



WORKBOOK 8

Courageous Action: Bringing it all Together

Welcome to the workbook for Module 8 of the Agents of Conscious Business course, with Rand Stagen!

The aim of this class was to start reflecting on and integrating the many themes from the course to date, and to explore the importance of courageous action in being an agent of conscious business.

The points that were covered:

- Considering leadership as the combination of power and wisdom
- Courageous action and our relationship to risk
- Quickly reviewing the classes to date, looking specifically at acts of courage

This workbook is going to make most sense if you have listened to the recording of the class for module 8.

You can either listen to the whole thing and then dive into this workbook, or do it in parallel, pausing the recording to work on an exercise, and then listening to the next bit.

Important note: this workbook also serves as preparation for the ninth and final class of the course. The second part is going to build on Rand's review of the classes to date and guide you in reflecting on your experience of the course and your learning. Doing these exercises should help prepare you for the final class, so we can cover a lot of terrain and get the most out of it!



The Five Big Ideas from the Class

Here are what we think were the five big ideas from the class with Rand:

1 – Leadership is the combination of power and wisdom

This is a quote from Peter Koestenbaum which Rand used to introduce the importance of courageous action (power), in addition to awareness (wisdom). The quote then continues: “Without wisdom, power is tyrannical. Without power, wisdom is vacuous.” [For those of you who, like us, don’t know what vacuous means: it’s empty, void, as in a vacuum ;-)]

As Rand noted, a lot of us that find ourselves interested in things like conscious business are strong on wisdom and awareness. But, to paraphrase Fred Kofman, are we ready to step into the dojo and move from philosophy to practice? In this class, Rand challenged us again and again to do just that.

2 – Learn to love business and the marketplace

Rand’s first challenge to all of us is that if we’re interested in becoming agents of conscious business, we would really benefit from a deeper appreciation of business, of capitalism, and of the marketplace. Even if we don’t work in a business day-in, day-out, all of us have plenty of experience interacting with business from day to day, as consumers. Fall in love with business. Learn to appreciate the many facets of what it takes to run a business.

When you’re in a restaurant, how are you being served? What’s the environment like? What do you notice? When you’re at the grocery store, how are you being treated by the staff and by the cashier? When you stop for gas, what stands out about your experience of interacting with that business? How is this business creating value? See if you can ‘taste’ your experiences like you might taste wine, appreciating all the subtle differences and nuances. To use David Allen’s phrase, get curious about the ‘magic of the mundane!’

3 – Real transformation is threatening and there’s a lot to lose

Be really clear about what you want to do in your work. Ruthlessly clear. And if you do choose to be an agent of conscious business, and strive to create transformation in yourself, in others, in the cultures and systems that you interact with, then realize that there are *tremendous* implications to really doing transformational work. There are power structures at play, and real transformation is going to be very threatening to the status quo.

Here, Rand read out an Adyanshanti quote that he found to be particularly relevant to the work of transformation: “Make no mistake about it. Enlightenment is a destructive process. It has nothing to do with becoming better or being happier. Enlightenment is the crumbling away of



untruth. It's seeing through the facade or pretence. It's the complete eradication of everything we imagined to be true." Most of the time, people are not up for doing this work. And that's ok.

4 – The power of a 'positive no'

This is the title of a book by Bill Ury that Rand strongly recommended. Imagine a tree where the roots refer to our deep purpose, our 'deeper yes'. The 'positive no' stems from that deeper 'yes' in the same way that the trunk of a tree stems from its roots. When we're ruthlessly clear, we can use that clarity to say 'no', not as a negative statement, but as a confirmation of our deeper 'yes.' That kind of positive 'no' is a courageous action, and it's a risk. How much risk are you willing to take? And when do you consciously make an exception?

5 – Creating value is the prime directive – and the timeframe is indefinite

At the end of the call, in the Q&A section, Rand threw out another nugget about his philosophy to business development. It's to have an 'indefinite time horizon', and to create value day-by-day, without attachment to the outcome. "I wake up in the morning and I say: How can I live my life today, just this day, in a way that creates value in the world? And whether I'm being paid, or not paid, whether it's a client, or not a client, whether it's a manager in a salad bar, or whether it's a CEO of a \$100 mln business, just create value."

To create value without attachment to the outcome, without expecting this or that to happen as a result. Having the faith that what goes around, comes around, and that things will happen not so much as a result of this conversation or that intervention, but more out of the *cumulative* value that you create day by day, day-in and day-out. Being deeply committed to the work, to just doing the work. "I've got my shovel in the ground and I'm just digging ditches. Just do the work. That's my philosophy."

