative engagement
4. Unchaining Greatness	Organizational Leadership	Culture <sup>1</sup> of Greatness <sup>2</sup> and high performance

1 In this fable, "culture" is defined as *the way we are and the way we do things*.

2 At the Circus, "Greatness" refers to *making a positive difference to the world and consistently surpassing the audience's expectations*.

*The Game Changers' Four Leadership Levels*



*Game Changers' path towards high performance and Greatness*

<b>Characters</b>	<b>Lets go of...</b>	<b>Embraces...</b>
Yang	Fake superiority/pretense of invulnerability	Humility and openness
Yin	Limiting beliefs about herself (cowardice, unsuitability of her aspirations, etc.)	Her aspirations (dancing, singing, painting...)
The Suit	Black-and-white judgments and playing the smartest animal in the room	His strengths to help others perform at their best
Ms Betty	Fear of mistakes/perfectionism and micro-management	Mistakes as sources of growth and empowerment
Chimp-Zee	Hanging out only with his tribe	Interest in others
The Ringmaster	Change resistance and the comfort zone of managing silos	Change and a purpose-driven leadership

Self-awareness brings animal leaders to the most challenging and most rewarding choice between:

1. Accepting who they are entirely, with all of their strengths and weaknesses, forgiving themselves for their past mistakes, and recognizing themselves as a work-in-progress; or
2. Denying some aspects of who they are, turning a blind eye to their weaknesses and insecurities, and striving to appear as perfect. Sleeky exemplifies this when he sticks to considering himself as a self-reliant “genius”.

## RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP

### Lifting Others Up



*“I believe that the first test of a great man is his humility. I don't mean by humility, doubt of his power. But really great men have a curious feeling that the greatness is not of them, but through them. And they see something divine in every other man and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful.”*

– John Ruskin

At the circus, it takes two to trapeze. It involves trust, openness to each other, and helping each other grow in order to bring out the best performance together.

Once animals “*drop the mask, dare to be humble, and open up, [they can] reconnect with all others,*” the Owl says.



---

It is more productive to look for the best in others than to obsess over their flaws

We look for others' inner beauty

---

Everyone has worthwhile and different things to say; we find better solutions to our problems with diverse ideas

We fully listen to others

### **We grow capabilities, initiative, and accountability**

---

#### **Beliefs**

#### **Behaviors**

---

Everyone has potential; It is our duty (and it is rewarding) to help unleash more of it

We help others unleash more of their potential

---

Blame promotes the fear of mistakes and discourages initiatives; tolerating excuses decreases accountability

We choose a no-excuse and no-blame approach to everything we do

---

A rising tide lifts all the boats

We do all we can to help everyone play at their best

### **We collaborate tightly to delight audiences beyond their expectations**

---

#### **Beliefs**

#### **Behaviors**

---

Collaboration and agility are critical to Greatness and its sustainability; celebrating progress motivates to sustain the efforts required

We build bridges, not walls, by making our animals more cooperative across groups and more agile at teamwork, and we celebrate our progress

---

The quality of the audience's experience determines our future

We center our decisions on the quality of the audience's experience

---

At the end of this chapter, you will also find a "Take-Away and Action Plan" template for you to scribble your ideas.

Before you read further, I invite you to quickly gauge your organization across the Four Leadership Levels. Upon completion, you can direct your attention to the Leadership Level that matters most to you.

## Leadership Level Assessment

Award a score of "1" in each cell of your choice, then calculate the sub-totals and an overall total for each leadership level.

SELF LEADERSHIP			
Your People...	Rarely	Usually	Always
Are sincere, humble, and trustworthy			
Share ideas and propose initiatives			
Dare to experiment, within reason, and learn from mistake			
Jump in to solve problems			
Embrace change out of their comfort zone			
Develop new skills			
Deliver on promises, without excuse			
<b>Sub-totals</b>		<b>(A)</b>	<b>(B)</b>
<b>Overall Total = (A) + 2 x (B)</b>	<b>/ 14</b>		

## RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Here are a few ways Relational Leaders manifest openness and help others grow. Which ones may reap the greatest benefits in your context?

