



HOW FAR WILL YOU GO?

How to Lead in the
Age of Uncertainty



Written by Josh Allred

Illustrated by Caleb Ceran

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Connection

In 1995, Chicago suffered one of its worst heatwaves in history that led to over 700 deaths over a five-day span. Most of the victims were elderly who couldn't afford air conditioning or had it quit working on them.

What's interesting to point out, according to Eric Klinenberg, is that some neighborhoods, even with similar social-economic status, were more prone to have heat-related deaths than others. The difference?

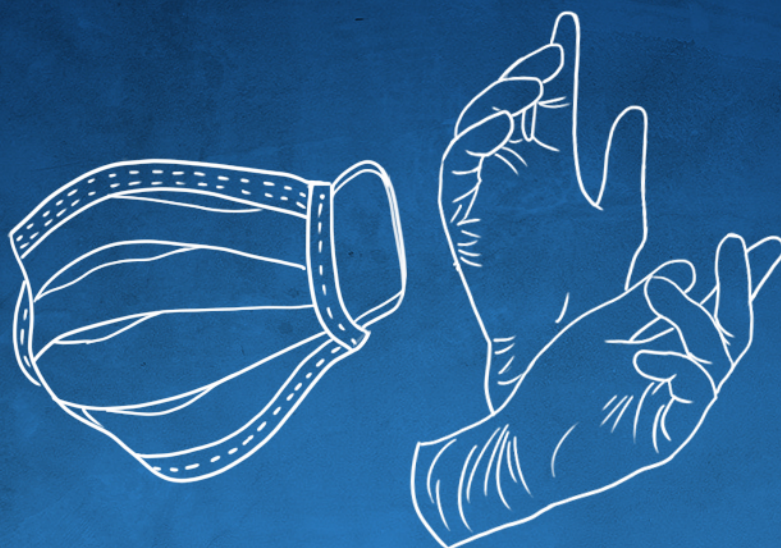
Some neighborhoods had a library while the others didn't.

The library was a network for people to check-in with each other.

A community that is better connected is more resilient to whatever comes next.



How Far Will You Go?



What Did We Talk About Before COVID-19?

Let's face it. The world has turned upside down. Uncertainty, fear, anxiety is running rampant. Forcing us to change. Quickly. Which is not something we are used to. Just weeks ago, unemployment was at historical lows. Now, we have the biggest surge of unemployment claims in history.

For teens, this hasn't been easy, either. Prom has been postponed for the time being. It is increasingly likely that many will not be able to walk on graduation day this year. Online school is bringing on added stress.

And yet...

Despite these challenges, there is something magical happening. In all this chaos, there are those who are stepping up. Communities are organizing to sew PPE's (Personal Protective Equipment) for healthcare providers. Grocery stores have created special hours for the elderly to shop.

There is an opportunity to zig when everyone else is zagging. Each of us have a chance to step up and stand out. To make an impact on the culture. It's your turn.

Will you lead us?



How Far Will You Go?

The Forever Problem

What changed from 10,000 BC to 5,000 BC? Not much. But if you look at what the world looked like from 200 years ago and juxtapose it with the last 20, you will see that everything looks different.

That's because change happens faster than ever before. It is exponential and with it comes new problems.

Two things we need to be aware of here:

1) Up to this point in history, every time we solve a problem, two more pop up in its place. Think of the Wright Brothers. Once air travel was possible, then you need pilots, airports, TSA, flight attendants...

2) Humans have always found a way to adapt.

