

Session 3 – What does it mean to be a “Game Changer”

3.1) Welcome back! Celebrations and Challenges

Come to class prepared to share!

What is a win from your playing or coaching that you can celebrate with the team?

What is a challenge from your playing or coaching that you can share with the team?

3.2) What does it mean to be a game changer?

In class you will discuss what it means to be a game changer in life as a player and as a coach.

Here are the fundamental points:

- 1) Life is a game
- 2) To change your life you have to change your game
- 3) To change your game you have to PLAY with purpose
- 4) To play your game better you need a great coach
- 5) To change the lives of others you need to BE a great coach

1) Life Is a Game

Key question: Where in your life are you attempting to work at something that is more suitable for play?

Key idea: Influence vs. Control (Play vs. Work)

What makes a game a game is this: anything that you can not control but you can influence is a game.

If you can control something so that when you take an action the same result happens every time, then that is work. If you cannot control something so that when you take an action you don't know exactly what is going to happen, then that is a game. It is good that some activities are work and some are games.

One key to enjoying life is knowing when to work and when to play and not get them confused. If you approach something like it is work – meaning you think you can control it – but really you can't control it then you can get really frustrated; until you realize that it is a game and start to play by creating influence.

In so many areas of life we have been taught to seek control but in most cases true control is impossible. This is called releasing the “illusion of control” so that you can embrace play.

2) To Change Your Life You Have To Change Your Game

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Key Question: How can the spirit of play be brought into your endeavor?

Key Idea: To change your game, do something New, Better, Bigger

New Game = Doing something different with your life; It could be a big new thing like a new career or a new business or it could be an experimental new thing like a new artistic activity.

Better Game = Approaching something that you are already doing in a new way so that you can do it better. Doing something better typically means getting the results you desire more often.

BIGGER Game = Creating a way to expand what you are already doing to make a bigger positive impact in the world or in the lives of others.

The second aspect to changing your game is to bring in the Spirit of Play. This means to tap into self-expression, creativity, curiosity, resourcefulness and resilience as you go for something new, better or bigger.

Finally... Play = Learn; Changing your game with the Spirit of Play means that you shift into LEARN MODE; willing to try new things, experiment and make some mistakes on your way to new, better or bigger.

3) To Change Your Game You Have To PLAY With Purpose

Key Question: How can you play your game to have a bigger impact on the lives of others?

Key idea: Play for Results vs. Work on Tasks

To be a game changer in life means that you play your game of life to:

- a) express yourself fully
- b) come alive in the experience
- c) create a positive impact on the lives of others.

This is an exciting, courageous and scary proposition.

It means shifting from the safe orientation of completing tasks alone in your work to playing for results (aka influence) in the world. When you play for results it is scary because you can fail.

The big benefit of working on tasks is that you can stay in your zone of control and minimize the risk so that there is little or no chance of failure.

This brings us to the Purpose part. If you are going to take the risk to play for results in the world, you will need to tap into something inside of you to find the courage to do it. That "something" is purpose. It is the reason – in your heart – that you want to make a contribution to the lives of others. It is WHY you care enough to embrace the potential for failure in your pursuit.

4) To Play With Purpose You Need a Great Coach

Key Question: Who knows your game AND has the ability to bring the best out of you?

Key idea: Coaching is a deep personal, purposeful relationship between two people oriented toward the success of the player.

Being a game changer includes tapping into purpose, risking failure in your pursuit of contribution, putting yourself into "Learner Mode" to do something new, better or bigger, tapping into the Spirit of Play and... expanding your influence while you release the "illusion of control".

Whoa! This is not a path you want to walk alone.
This is where your Coach comes in.

Your coach will walk with you on the pursuit of playing new, better and bigger.
Your coach knows your game AND has skills and methods to bring out your best.

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Your coach will help you game plan to make the most of your skills and resources.
Your coach will help you master the new skills you need to learn.
Your coach will help you face challenges and rebound faster from failures and setbacks.
Your coach will help you design a winning environment so that your world is suitable for play.