### Openness

*"It takes a great man to be a good listener."*

– Calvin Coolidge

### In practice

#### Listen for value without judgment

Who listens to you? I mean, REALLY listens to you? How do they do that? How do you feel then? May I guess? They:

- make you feel you are an important and interesting person to them by giving you their full attention, their time, and silence.
- don't interrupt you.
- take time to appreciate and think about what you said before they answer.
- ask you to elaborate further.

As a result, you feel respected, honored even. You think at your best and the conversation energizes you.

If that's right for you, how about offering even more real listening to others, suspending judgment, and looking for value in what they say?

### **Express gratitude**

It really is *a tide that lifts all boats*. As Mark Twain once said, "The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up." Neuroscience recently proved him right. To whom could you express more gratitude towards?

### **Display vulnerability**

We display vulnerability when we apologize for past wrongdoings (as Yang and the ringmaster do), when we say "we don't know" (as the Owl does), or admit "we need help" (as Ms Betty does).

Somewhat counter intuitively, demonstrating vulnerability at appropriate times, is a genuine sign of confidence. It really sends the message, "I feel good enough about myself and it's OK for me to share my weaknesses and ask for help." As an illustration, Yang gained more respect and support from others for making himself vulnerable at times in the fable.

With whom could you display more vulnerability this week?

### **Prove you care**

*Case-study: Martin, CEO for a paper company, Europe*

Most of my clients do genuinely care for their people and are surprised when their 360° feedback survey rates them low on caring, so I ask them, “What really matters to your people?”

They often realize they don’t know and they should if they actually care and want to prove it. One easy way to show you care is to ask your colleagues, “*What was the highlight of your weekend?*” three Mondays<sup>14</sup> in a row.

Read how Martin used that simple approach, what he learned from it, and how useful it came to be.

### **Help others grow**

*“I find the best way to love someone  
is not to change them, but instead, help them reveal  
the greatest version of themselves.”*

– Steve Maraboli

---

14 Or on whichever day your working week starts.

## **Nurture appreciation of diversity and teamwork**

Instilling a bias for diversity across the organization enables employees to value and integrate others' way of thinking. That accelerates problem-solving and enhances the quality of the solutions put together.

One easy way to acknowledge the value of diversity and teamwork is to reflect, at the conclusion of team meetings, about which great teamwork practices were at play along the interactions and how beneficial the diversity of team members was.

Finally... have (sufficient) patience!

### **Further reflection...**

<b>Coaching questions about Team Leadership</b>	<b>Reflect with</b>	<b>Fable chapter</b>
Are some of your beliefs blindsiding you about the greatness potential of your team(s)? What beliefs could you adopt instead, to liberate more of its/their greatness potential?	The Ringmaster	14
How aligned are your team members' beliefs about what will make the team even more successful?	The Ringmaster	15
How aligned are your team members about the behaviors that will make your team even more successful?	The Ringmaster	15
How aligned are your team members about the team's purpose, direction, and goals?	The Ringmaster	14



## About the Author

Jean-François Cousin became an executive coach in 2006, in the wake of a corporate career across the globe with a Fortune-500 company where he held senior leadership positions.

He serves CEOs, C-Suite executives, and leadership teams around the world, under the brand GREATNESS Leadership Coaching.



Jean-François believes that each person and each team has Greatness-potential, and makes it his mission to support leaders and teams to catalyze it.

He supports his clients to find out *which* further steps they need to take and *how* to take them in order to change their game and contribute the greatest performance at their organization. *Game Changers at the Circus* captures the learning from such endeavors.

Jean-François' interventions as an inspirational speaker have enthused hundreds of audiences.