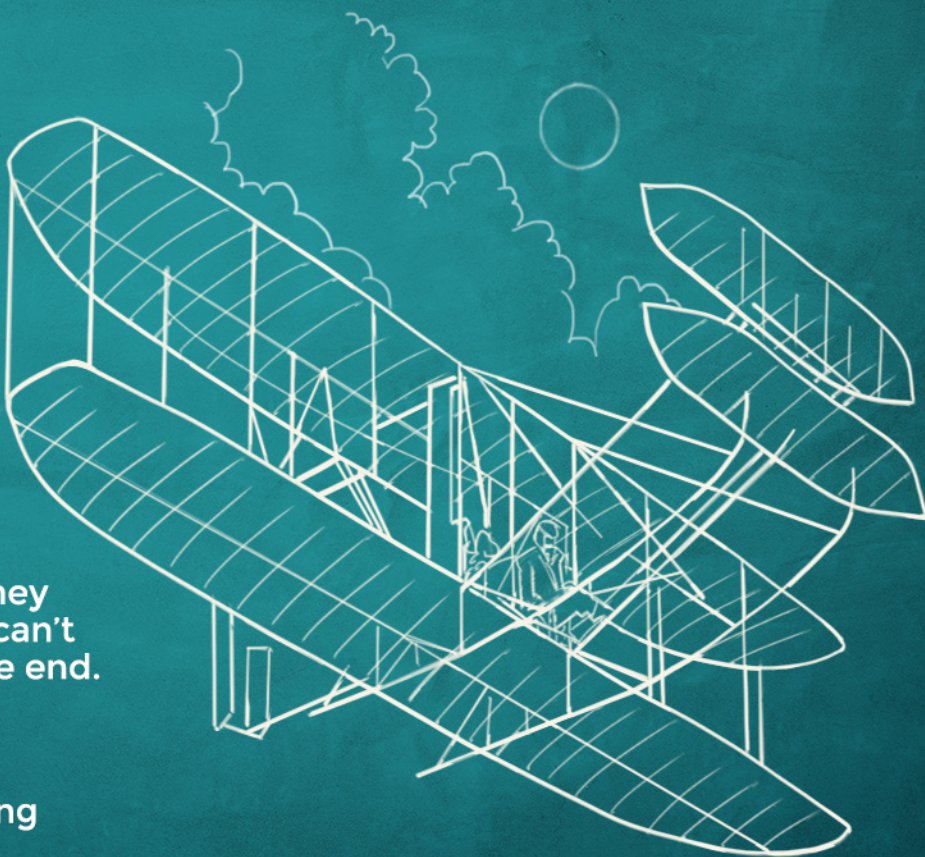
Whether we are talking about an order to shelter in place, social distancing or the financial hardship associated with Novel Coronavirus, we have to understand that none of these problems will last forever.

Here's the thing:

Problems only feel like they last forever because we can't see the beginning nor the end.

And

You are never done solving problems.



How Far Will You Go?

We can't go back

We can't go back to the way it used to be.

It used to be you got a job in a factory. It used to be stable. It used to be that you stayed there for a long time. It used to be that a degree got you a good job.

The world used to be a lot of things.

Life is not a fairy tale. You're not going to win the lottery. A magic lamp isn't going to spit out a Genie and fix all of this. The Tooth Fairy isn't showing up.

The natural question to ask, "Is everything going to be okay?"

If what you really mean is, "Will things go back to the way it was before?", then no.

The sooner we can accept that the things that used to be are gone, the sooner we can start building a new tomorrow. You can be part of building a new future - one that we can all be proud of.

Make things better by making better things.



How Far Will You Go?

The Next Step Isn't Written

We don't know what is going to happen next but we must act. So, what can we do?

You don't need more time or money or education (these are places we choose to hide). You already have enough to start.