5) To change the lives of others you need to BE a great coach

Key Question: How do you shift from high achiever to true leader

Key Idea: In your pursuit of new, better and bigger you will need a great team.

As you play your game of life and the “game changer” level, you will realize that you need other people. When you gather people and form a team with a shared purpose, you will need the skills and methods to be the coach of the team.

3.3) The winnable / Unwinnable game

In class you will discuss what makes a game winnable and unwinnable. Here are some points to prepare you for the discussion.

What makes a game winnable

This is a BIG question with no specific answer because it is personal to every player and every game. There are a few things that you will learn to “look” for that will make a game winnable or unwinnable.

1) The time frames seem realistic

The time frame for the objectives must be realistic given – and here is the tricky part – the players’ whole life. The primary factor that makes a game unwinnable is an unrealistic time frame.

2) Focused desire

We have talked about this already but it can’t be overstated. Your player really needs to know WHY they are doing this in order to overcome all of the challenges that are going to occur. And if your player has MANY different desires that they want to fulfill at the same time, this can make a game unwinnable too.

3) Basic Skills

Your player will most likely need to develop new skills and build on some existing skills to accomplish their objectives. But you want to know that they have a foundation that you can build on.

4) Suitable Environment

For sure you will have to work with your player to transform their environment from suitable to supportive to “winning” in order to create sustainable results. The bottom line here is that most people are not playing in an environment that is totally set up for them to win, so you can expect to make some upgrades here. At the same time, it can’t be so full of obstacles that they can’t even get started.

Examples that would make an unsuitable environment include: dire financial environment, unstable relationships or family life, a major health crisis, something that is creating a major and unavoidable demand on their time – like an ailing parent that lives in their home for example.

5) Intended results that are specific and in the “challenge sweet spot”.

This means that they are not too hard and not too easy either.

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Keep in mind that these five areas are things that you will keep an eye on while you are talking with your player (or potential player) about their game. You won't know all there is to know about their situation until you get into a bit further.

At this point, you are looking and exploring to make sure that it feels right.

It is also a VERY good idea to let your player know that if you both come to the conclusion along the way that the game is unwinnable as it is currently defined – you can redefine it at that time.

What makes a game fun to play

- 1) It has a desired outcome that focuses your energy, attention and imagination
- 2) It has activities that are fun and challenging.
- 3) It has basic rules and boundaries that establish respect and fair play
- 4) It has a score card so you can evaluate how well you are playing on a regular basis; note to managers: this is major upgrade from the generally useless annual performance appraisal
- 5) It has skills that you can practice to expand your capacities AND if you really get into the game you can pursue mastery.
- 6) In a game you can notice and feel yourself improving over a period of time.
- 7) It has a variety of possible strategies and game plans that spark your creativity.
- 8) It is full of surprises that test your resilience and resourcefulness
- 9) AND above all it has OTHER PEOPLE PLAYING so that you feel like you are a part of something. You build relationships through shared experiences.
- 10) A winnable game is something you PLAY for enjoyment, for a purpose. A winnable game will bring you to life.

Now, let me tell you something here: playing a winnable game does not mean life is always easy! NO.

Sometimes you get into a really challenging game and it is tough. And sometimes you LOSE and it is heart breaking. All of these things are part of playing games. But when you REALLY play, you feel that reward that only comes from giving it your all no matter what happens.

What makes a game unwinnable

As a coach, you must know how to spot an unwinnable game! If your player has one, it will become a problem for them but a BIGGER problem for you because it is your job to help them win.

Here are a few thoughts about the unwinnable game:

Many people today are trapped in an unwinnable game, OR a game that is not worth playing.

And it is the reason this whole concept is so transformational and so important - NOW more than ever.

...in their careers, businesses, relationships, finances, health - most people are playing a game they cannot win OR a game that is not worth winning because it has no real purpose for them. And they are suffering as a result; even if they put up a good front and say that everything is GREAT. It's almost like they have gotten accustomed to it. UGH!

The unwinnable game...

- Dampens the human spirit,
- Thwarts creativity and
- Suppresses self-expression
- Causes overwhelm, frustration, isolation and apathy

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AND it shows! EVERYWHERE.

