

**Emily Morgan**

**2nd  
Edition**

# LET IT GO!

A decorative graphic of various green and teal leaves and petals scattered around the word 'GO!' and trailing upwards towards the word 'LET'.

How to (Finally) Master Delegation  
for You and Your Organization

## More Praise for *Let It Go!* 2nd Edition

“Emily Morgan’s *Let It Go!* contains the key to your freedom and happiness: Do more of what you’re good at and less of what you’re bad at. Following this book’s advice can turn your job into your career and your career into your greatest story. Start now. Do not delay.”

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“Delegation is one of the most powerful ways leaders can buy back their time, yet so few do it well. This book shows you exactly how to move from drowning in tasks to focusing on the strategic work only you can do—and how to build a team that thrives in the process.”

—**Ashley Whillans, PhD**, Volpert Family Associate Professor, Harvard Business School; Author, *Time Smart: How to Reclaim Your Time and Live a Happier Life*

“Delegation is one of the most important leadership skills and one of the most challenging. *Let It Go!* brilliantly tackles the art of delegation as both a mindset shift and a practical system, helping leaders stop being the bottleneck and start empowering their teams with confidence and clarity. If you want to have more time to create real impact on a larger scale, this book is a must-read!”

—**Lindsey Pollak**, *New York Times* Bestselling Author, *The Remix: How to Lead and Succeed in the Multigenerational Workplace*

“Great leadership isn’t about doing more; it’s about doing what matters most. *Let It Go!* gives leaders the mindset and tools to release control, build trust, and scale their true impact. Practical, honest, and deeply relevant, this updated edition belongs on every serious leader’s bookshelf.”

—**Gregory Cleary**, Founder, Pinnacle Business Guides

“*Let It Go!* gives you research-based practices to help you delegate more, and better. Just as important, it makes you take a hard look in the mirror and see the ways that your identity, as you’ve constructed it, is getting in the way of your getting to the next level of performance. You can do better, and Emily Morgan shows you how!”

—**Michael Urtuzuástegui Melcher**, CEO, M2Leaders; Author,  
*Your Invisible Network: How to Create, Maintain, and Leverage the Relationships That Will Transform Your Career*

“*Let It Go!* addresses a challenge nearly every entrepreneur faces as their business grows: knowing what to hold on to and what to let go of. Emily Morgan provides a clear, practical framework for helping leaders identify their Most Impactful Contribution—and then build the mindset and structure required to delegate everything else. This book shows how delegation, when done well, creates leverage, clarity, and freedom—not just for the leader, but for the entire organization. It’s a valuable guide for entrepreneurs who want to grow without becoming the constraint.”

—**Dan Sullivan**, Co-Founder, Strategic Coach

“Delegation is where most leaders get stuck, and this book finally gives them a way out. *Let It Go!* provides a practical system that any leader can use to reclaim their time and empower their team to do meaningful work.”

—**Mark O’Donnell**, Visionary, EOS Worldwide

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# LET IT GO!



How to (Finally) Master Delegation  
for You and Your Organization

**atd**

PRESS

ALEXANDRIA, VA

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*This 2nd edition is dedicated in loving memory  
of my beloved father, Tim.*

*Letting go of you was my hardest journey yet.  
Thanks for everything, Dad!*



**Buy This Book**

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# Introduction

This book is about learning how to finally let go of the work that holds you and your team back from making your collective Most Impactful Contribution™. I firmly believe that, as leaders, we are each put into the world to make an impactful contribution that only we can make. In my work, I have found that delegation is the tool you can use to create the space you need to live out this mission and foster a culture of delegation™ within your team—and it starts with you. What I mean by *culture of delegation* is the deep-seated value your organization places on the effective distribution of responsibilities and tasks to achieve your company's vision and goals.

My own journey with delegation has evolved over time. I spent my early career working as an executive assistant, supporting others in various capacities and organizations where people delegated things to me. Years later, when I started my fractional executive assistant company, I was both the entrepreneur and the assistant. I was servicing clients, learning how to be an entrepreneur, building out my business, and learning how to delegate to others.