Courageous action

As Rand said during the class, there are tremendous implications to doing transformation work. First, as Bill Torbert said in Module 4, you have to be vulnerable to transforming *yourself*, in order to lead transformation in *others*. So let's take some time to really unpack that and consider what it means to do transformation work.

Exercise!



Consider the following questions and take a few minutes to jot down some notes below. How does your work (or the work you aspire to do) involve transformation? What is it that's being transformed?

Transformation is threatening. We have a lot to lose, and so do others. Adyashanti said it well:

"Make no mistake about it. Enlightenment is a destructive process. It has nothing to do with becoming better or being happier. Enlightenment is the crumbling away of untruth. It's seeing through the facade or pretence. It's the complete eradication of everything we imagined to be true."

Now read that again and replace the word 'enlightenment', which is about *spiritual* transformation, with the word 'transformation' as we've been using it here, in the context of work.

What do you notice when you read that? What does it *mean* for you and for the work that you (aspire to) do? What does it challenge? What is at stake here?

This kind of work is something that we can aspire to, but as Rand emphasized, there will always be exceptions, either by conscious choice or not. Think about a situation in the past few months that was a 'moment of truth' for you, where there was an opportunity to be honest and transparent with someone about the possibility of real transformation, and (this is important), where you either consciously or unconsciously decided to make an exception. There was a window of opportunity for real transformation, but for whatever reason you didn't act on it.



Rand provided some examples of why you might make an exception to your aspiration for transformation work, such as economic reasons, maintaining a long-term relationship with someone, maintaining a certain reputation, etc. Behind all of these, of course, are risks: to walk away from revenue, to damage a relationship, to damage your reputation, etc.

Do you have your 'moment of truth' situation where you did *not* take that kind of risk? Great, then quickly describe it below.

Why did you make an exception? What was the risk?

Imagine you would be able to go back in time and live through that moment of truth again. What if you were to take a bit more risk this time? What would you do, or if you're having a conversation with someone, what would you say?

If you have a difficult conversation or moment of truth coming up, that's even better! Roleplaying the conversation or situation with different levels of risk is a great way to prepare. Of course, that doesn't mean that you should always take maximum risk. It will, however, give



you a much better sense of what different levels of risk might look like, and prepare you to make a conscious decision in the moment.

Bringing it all together

The last part of the class with Rand, before we went to Q&A, was spent reviewing the six classes to date (it doesn't include the class with Cindy Wigglesworth, as that was only added to the second Agents of Conscious Business course). For each class, Rand picked out a few key themes he had heard while listening to the recordings, and specifically the acts of courage that were highlighted and often modelled by the various teachers.

In preparation for the ninth and final class of the Agents of Conscious Business course, let's build on that and start bringing it all together. By doing some reflection and integration now, before the last class, we will be able to cover a lot more terrain during the class itself.

Exercise!

As a start, go back to the learning objectives you defined in the very first module. You may remember we did a visioning exercise during the class on what you would have at the end of the course that you didn't have before. We then built on that in the workbook for the first class to define three goals for the course, and for each you described when you would know you would have achieved that goal. Take a minute now to read back your answers to those questions.

For each goal, take a few minutes to reflect on what progress you feel you've made during these past months, and jot down some key points below.

Goal #1

Goal #2



Goal #3

Of course, you may have learned things you didn't even think of at the start of the course. Finish the following sentence: What most surprised me, is ...

Rand also talked about the value of being challenged and disrupted. Let's explore that. What most challenged and disrupted me in the course, is ...

Brian Robertson suggested each of us acts as a sensor. Tune into your experience of the course as a sensor. What most energized me, is ...

Now, as final preparation for the class for Module 9, consider where you are now, about to step out of this learning 'bubble' and back into the 'real world'.



Having gone through the course, what are the biggest, juiciest questions you are now left with?

What do you most need to move forward in your practice as an Agent of Conscious Business?
(Spend some time on this one - it'll be really valuable to dig into this in our final class!)

If you have any time and juice to review your workbooks for the first seven modules of the course, this would be a great time to do so. What really stood out for you? Where do you want to dig deeper? How can you take this material beyond the 'dojo' and into your life and work?

That's it for this module's class "Courageous Action: Bringing it all Together"! We hope to see you all in Module 9 to hear your reflections and learnings, and celebrate and close this learning space we shared.

You'll find more info on our final class on the [Academy website](#).

If you have any comments or questions, please email us at mail@wakinguptheworkplace.com or throw a comment on the Academy website page for [Module 8](#) or [Module 9](#).