... in stress, anxiety, over-consumption, low-grade frustration and a whole host of other cultural phenomenon.

An unwinnable game has many causes:

- 1) Playing a game that requires skills that you have not fully developed AND you do not have a coach teaching you those skills
- 2) Playing a game based on a goal with an unrealistic time frame (have you heard of this one?)
- 3) Playing a game with an environment that is not set up for winning. The environment is the world of people, places, things and ideas. There are resources that are needed to win that you just do not have, or obstacles that are constantly in the way.
- 4) Playing someone else's game - it has no real meaning for you personally
- 5) Playing a game where there are escalated expectations for performance - or where it is expected that you can play at a high level 24/7/365 - you can't!

What are your highlights regarding a winnable game?

What are your highlights regarding an unwinnable game?

In what way are you MOST likely to create an UNWINNABLE game for yourself?

3.4) Play Two Win Step #2) Design the Object of the Game (Continued)

Identify the Outcomes, Mastery, "Becomings" and Upgrades using RACE

Designing a fun and winnable game is a highly creative process.

Learning how to design a life game is a major step in becoming a game changing life coach!

It does require some practice! Learning how to do this well is truly a transformational opportunity for individuals and organizations.

1) Identify the recurring Results that grow into the desired Outcomes.

Creating results in the world is what makes the games of life so exhilarating.

2) Identify the recurring Actions that grow into acquired Mastery.

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Every game has actions that happen over and over again as the game is played; like shooting the ball toward the basket in basketball.

{Here is where we will put our attention in this session}

3) Identify the recurring Challenges that grow into Becomings.

Any game worth playing is full of interesting challenges; some anticipated, some unexpected! The key for the player and coach is to find the sweet spot between easy and hard. If the game is too easy it is not inspiring. If it is too hard (not winnable) then apathy sets in. The coach must continually expand the game so that the player grows in ability by stepping into bigger and bigger challenges. It is through facing challenges that we become the person we desire to be.

4) Evaluate what matters and connect that to Upgrades.

There are two ideas here. First is that you have to decide with your player how you will evaluate the results of the game. What will you look at to see if the game is going well? Often this starts with counting something like #'s of new paying customers for a business game; The second idea is called "Upgrades" or Environmental Upgrades. These are real changes in the world around the player that occur by playing and winning the game. So a quick example from a business game would be when I have 3 new players on my team (aka employees) I will know that my business is growing.

5) Scan the players' situation for anything that will affect their ability to play and win.

Coaching is always personal. As a coach you need to know about anything in the players' life that will impact the player in the game. The games of life cannot be compartmentalized. Everything impacts everything else.

So for example, if the players' desire for Mastery is to become masterful at selling BUT they have very little skill in sales, this is a situation that will require practice. If the player is playing a business game but is currently tied into a full time job, this situation is a BIG block in the environment that will require some World Power shifting.

6) Make sure the game is winnable and make adjustments if it is not.

The player and coach must take a good look at the desired objects of the game, and the players' situation to make sure that the objectives are achievable. If they are not, something must be adjusted because a player and coach should NEVER set out to play a game that is UNWINNABLE! It is better to make the object of game VERY achievable and then make it bigger because success builds success while defeat can start a downward spiral.

Let's talk about your situation

When you first start coaching a new player you have to find out what is going on in his/her life. Without this information it is impossible to figure out if the game they want to play is winnable or not.

The only way to find out is to ask. Often players don't want to talk about these things because they don't want to reveal their current circumstances. But this is just more of the common unhealthy habits of a) playing an unwinnable game and b) playing alone.

Remember, you are a LIFE coach. So you have to take into account ALL of your players life. You cannot just focus on one little part and assume they will "deal with" the rest of their life.

At the same time, you can't get so LOST in the player's situation that you lose focus on the game they want to play and win. It is a delicate balance and holding it all is a big part of what makes a great coach a real game changer!