I have observed “delegation in the wild” for nearly two decades. Along the way, I have seen leader after leader struggle,

get stuck, become a bottleneck, slow down, and ultimately frustrate their teams.

Delegation is one of the top leadership skills. Yet, a 2014 Gallup study tells us that three out of four leaders continually struggle with it.<sup>1</sup> We have work to do. This is the reason I get up in the morning—to help others learn what they can gain when they finally let go.

My view on delegation is a 360-degree deep dive. I’ve been both a career “delegator” as well as a career “delegatee.” I’ve spent nearly 20 years running an executive support firm that has helped thousands of leaders save tens of thousands of hours by teaching them how to “let go” and increase their freedom to do incredible work in the world. The thoughts, concepts, and solutions shared in this book are a culmination of my experience as an award-winning entrepreneur running a delegation company and my work training and coaching some of the nation’s top leaders.

As leaders, our teams and stakeholders are counting on us to show up each day with the strength and clarity required to make our biggest and Most Impactful Contribution. The only way we can do this is by continuing to elevate ourselves through awareness and intentionally conserving our time, energy, and focus. I’m convinced that the single best way to accomplish this is through a fanatical and consistent commitment to delegation.

That’s why I created the Let It Go System™—a complete framework of mindsets, habits, and tools designed to help leaders and teams delegate more effectively, reclaim their

time, and scale their impact. This system now powers a growing network of certified advisors, facilitators, and Let It Go Certified Organizations™ working to embed a culture of efficiency and trust across teams.

Delegation is deep work. It's hard work, but it's the foundation for the growth that creates freedom for you and your organization. Once you master delegation, you can teach and empower your team to master it too. Through this commitment to letting go, your entire organization shifts into a team of people doing meaningful work that they love. They are happier in their work and stay in their jobs longer, and your company can make a bigger impact than would ever be possible on your own.

This is the vision of a delegation culture. It's a retention strategy, a salvation strategy, and an impact strategy that you can implement within your business today to produce results. All it takes is an open mind, an open heart, and a willingness to go deep and think differently about delegation and what you would ultimately like to contribute.

It's been four years since the first edition of *Let It Go!* was published. Since then, this work has grown beyond the page. What began as a personal framework has blossomed into a complete certification program, equipping leaders, facilitators, and organizations to apply and scale this approach in powerful, practical ways.

As the book gained traction, so did my thinking. Ideas evolved, tools sharpened, and new insights emerged from both the field and the lab. This second edition features expanded

content, practical tools, and fresh research-backed insights from experts like Mary Steffel of Northeastern University and on-the-ground perspectives from Eileen Coombes, chief learning officer at Verve. Throughout this book, you'll see how the Let It Go System—our proven combination of mindsets, habits, and tools—equips leaders and teams to scale efficiently and sustainably.

The book is structured in three parts. In part 1, we start with the essential three steps you can take to reframe your mindset. In my experience, these three steps are the missing link for being able to delegate well.

Once you've done the deep work in part 1, you'll learn the techniques for how to delegate in part 2. This is the tactical side and it has three important components: the art, science, and discipline. The components must work together seamlessly before you'll feel the impact that delegation can bring.

In part 3, it all comes together in execution. When you have developed the mindset and technique to delegate well, you can then start to cascade a culture of delegation through your team. A new chapter in part 3 is dedicated to new and emerging leaders who are navigating the “murky middle” of leadership. Whether you are an emerging leader or managing emerging leaders, you'll learn about the unique challenges these leaders face with letting go. We know that if we can empower them early with the right tools and mindsets, they can take their teams further faster.

## **BONUS TOOL!**

### **Organizational Efficiency Index**

Before diving into new delegation habits, it helps to first understand where you're starting from. The Let It Go Organizational Efficiency Index™ is a fast (five minute), research-backed tool to measure how effectively your team uses time, clarity, and trust. The results offer a clear baseline and spotlight the greatest opportunities for growth. You can access the index and all other resources discussed in this book for free at [LetItGoDelegationBook.com](http://LetItGoDelegationBook.com).

