




Basic Elements to Greater
Happiness, Health & Productivity

DAVID VITTORIA

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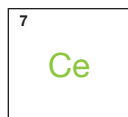
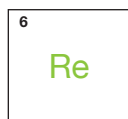
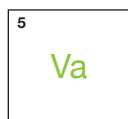
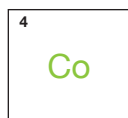
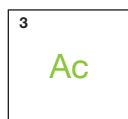
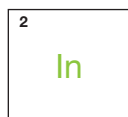
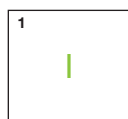


***The struggle comes when we
sense a gap between the clock
and the compass – when what
we do doesn't contribute to what
is most important in our lives.***

– Stephen Covey

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INTRODUCTION

In the twenty years I've spent as a helping professional, I've discovered that authentic happiness, holistic health and purposeful productivity are critical success factors. They are three of the key requirements for achieving one's vision – whether “one” is an individual, a team or an organization. Happiness, health and productivity. They are conditions of satisfaction that must be met and given special and constant attention in order for any person or organization to achieve high performance.

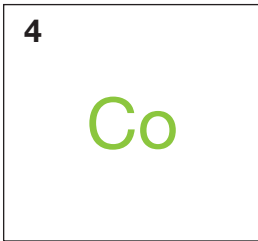
Unfortunately, for most people trying to live their purpose – and in most businesses striving to shape their organizational culture – these conditions largely go unmet. It's no wonder, then, that workers are disengaged, customers are dissatisfied, and organizations often have a difficult time getting employees to adopt their mission, vision and values.

The 8 shares the stories I've heard and the lessons I've learned about what it takes to be fit and fulfilled, and to get your highest priorities achieved each day. The book is inspired by the real-life experiences of some enlightened individuals and organizations that have shifted their energy and attention towards what matters most to them. It's about happy people who are living their dreams. And it's about healthy companies that embrace both purpose and profit – whose employees are engaged, whose customers keep coming back, and whose competitors have taken notice.

The 8 is based on my work in over 15,000 hours of coaching and counseling sessions and more than 2,000 hours of on-site observations in small businesses, schools, non-profits, corporations and governments all over the world. This book is the by-product of hundreds of interviews with people at all levels, from the boardroom down. The collective wisdom and the actions that form **the 8** will teach you that whether you're one person, one team or an entire organization, when you find your direction, speak your truth and live your values, *shift happens!*

The real people and organizations you will read about illustrate each of the eight basic elements through powerful lessons of service, strength and sacrifice. Following each story you'll find tips and exercises to help you apply these guiding principles to your life and inspire you to greater heights.

You'll find that many of the challenges you may be facing – like negativity, stress or ineffective communication – can be overcome by simply investing more time in doing what matters most to you at work and at home. As you'll learn in this little book, I have some big ideas about how you can create real and meaningful change in your life and in the lives of others. It's elemental really.



COMMUNICATE

say what's
real

***Courage is what it takes
to stand up and speak;
courage is also what it takes
to sit down and listen.***

– Winston Churchill

In 2007, I received a call from Judy, the owner of a manufacturing business in Texas. She reached out to our company to discuss the possibility of a team-building workshop for her twenty employees. After listening to her talk about some of the challenges she was facing in her organization, I asked a question. “So what’s *really* going on there, Judy?” She paused for a while and said, “It feels like our company has cancer.”

When I asked Judy what was “really going on,” a light bulb went on for her. She continued, “It occurs to me, David, that we have been so busy that we hardly **talk** anymore [with noted emphasis on the word “talk”]. We have staff meetings and we conduct regular leadership discussions. We exchange hundreds of emails every week, and I’m on the phone with our customers and employees all of the time. It’s relevant information that we’re exchanging day after day, but we’re buried in the day *to* day.”

Judy continued, “I really get the sense from these interactions that there is an undercurrent of negativity and frustration eating away at us. It’s in the tones, it’s even in the silence, and it’s palpable. That’s why I thought an

event to bring our people closer would be a good idea – to get us out of this rut. I can't put my finger on the core problem though, you'd have to experience this vibe for yourself.” Within a week, I was on a plane with one of our staffers. We were ready to feel the vibe.

Over the course of two consecutive days, we conducted interviews with every employee in the organization, including Judy. To my surprise, there were some good vibrations in the conversations we had. The company was having a phenomenal year despite poor economic conditions, and people were anticipating bonuses. Employees seemed to like their work. The staff appeared to get along with each other, and according to satisfaction surveys, their customers were happy.