Getting into Game Design

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Here we help our player make the BIG shift to WIN-Ability. Most people – for reasons that are difficult to explain – set themselves up to fail in the important areas of life like career, business, community, romance and family

A BIG part of your role as a Game Changing Coach – and the purpose of step #2 – is to find the sweet spot between too easy (a game not worth playing) and too hard (an unwinnable game).

To do this, you really have to understand your player, the game, their abilities and their situation. You have to understand specifically:

- 1) What do they MOST want to accomplish in the next 3 months?
- 2) What are the results, activities and challenges of the game; what is their current skill level in these activities?
- 3) What are their current life situations that affect their ability to play?

This includes their commitments and life challenges that will affect their ability to play the game fully? Specifically you need to establish how much time they have to dedicate to playing this game on a weekly basis.

- 4) How strong is their level of confidence that they can win

With this picture you will guide them toward designing short term objectives that are right in the sweet spot. And then you will keep raising the bar gradually to keep them in that growth zone without tipping the scale into unwinnable. It is a creative and delicate process that will test your skill as a coach.

Designing the Object of the Game... What are your highlights?

3.5) Coaching Practice

Coaching Outline for Session 3 Step #2: Design the Object of the Game (Part 2)

Note to the Coach: The Numbered Bold Lines are there to give you a reference point, you don't say them to your player.

1) Quick Life Check in

Say: Welcome back! It's great to be with you again.

Say: Today we are going to finish designing your game and make sure it is winnable!

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Ask: Does that sound good to you?

Wait for the “yes”. (Agreement)

Ask: Before we do that...How are you? Can you give me a 1-minute update on what is happening in your life?

If there is something BIG going on...

Ask: is this something we need to address during our session?

{If yes, make a note of it}

2) Recap the Design the Game Conversation

Say: In our last session we got into the actions, results and outcomes of your game.

Ask: Can you recap for me how your game is played

{Dialogue briefly about this}

3) Finish Designing the Game – Make it winnable

Say: OK, now we are going to finish designing the game and make sure it is winnable. So in our last session I challenged you to notice the challenges that you faced while playing for results.

ASK: What **CHALLENGES** did you face?

And what additional **CHALLENGES** do you expect to face while playing for your results?

ASK: Who will you **BECOME** – what character traits do you want to develop – as you face these challenges?

ASK: What is most important for us to **EVALUATE** each week to track your progress in the game?

ASK: What **UPGRADES** to your environment will you need to sustain your game at a high level?

ASK: What **UPGRADES** to your environment do you want to enjoy as you win your game?

ASK: Tell me about any situations in your life – like commitments or life challenges – that could affect your ability to win this game?

ASK: When you look at this 3-month game, your current abilities and your current situation, do you believe that this game is winnable for you?

ASK: If not, how should we modify the game to make it winnable?

4) Wrap Up your Design the Game Conversation

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Say: "OK, this is a good place for us to wrap up this session. Next time, we are going to dive into your experience of playing the game."

Say: "My challenge for you between now and then is to focus on your recurring results and the actions you can take to create those results. **ASK:** "Can you do that?"

Wait for them to say: "YES!"

ASK: "This was a great session. Can you give me a 30 second wrap up of what you learned today".

>> Here is a sample dialogue with additional questions & comments

">>" You will see this symbol next to the lines that are in the coaching outline.

Always begin a session by establishing agreement and then check in on the challenge that was discussed in the last session.

1) Quick Life Check in

>> **Say:** Welcome back! It's great to be with you again.

>> **Say:** Welcome back! In our last session we made a lot of progress in designing your game and now this week we are going to make sure that it is winnable.

>> **Ask:** Does that sound good to you?

Wait for the "yes". (Agreement)

>> **Ask:** Before we do that...How are you? Can you give me a 1-minute update on what is happening in your life?

If there is something BIG going on...

>> **Ask:** is this something we need to address during our session?

{If yes, make a note of it}

2) Recap the Define the Game Conversation

>> **Say:** In our last session we got into the **ACTIONS**, **RESULTS** and **OUTCOMES** of your game.