This book isn't about what you've done wrong in the past, but how you can enjoy the freedom of delegation with the confidence to finally do it right as you move forward into the future. I get the frustration many business leaders feel because I've been there and I understand the scar tissue you may have developed around this topic. It's time to put that all behind you as I take your hand on this transformational journey to achieving effective, impactful delegation.

Mindset. Technique. Execution. This is your formula for success. Are you ready? Let's do this.

# PART 1

# MINDSET

"When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves."

—VIKTOR FRANKL

Chapter 1Step 1: Know Your Most Impactful Contribution

*“I am mine, before I am ever anyone else’s.”*

—Nayyirah Waheed

I firmly believe that each of us is here to make a special contribution that only we can make. When we know what our calling is, we find ourselves in the zone, overflowing with passion, excitement, and energy. In life and in work, your ability to identify, stay in touch with, and articulate your own Most Impactful Contribution is the key to finding limitless freedom and to maximizing your purpose. Simply put, your Most Impactful Contribution is the work that only you can do, which then creates the highest value and results. This is a crucial concept to understand before we start the work, because the goal of letting go is not simply to delegate tasks for the sake of it; it’s to free you up to do what you do best—to make your own Most Impactful Contribution.

When I talk about a Most Impactful Contribution, I’m not talking about a long mission statement or a list of everything you’re good at. In fact, determining mine took real work. I had to strip away roles, titles, and busy work to distill my Most Impactful Contribution down to something that felt

authentic—and something I could actually remember and repeat with ease. For me, my Most Impactful Contribution is simple: to create, connect, collaborate, and learn. That clarity gives me a filter. When I'm deciding what to hold on to and what to let go of, I can quickly ask: Does this work align with my Most Impactful Contribution? Does it fall into one of those impact buckets—or is it quietly pulling me away from them?

The world needs each of us to bring our individual talents, deepest passions, and boundless energy to accomplish the special things we are uniquely suited to do. It needs each of us to elevate our time and energy to innovate and accomplish our objectives. Unfortunately, as we build our businesses, careers, and lives, it's easy to lose sight of our own special abilities and the talents of those around us, as well as how to best apply them to meet our goals. Strategic delegation of work is the primary tool to get you from where you and your organization are now to where you're meant to be.

As your career evolves, you may find yourself holding a death grip on work that others could handle as well as or even better than you. Yet somehow you just can't let go. In our work at the executive support firm Delegate Solutions, we fight this battle every day with the leaders and entrepreneurs we advise.

For example, take our client Henry. As he moved from a solopreneur to having a small team, he struggled with being able to let go of his day-to-day tasks. At times, this came across as being hypercritical because he was micromanaging his team to excess, always wanting to oversee every little detail.

He wanted to review anything he delegated with a finetooth comb—including social media posts, order forms, and email responses—simply because, until that moment, he'd been the only person who had ever handled those tasks. However, our team was able to slowly build trust over time through consistent execution and care to gently force him out of those habits so he could elevate himself as the visionary leader of his company.

There are many reasons why my team and I are determined to help business leaders let go of their death grip on work. Some leaders attribute their value and contribution to how busy they are, so they become more concerned with their output than their impact. They get very comfortable in a state of “busyness,” so much so that they can potentially spend their entire careers attending to tasks because busyness becomes a safe, comfortable space that makes them feel useful.

In fact, busyness itself has become a bona fide status symbol that challenges delegation efforts. Research supports how deeply embedded a culture of busyness has become. Harvard Business School's Ashley Whillans found that the percentage of employed Americans who reported “never having enough time” rose from 70 percent in 2011 to 80 percent in 2018.<sup>2</sup> In addition, an NIH study about busyness and idleness found that people often embrace busyness simply to avoid seeming idle—even when it lacks meaningful outcomes.<sup>3</sup> In a culture like this, it's more important than ever to stay grounded in our Most Impactful Contribution.

As your team grows and evolves, if you aren't careful, you can start to settle in and slowly become the hero of the team you are supposed to be leading. You may find yourself getting a rush of dopamine when you're regarded as someone who swoops in to solve every single problem. You can get pleasure from feeling needed all the time. You may subconsciously even start to feel so energized by being the hero (or bored by what you're doing each day) that you actually start creating messes and fires at work to keep the adrenaline flowing.