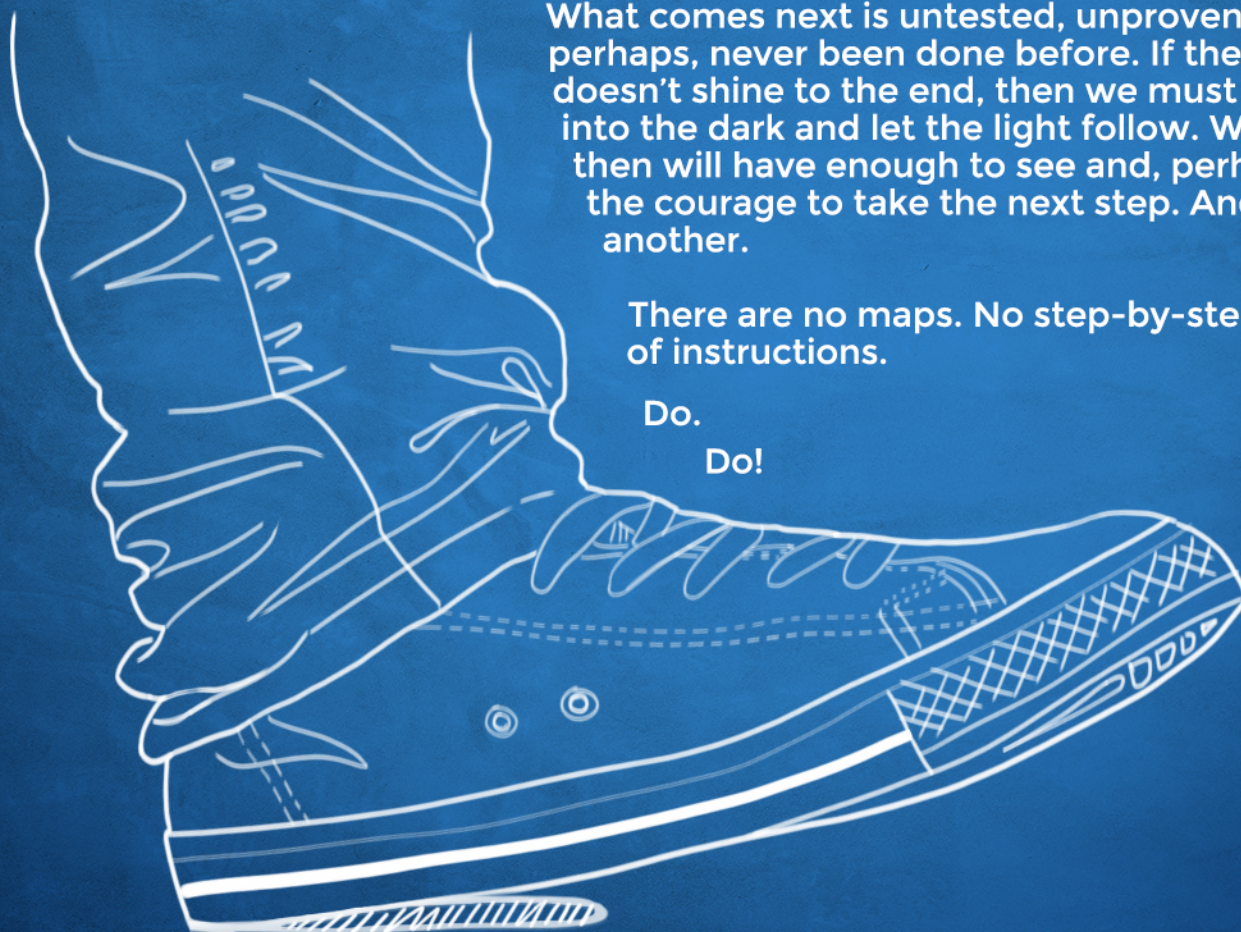
Too often, we sit there waiting to see the end with every step highlighted. Every pothole, every detour must be shown before we decide. But we can't know the ending until we start this new beginning.

What comes next is untested, unproven and, perhaps, never been done before. If the light doesn't shine to the end, then we must step into the dark and let the light follow. We then will have enough to see and, perhaps, the courage to take the next step. And then another.

There are no maps. No step-by-step set of instructions.

Do.

Do!



Who's Going to Test It?

For a long time, it was widely believed that stomach ulcers were primarily caused by stress. But in 1982, Dr. Barry Marshall and Dr. Robin Warren had discovered that it was actually caused by a bacteria called *Helicobacter pylori*.

It was groundbreaking research that could make the lives of millions better. Except...

No one believed them.

Doctors carried a worldview that such a big discovery was reserved for the elite schools, not the University of Western Australia, and that bacteria couldn't live in such an acidic environment.

After years of ridicule and rejection, Dr. Barry Marshall decided to drink(!) a broth full of *Helicobacter pylori*, which caused a stomach ulcer. He then treated it with simple antibiotics.