His clients include Accenture, AkzoNobel, Allianz, Amadeus, Baxter, Bayer, BNP Paribas, Bosch, Carrefour, Chevron, Corbion, Deloitte, EDF, Essilor, Ford, Hilton Worldwide, Lafarge, Hermès, HSBC, JCDecaux, Johnson & Johnson, L'Oréal, Mazars, Mazda, Michelin, Mondeléz, Pfizer, Saint-Gobain, Sanofi, SC Johnson, 7eleven, Technip, Tesco, Unilever and The World Bank Group, amongst others.

Jean-François also works as an adjunct coach with the Center for Creative Leadership, Korn Ferry, and PeakInsight. He is a Master Certified Coach, credentialed by the International Coach Federation, the highest distinction in the profession.

Jean-François co-authored several other books and regularly contributes columns and interviews to the media.

Based in Singapore and Bangkok, he works worldwide and can be contacted at [info@greatness.coach](mailto:info@greatness.coach)



## Testimonials

“Jean-François Cousin has been an invaluable coach in helping me improve my leadership skills.”

– **Geoff Strong**, Managing Director,  
Latin America Business Unit, Chevron

“Before he decided to embrace the career of a coach, Jean-François Cousin was a successful executive in a multinational company, and this previous life of his is an invaluable asset to grasp acutely the most sensitive business situations.

He has spent years in Asia animated by the desire to understand the nature of relationships in that part of the world. As a result, Jean-François is one of the Westerners who have grasped the most profound understanding of this region and how to bridge the cultural gaps.

Upon years of relentless practice and personal development, he has become a truly exceptional coach. He helped me turn around my team in less than 2 years. The value he added is acknowledged by all those he has coached, and (several years afterwards) the local managers remain extremely grateful for how he helped them grow. At a personal level, I continue to regularly ask for his wise advice.”

– **Bruno Charvet**, Sales and Marketing Director,  
Middle-East – Africa, Ford Motor Company

“I have known and worked with Jean-François Cousin for over 3 years and we have utilized his coaching for the development of our executives with great success.

I have always found him to be a pragmatic coach, able to seek practical solutions for his clients to apply and succeed quickly. As an expat who knows Asia below the skin, Jean-François is able to uniquely help expat managers understand how to work best with their Asian colleagues without losing their own edge”.

– **Umesh Phadke**, Managing Director,  
L'Oréal Thailand

“I have known Jean-François Cousin for 20 years along different professional assignments. What has always fascinated me about him is his desire not to rest on his laurels, and to always try different things. From a technical expert, he moved to be an excellent general manager of a large corporation, then chose to become a professional coach and now to write a book.

Jean-François has all the hallmarks of a great coach. I have found him to be very methodical in his approach, tough in his questioning tactics and insightful in his advice.

Moreover, given his years at managing companies and people, he is able to draw from his vast pool of experience in his coaching assignments. I would know—I myself have benefited from his coaching experience.”

– **Leonard Lee**, Senior Director, Head of Talent  
Management (Asia-Pacific) at Hilton Worldwide



“*Game Changers at the Circus* is a unique and charming story with important lessons for every leader. Read this book and make a positive difference in your organization!”

– **Ken Blanchard**, coauthor of *The New One Minute Manager*<sup>®</sup> and *Leading at a Higher Level*

“Packed with easy-to-apply principles and practical action steps, this book will help you and your team achieve new levels of passion, productivity, and performance.”

– **Ron Kaufman**, New York Times bestselling author of *Uplifting Service*

**T**here are autocratic lions in a workplace. And there are peace-loving elephants, nonchalant chimps, eager beavers, single-tracked eagles, and self-centric snakes too. All protect a crippling status quo until a game changer joins and unleashes greater possibilities. Will *you* be a game changer at your circus?

Written in two parts, *Game Changers at the Circus* first tells a compelling fable about the transformation of a sluggish circus where animal leaders were stirred into dropping their silo-mentality to orchestrate the greatest performance possible, together as a team.

Next, *The Game Changers’ Leadership Workbook* offers straightforward and proven steps leaders and their teams can apply to transform even the most toxic workplace into a positive environment with a culture of Greatness.

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