Perhaps you've met a woman like Sue, who's always running around like her hair is on fire. Sue's triple-booked every day and makes promises she can't keep because she's too busy to execute on anything. Her team is endlessly turning over because they have to spend the majority of their time cleaning up her messes, and they are powerless to change anything.

Like Sue, many of us are so overwhelmed with the busyness of business that we've lost touch with what we really wanted to spend our time doing when we started our careers. We've become distracted from our calling, and the impact we wanted to make through work and in our personal lives. We're too comfortable and busy doing work that sucks the life out of us, and we're stuck here.

People follow their leaders, which means that companies become so busy executing that no one is innovating. This is because the someone who should be innovating is you, but you're so busy saving the day (or ordering all the office supplies) that you're missing opportunities to make a

real impact. You must find ways to shift your own thinking to value the ideas you have over the tasks you do.

Your single most important first step in mastering delegation is to connect with, value, and articulate your Most Impactful Contribution. This then creates a lens from which all delegation extends. Identifying your Most Impactful Contribution forces you to be clear about what you want to spend your time and energy doing before you start to delegate. This lens helps you quickly and easily filter out activities that don't align with your most important work and allows you to easily spot possible things to delegate more clearly than you could before.

When you focus on valuing and embracing your Most Impactful Contribution—once you truly understand it and create boundaries to protect it—you are finally ready to delegate. If you feel stuck with how to achieve this clarity, don't worry. Later in the chapter, we'll do some exercises to unpack it together. For now, I just want you to understand that this Most Impactful Contribution concept is foundational to delegation mastery.

Finally, we will work to envision what your ideal day looks like. This will serve as a motivator and visual prompt, expanding the lens that will allow you to compare how you're currently spending your time.

In the past, your delegations may have occurred haphazardly, impulsively, and without much thought. You may think that delegation hasn't really moved the needle for you in relation to the time you were able to free up. That's likely because

the delegation only created a vacuum of time that you filled with more busy work.

Parkinson's law applies here: "Work expands to fill the time we allow to complete it." For delegation to work well and for you to finally let go, you first have to bring clarity to what you want to do with the time you free up, and then start to delegate from there.

## **A Delegation Tale**

Meet Tom. We will follow his delegation journey as we work through this book. Tom is a new leader who decided on a whim after talking to a peer that he needed an assistant to help him clear his plate. He hired Anne very quickly, without any real delegation plan. By the time she started, however, Tom's excitement had shifted to other new projects and priorities. He spent only a few minutes with Anne in those first few days, and they never agreed to any sort of regular meeting cadence to check in. Anne spent the majority of her first two weeks waiting to catch Tom after his meetings to ask him to give her things to do.

Tom's first problem was that he never thought through how he wanted to spend the time he freed up by hiring Anne. He just knew he wanted to clear his plate, thought it would be cool to have an assistant, and excitedly hired one. He was able to initially hand over a few tasks, but he found himself getting endlessly frustrated when Anne kept asking him a bunch of questions. She was supposed to make his life easier, not harder, right? On top of that, he was growing frustrated

that Anne didn't seem to have much to do, and she kept giving him most of the things she completed to review, which only added to his stress. So now, not only was Tom drowning in even more busy work, but the time he was able to free up by hiring Anne was spent in frustration and distraction.

Before Anne started, Tom could have made a list of all the work he was doing and determined what he really wanted to do instead. Then, once Anne was hired, he could have scheduled an hour-long meeting each day with her to systematically delegate work and clear his plate. They could have added time blocks to Tom's calendar or set up an ongoing meeting at the end of each day to assess what was accomplished or required Tom's feedback.

This deliberate and focused approach to delegation would have made all the difference for Tom. To delegate well, he needed to know what he wanted to hand off and make time each day to connect with his assistant. He also needed a plan for how he could use the time he freed up.

## YOUR TURN

### Uncovering Your Most Impactful Contribution

Before you start to think about what and how to delegate, let's start with *why*. In the following exercise, you will work to uncover your own Most Impactful Contribution, which must be the foundation of your delegation strategy. The goal here is to get back in touch with your *why* and understand what you really want to contribute. This mindset shift is one of the core principles of the Let It Go System. Once we establish your

Most Impactful Contribution, we will move into crafting your Ideal Day™ around it.