Ask: Can you recap for me how your game is played

{Dialogue briefly about this}

The point here is that transforming an endeavor into a game is an iterative process; meaning you rarely nail it perfectly in the first conversation! You will keep refining it over time.

Let it flow AND keep it on track at the same time... THIS is the magic of great coaching conversation.

3) Finish Designing the Game- make it winnable

>> **Say:** OK, now we are going to finish designing the game and make sure it is winnable. So in our last session I challenged you to notice the challenges that you faced while playing for results.

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>> **ASK:** What **CHALLENGES** did you face?

And what additional **CHALLENGES** do you expect to face while playing for your results?

Remember, that in the Industrial Age we were taught to only do things that did not have challenges so that we could avoid making mistakes.

So it is a challenge for most people to see that challenges are fun! But this is the transformation you need to bring to your own mind and to everyone you coach.

At first, they may not see the challenges. Or they may describe them as problems.

You have to ease them into finding the fun in whatever gets in the way of creating the results they desire.

Challenges can be external like:

It is hard to find places where my ideal customers hang out.

Challenges can be internal like:

During my conversations with potential customers I come up with a reason NOT to ask them to hire me.

Ask: What are some of the general challenges that you are facing right now?;

Things that are taking up your energy and thoughts. It could be a recurring problem that you haven't been able to solve; or something that you think might get in the way of playing your new game?

Listen and take notes. If the challenges are related to the game, write them in the Blue Circle labeled challenges. You will get into this more as the game moves along, but for now you need to get a feel for how "winnable" this game is for them.

If the challenge is not related to the game but seems more like a life "situation" write a not in the margin of the playsheet. We will get more into that with them in a moment.

Again...

Keep probing: What else? Is there anything else?

REMEMBER: be objective, listen without getting lost in the story.

This is good because your player gets the sense that you care about the details; that you are not just going to accept surface level conversation.

>> **ASK:** Who will you **BECOME** – what character traits do you want to develop – as you face these challenges?

The becomings often come from facing challenges. And sometimes your player may have an idea about specific character traits that they want to develop even if they are not related to a specific challenge.

So you can ask directly about character traits...

SAY: Let's identify a few character traits that you want to build as you play the game. Who do you want to become as a result of playing?

Specific experiences will come up here. Examples:

1. I want to have a much better relationship with my spouse/child/boss/colleague = I want to be more loving, caring, thoughtful or connected
2. I want to feel more relaxed at the end of the day = I want to be more peaceful
3. I want to have more time for myself = I want to be more joyful or reflective
4. I want to be a more confident as a business person
5. I want to be a more "present" during family activities

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Becomings are the secret sauce of coaching!

The ultimate outcome of playing any game, WITH A COACH, is the joy of personal growth and self-discovery. This is found in the "WHO YOU BECOME" in the experience.

We all know that this is true for the greatest moments of our lives. Typically they began as a great challenge. Sometimes we create the challenge. Sometimes the challenges just seem to find us.

Ultimately it is the personal growth that tells the real story. AND, it is a big deal to think about this consciously as you get into the game.

>> **SAY:** A key element to playing well and coaching is to evaluate how the game is going.

>> **ASK:** What is most important for us to **EVALUATE** each week to track your progress in the game?

Step #5 is called Evaluate What Matters. We will get into that step in much greater detail then.

But in the beginning of the game it is very powerful to start to think about how your player wants to evaluate their performance. This is very empowering because in most things in life we feel we are being judged by outside forces.

Here you encourage your player see that "Feedback is the breakfast of champions".

When you play a BIG game, EVERYTHING is feedback. The question is which feedback is most important to look at?; which feedback will give you clues about how to play better?

Examples:

- 1) Count my revenue (on a spreadsheet)
- 2) Count how many exploratory sessions I do and % of YES's
- 3) Keep a list of people I think can refer customers to me.
- 4) I KNOW the highlights of my child's games.

>> **SAY:** To play your game in a new, better and bigger way, we will probably need to help you design a winning environment.

>> **ASK:** What **UPGRADES** to your environment will you need to sustain your game at a high level?