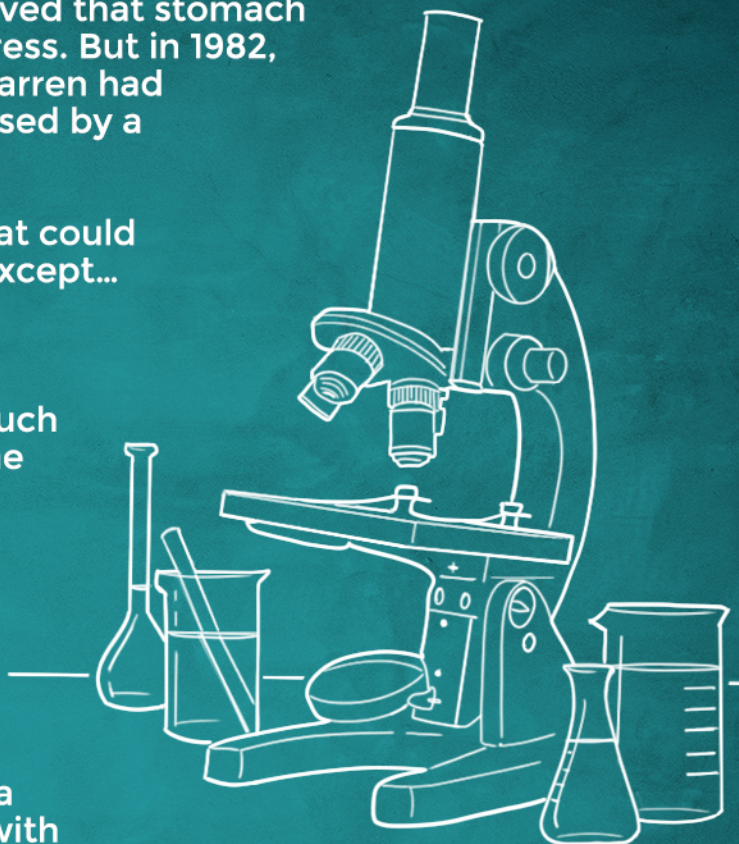
When you know something to be true, it's important to remember to be persistent long enough for others to see what you see. Sometimes, it might mean doing something that has never been done before.

Stepping into the unknown, it's a familiar feeling. That feeling is tension.

Tension is always present when we do something for the first time. Dealing with that tension is what leaders do.

Instead of wishing for it to go away, the alternative is to embrace it.

Learn to dance with it.



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The Arena

Much like those librarians in Chicago, you get to make a choice here. You can choose to sit in the stands and criticize what happens next or step into the arena and become an agent of change.

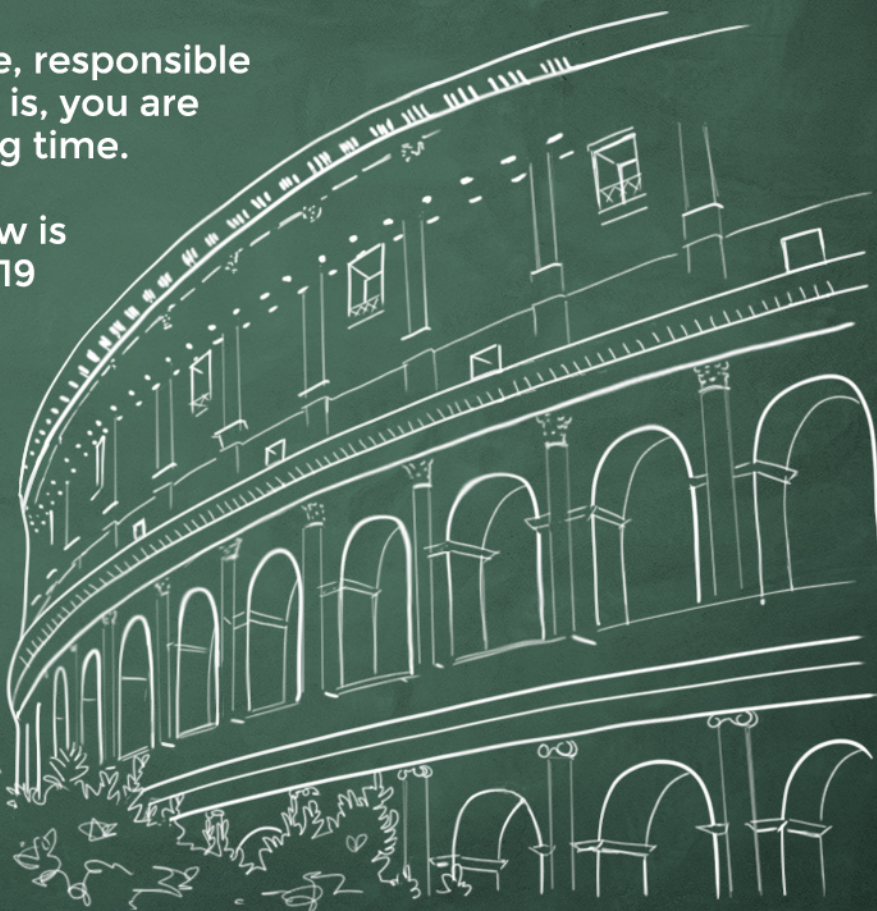
It's true, if you are going to step in the arena, at some point, you're going to get your teeth kicked in. The alternative is to sit on the sidelines and wait for things to get better.

Waiting feels like the safe, responsible thing to do. The problem is, you are going to be waiting a long time.