What was also apparent though, was that Judy was right. While they were being forthcoming with us, several comments from the employees indicated that their interoffice communication had become inversely proportional to their sales. While their profits were on a meteoric rise, many employees now seemed to be avoiding crucial conversations. Due to heavy workloads and throttling time pressures, people were venting their

complaints in the form of malignant, break room sound bytes. Some felt micromanaged, but weren't sharing that with their supervisors. Others felt stuck in their positions and unsure about opportunities for advancement. What had been a collaborative sales team working towards a common goal now seemed like a group of "me-first" individuals who were jostling for attention.

After weeks of intense team meetings and individual discussions, we helped the employees confront their dis-ease and learn new ways of communicating with each other.

They drafted what they called "The Constitution" – a contract they all signed that outlined some key principles designed to govern more effective communication. They all committed to making time for important conversations – regardless of how busy they might be. They also promised each other they would each make a list of the things they expected at work, whether that expectation was met or unmet, whether it was spoken or unspoken and who at their office was responsible for addressing each expectation.

What this group of dedicated and ambitious people realized was that none of them were mind readers and that what felt like cancer to Judy was, in fact, a chronic and progressive condition that afflicts many individuals, families, teams and organizations every day – they stopped saying what was really going on.

Here are four steps *you* can take to ensure that your communication is clear and that your expectations are being addressed . . .

1 Focus

Expectations have a profound impact on our emotions, our behavior and our performance. Think about the important relationships in your life – at work, at home and with your friends. What do you want from the people around you? What do you expect? How critical is each of these needs? You may want to rank the people and your expectations in either the order of their importance to you or the extent to which they're being met.

2 Reflect

Consider in which areas, and with whom, your expectations are *met* or *unmet* – and whether they have been *spoken* or *unspoken*. If you feel like an expectation is being met, don't just move on to the next one though, analyze and learn from it.

Take time to review those expectations that are currently fulfilled – it can be a rewarding exercise to consider what you did to help achieve that. When you come to an unmet expectation, first ask yourself if what you want is *realistic*. If it is, next reflect on whether your needs have been 1) communicated and 2) said to the right person. You know if someone's the right person if they have the power, authority, influence, title and/or responsibility to actually do something about what you want.

3 Act

When you talk to the right people, let them know what is important to you and that you'd like to discuss a plan to get your needs met. Sound selfish? It's really not! Sharing your needs and communicating your wishes, while sometimes uncomfortable and new to many folks, might be the only way others know *exactly* what you want. People aren't mind readers. And as long as you're willing to reciprocate by listening to their expectations, there's no selfishness involved.

Consider what you can do for yourself to fulfill your own expectations as well. Explore opportunities for you to invest in your own growth and development, increase your knowledge, and put more "tools" in your toolbox.

4 Adjust

Sometimes, your expectations may need to be modified. When considering the relationships that are important to you today – at work and in your personal life – ask yourself a few questions. Can you live with the situation the way it is? Do you need to reconsider your needs? Where do you need to let go and move on?

*Don't lower your
expectations to meet
your performance.
Raise your level of
performance to meet
your expectations.*

– Ralph Marston

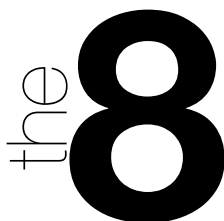
The Author



David Vittoria is the Founder & Chief Inspiration Officer at Ascendi, a specialized consulting firm focused on team development and organizational health. David is an accomplished executive coach and sought-after speaker on a wide range of topics impacting individuals and the workplace.

Learn more about innovative solutions based on **the 8** and take the FREE Happiness Index™ online at

livethe8.com



Praise for the 8

“Most of us want to live happy, healthy, and productive lives. In **the 8**, a great little book full of simple truths, David Vittoria helps us move toward that goal. With touching examples from his own life along with applicable tips for the reader, David demonstrates how we can be engaged in our own lives in a purposeful way. If you’re looking for real satisfaction in life, read this book.”

Ken Blanchard, Coauthor

The One Minute Manager® and *Lead with LUV*

“This is a wonderful, warm, witty book that touches your heart and guides you to be more and more of the very best person within you. I LOVED every single page; each filled with powerful stories and positive messages. We need more books like **the 8** and more people like David.”

Brian Tracy, NYT Bestselling Author

No Excuses and *The Power of Self-Discipline*

“Captivating! A true life-changer if you’re ready!”

Jason Jennings, NYT Bestselling Author

Less is More, Think BIG – Act Small, and *Hit the Ground Running*

“The beauty of metaphor is that it conveys not just information, but meaning. That’s what I love about **the 8** – the elements and periodic table are perfect metaphors, since elements are the building blocks of life. **the 8** offers you eight essential building blocks of happiness, fulfillment, and serenity.”

BJ Gallagher, Coauthor

A Peacock in the Land of Penguins

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Resources for Personal and Professional Success