This aspect of Upgrades is often the "Super Outcome" of the game. In other words, what positive changes in my environment do you want to create as you play and win your game?

Examples:

- 1) Strong connections with a referral network
- 2) A beautiful writing space in my home that makes me feel creative and open

>> **Say:** A final part of your objectives for the game are the rewards of winning

>> **ASK:** What **UPGRADES** to your environment do you want to enjoy as you win your game?

- 1) A new CAR! (I seriously need one)
- 2) A closer relationship with my child & mate

Important: Next, get a feel for your players "situation".

Often your player will reveal their "situation" when they talk about the challenges of the game. But if it didn't come up, now is the time to ask them about it.

>> **ASK:** Tell me about any situations in your life – like commitments or life challenges – that could affect your ability to win this game?

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Additional comments and questions you can use here:

Say: I need to get an understanding of what is going on in your life so that we can create a winnable game.

Ask: What are a few of your major commitments right now, things that take up your time and energy?

Listen and take a few notes. On the playsheet, write key points on the margins of the page. This is metaphorically good because it shows that these items impact the game but they are not the game itself.

Keep probing: What else? Is there anything else? You will be surprised at how many times the fourth or fifth thing they mention is a HUGE item in their life, but they didn't want to bring it up. (aka face reality).

THE BIG REALITY FACING QUESTION

Ask: When you look at your commitments, what is a realistic amount of time that you can dedicate to playing this game right now?

Listen. Challenge their answer if you feel that it might be unrealistic.

Remember: most people tend to create an unwinnable game when they start something new.

"Is this game winnable?" The BIG question.

YOU MUST ASK YOUR PLAYER THIS QUESTION.

Do not shy away from this question.

Also, don't assume you know the answer based on how the conversation has unfolded.

Ask the player. And let them answer. You may be surprised.

>> ASK: When you look at this 3-month game, your current abilities and your current situation, do you believe that this game is winnable for you?

DIALOGUE TOGETHER: Talk about the win-ability of the game as you see it as well. Offer your comments and perspective on the situation.

Listen: write down a few things about what they say on the bottom of the Play Sheet. There isn't a specific spot for this.

>> ASK: If not, how should we modify the game to make it winnable?

IMPORTANT: If you think the game is unwinnable but your player feels that it is, here is what you do.

Say: OK. If you feel confident, that is the most important thing. Let's agree to re-evaluate the game after a few weeks and if it turns out that it is a little aggressive, we will make the needed adjustments. Fair enough?

REMEMBER: You have to end the session with a challenge.

And you also want to get them involved in the activities of the game that you identified.

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When the conversation is complete, here is what you do.

>> **SAY:** Great! Now we have your Winnable game ready to play

4) Wrap Up the Conversation

>> **Say:** "OK, this is a good place for us to wrap up this session. Next time, we are going to dive into your experience of playing the game."

>> **Say:** "My challenge for you between now and then is to take your recurring actions and play for results and watch what happens. **ASK:** "Can you do that?"

Wait for them to say: "YES!"

You may want to get a little more specific..

ASK: Which activity and result do you want to focus on?

ASK: How many times will you do this action this week?

ASK: What result are you playing for in the next week?

If they seem uncertain as to what to do..

Look over your play sheet and notice where your player lacked clarity. Challenge them to reflect on that issue or question and write down several ideas. Be sure to ask them to send you what they write prior to your next session. This will create an accountability loop.

Example:

Say:"We are going to get you started in this game. One thing I noticed that was not clear was your understanding of the challenges you will face in xx activity. I would like you to reflect on this and write down 3 items for each of these. If you can't think of what to write, call a good friend or colleague and ask them to help you. Sometimes an outside perspective is helpful."

Say: I know this may stretch you outside of your comfort zone. Can you do it? And send it to me by next Tuesday at 5PM? (give a specific time to your request)

Wait for them to answer.

>> **ASK:** "This was a great session. Can you give me a 30 second wrap up of what you learned today."

Wait for their answer.

>> **Say:** "GREAT! I look forward to next time."

3.6) Highlights from the session