Life is short and tomorrow is no guarantee (as COVID-19 has reminded all of us).

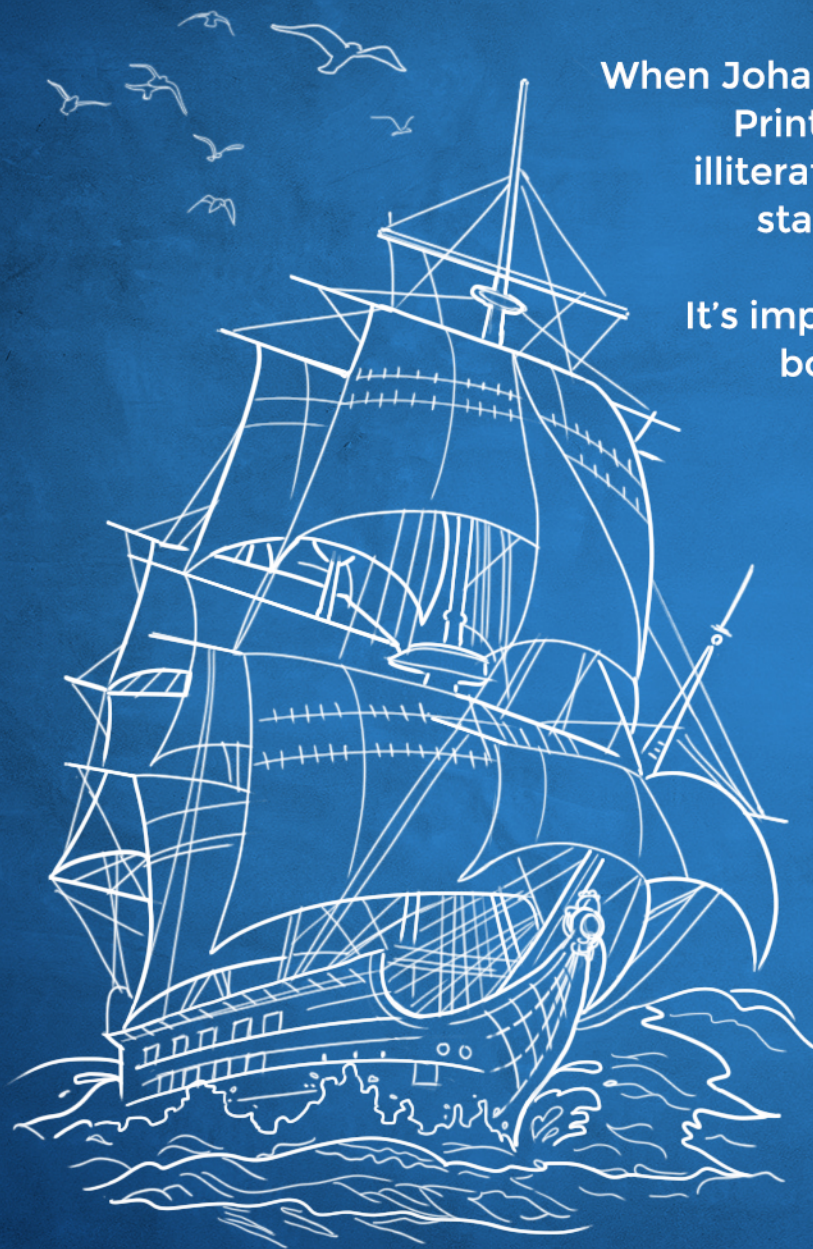
The amygdala is very good at reminding us, "You are not good enough" and "Don't be stupid; this is not the right time."

Well, when is it ever the right time?



How Far Will You Go?

Now Is Your Chance



When Johannes Gutenberg launched the Printing Press, 90% of Europe was illiterate. What a terrible moment to start a book publishing business!

It's important to see here that all the boats rise and fall with the tide.

The point is, the moment will never feel quite right to begin. It doesn't matter whether we are facing a pandemic or a recession or if the waters are calm.

You will never run out of excuses.

It's your turn.

Every passing moment is a chance to turn it all around.



How Far Will You Go?

Quit Running from Sabretooth Tigers

For thousands of years, making a decision based on fear was a good thing. It helped us run from really dangerous things like sabretooth tigers. We needed this type of decision making to stay alive.

However, we don't live in an era where we have to run from sabretooth tigers anymore. Yet, this is still how our brain operates.

It is our default setting.