In this exercise, I'll ask you to attach "feeling" adjectives that align with each question or statement. When we put words to emotions, we create an emotional attachment to our thoughts. The more we can see and feel our vision, the easier it will be to execute.

It's important to note that others see things in us that we don't see in ourselves. Because our thoughts and feelings come naturally, we view them as normal and not unique, but they are really exceptional parts of us. As you go through this process, think back on any positive feedback others may have shared with you that could reveal possible themes about why you're here and what makes you unique. Here we go.

Use the feelings wheel in Figure 1-1 to help you select adjectives that feel right to you as you work through each item. Record your responses in the space provided.

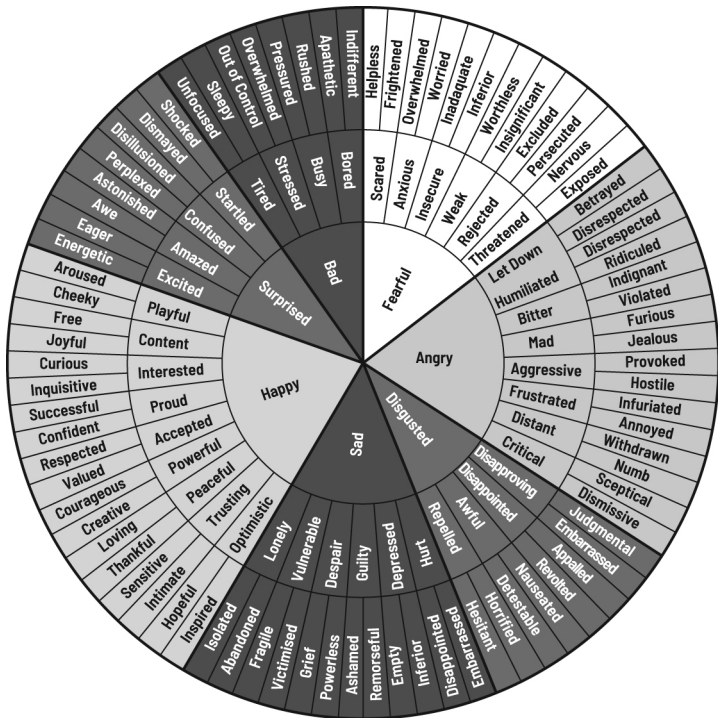
What are some of your favorite things to do, personally or professionally, that bring you a lot of energy? These are things you could spend all day doing.

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Figure 1-1. Feelings Wheel of Adjectives



How does it make you feel when you do those things?

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What have people told you over the years that you're really great at?

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When people tell you what you're great at, how do you feel?

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## Envisioning Your Ideal Day

A powerful way to recognize or connect with your Most Impactful Contribution is to bring it to life by visualizing living out your Ideal Day—and truly understanding what you actually want to spend your time and attention on.

Delegation only creates real tangible impact if we're intentional about how we'll use the time it frees up. Visualizing an Ideal Day helps us contrast our current routine with the ideal so we don't just trade one set of low-value activities for another. Without that clarity, we risk filling the space with more of what drains us and find ourselves ever more frustrated by delegation.

The next exercise, The Ideal Day, helps you envision how you could be using your time and energy when you're fully focused on what matters most. Find a quiet space, get comfortable, and use the prompts to walk yourself through your Ideal Day.

## YOUR TURN

### The Ideal Day

Describe your Ideal Day. How are you spending your time?

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Using the feelings wheel of adjectives in Figure 1-1, what three adjectives would you use to describe how it makes you feel to live your Ideal Day?

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When it comes to your work, your Ideal Day would be spent doing what?

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When you're spending time doing those things, how do you feel?

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What can you do to make the biggest impact in your work each day?

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You should see a lot of positive emotions reflected in this exercise. We always want to start with the positive and find ways to expand on that. This helps create a clear headspace for us to begin to connect the emotion to the associated activities.