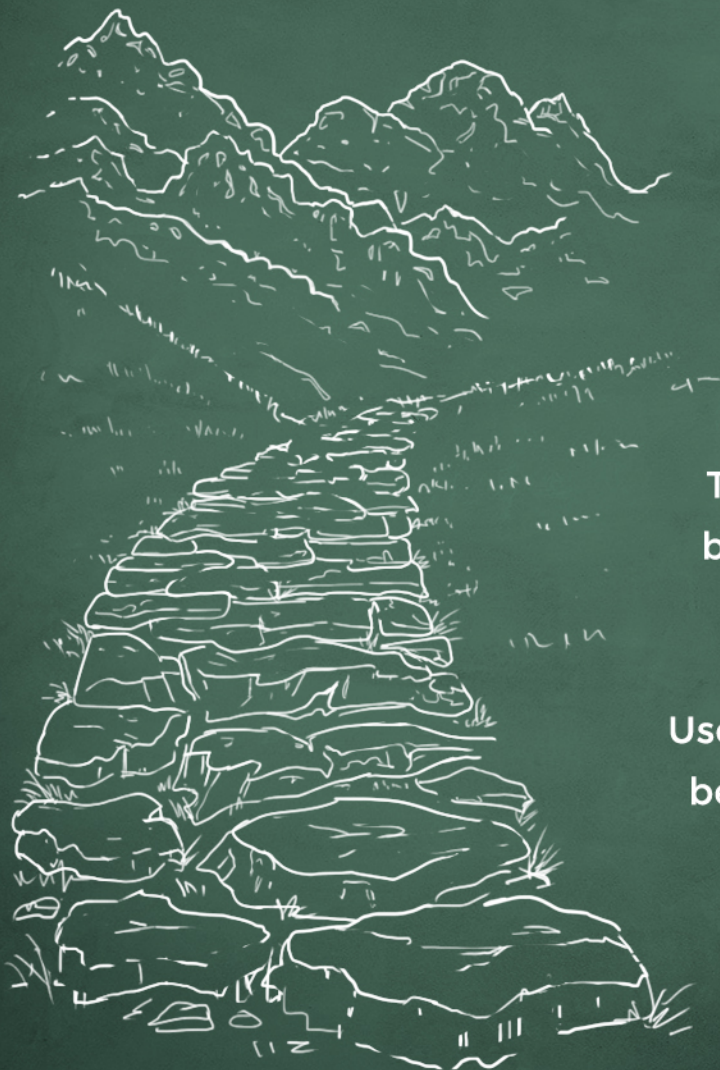
Every time we check our phone, our fear and anxiety ramp up. It's difficult to resist but checking our phones every couple of minutes to see if the world is still broken isn't going to change that. It will only make us feel worse.



How Far Will You Go?

About Shortcuts

The shortest path to becoming a doctor is to go through med school.
And if you want to become a marine, you have to go through basic training. No other way around it. It's what separates insiders and outsiders.



There are people out there that will try to sell us on a shortcut. But they don't exist. Everyone is already on the shortest path.

The trick is to find longcuts. Things that will pay off tomorrow by putting in the work behind the scenes today.

Use this time to learn a new skill; to become really good at something. When the world opens back up (because it will), how will you be better?



How Far Will You Go?

Uncomfortable at First

Ignaz Semmelweis discovered that simply washing your hands can reduce the spread of infection. A remarkable discovery in the 1850's. And it later laid the groundwork for germ theory.

However, it took the medical community 20 years to adopt this habit. 20 years!

The question is, was it painful to change or just uncomfortable?

The longer we wait to adapt, the more painful it becomes.

There is an old African proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

This is a time to go together.

We need you.
You have more power than you can imagine.

Just act accordingly.

Go, make a ruckus.





Josh is the creator and chief architect of Pivot Adventure, an adventure therapy course for teenagers based out of Salt Lake City, Utah. Josh started this workshop to make a dent in the industry that has priced people out for decades. With over 15 years of experience working with youth, Josh defines his career by the impact he's had in teaching others.

His other big project to date is his blog with over 1,500 consecutive posts about breaking false limits and leveling up. You can reach Josh at leap@pivotadventure.com.



Caleb is a freelance artist and graphic designer with over 10 years of experience. He is the owner of Paint with Caleb, where he teaches people with no previous experience to paint and draw. Caleb brings hope through the arts. He helps people smash their self-limiting beliefs and discover their inherent creativity. Caleb's work can be found at CalebCeran.com.



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