### **BONUS RESOURCE!**

#### **The Clarity Playbook**

If you'd like to dig deeper into your Ideal Day or Most Impactful Contribution and define the unique value only you can bring to your role, I highly recommend you check out *The Clarity Playbook* by Chris White. It's a powerful tool to help leaders clarify purpose, priorities, and performance expectations. Learn more about this and other resources, prompts, and journaling ideas in our bonus area at [LetItGoDelegationBook.com](http://LetItGoDelegationBook.com).

## **Chapter Recap**

Review your answers to the chapter's exercises, and then consider the following questions.

What trends do you see in how you want to spend your time each day?

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What do you think you are called to do with your life?

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What impact will you be able to make with this new focus?

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Now, let's craft your Most Impactful Contribution statement using these reflections. How would you describe your Most Impactful Contribution?

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Congratulations, and beautiful work! You are now cleared for delegation takeoff! You may proceed through the rest of the book.

## **BONUS RESOURCE!**

### **AI Prompts**

If you're still feeling stuck, try my custom artificial intelligence prompts (accessible at [LetItGoDelegationBook.com](http://LetItGoDelegationBook.com)). An AI tool can help you gain clarity faster on your Most Impactful Contribution by acting like a delegation coach who spots themes and patterns in your answers and helps you craft your statement—just as if I were guiding you myself. You can also try experimenting with things like word clouds or journaling for deeper insight. Let this be your starting point—not your final draft.



# About the Contributors



**Mary Steffel, PhD**, is an associate professor of marketing at the D'Amore-McKim School of Business at Northeastern University. She has served as a fellow on the White House Social and Behavioral Sciences Team and Office of Evaluation Sciences at the General Services Administration. She has a PhD in psychology from Princeton University and a PhD in marketing from the University of Florida. Her research examines the social and psychological forces that guide judgment and decision making—including when and why people delegate decisions to others—and offers evidence-based insights to help leaders delegate more effectively.



**Eileen Coombes** is the chief learning officer at Verve, where she helps leaders and teams strengthen capacity, build healthy delegation skills, and create cultures rooted in efficiency, accountability, and growth. With more than 20 years' experience in leadership development and organizational transformation, she brings deep expertise in helping executives boost productivity, expand impact, and work

in ways that truly energize them. She has been featured in Inc. com, Vistage Research and Insights, and *The Leader Assistant* podcast. Eileen holds degrees from the University of Central Florida and Bowling Green State University. She lives in North Carolina with her husband and two children.



# About the Author



**Emily Morgan** helps leaders create the freedom to do more of what they love. A pioneer in the delegation and efficiency space, she founded the executive support firm Delegate Solutions in 2007 and later launched Verve, a training and coaching company dedicated to transforming how leaders and teams work. She designed the Delegate Freedom System, a framework that has empowered thousands of busy leaders to delegate with confidence and intention.

The first edition of *Let It Go!* became an Amazon best-seller and solidified her reputation as a sought-after voice in leadership and efficiency, with features in *Harvard Business Review*, *Forbes*, *The New York Times*, CNBC, and more.

Emily writes and works from her lavender farm just outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where blooming rows, wafting fragrance, wandering sheep, and a slower pace remind her why freedom matters in the first place.



# About ATD

The Association for Talent Development (ATD) is the world's largest association dedicated to those who develop talent in organizations. Serving a global community of members, customers, and international business partners in more than 100 countries, ATD champions the importance of learning and training by setting standards for the talent development profession.

Our customers and members work in public and private organizations in every industry sector. Since ATD was founded in 1943, the talent development field has expanded significantly to meet the needs of global businesses and emerging industries. Through the Talent Development Capability Model, education courses, certifications and credentials, memberships, industry-leading events, research, and publications, we help talent development professionals build their personal, professional, and organizational capabilities to meet new business demands with maximum impact and effectiveness.

One of the cornerstones of ATD's intellectual foundation, ATD Press offers insightful and practical information on talent development, training, and professional growth.

ATD Press publications are written by industry thought leaders and offer anyone who works with adult learners the best practices, academic theory, and guidance necessary to move the profession forward.

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