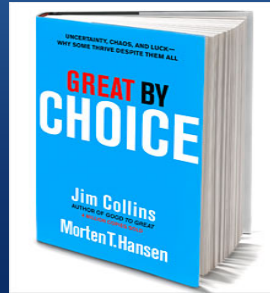


Created By :Duane Regier

GREAT BY CHOICE

BY JIM COLLINS AND MORTEN T. HANSEN(2011)



What is Great by Choice about?

Summary:

Human resource management has become a major focus in the business and public sector over the past ten years. People are interested in getting ahead and staying ahead. Based on research, Collins and Hansen outline the principles for building a truly great business in today's unpredictable and fast-moving times. In *Great by Choice*, they answer the question: Why and how do some companies thrive in uncertainty, even chaos, while others do not? The team studied companies that rose to greatness and coined them '10X' companies. The team then contrasted these companies with a set of companies that failed to achieve greatness in similar environments. Provocative surprises were in store when the results were analyzed.

What separates a company/public sector from being merely good in a changing environment to one that is truly great? This question led Collins and Hansen to develop the behaviors necessary to become a 10X company. What is a 10X company? A 10X company is one beating their industry indexes by a minimum of ten times over fifteen years in environments with big shifts and unpredictable change. Collins and Hansen discuss and select cases based on performance but also focus on what environmental factors played a role during their march to becoming a stable 10x company.

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“Victory awaits him who has everything in order – luck people call it. Defeat is certain for him who neglected to take necessary precautions in time; this is called bad luck”

Ronald Amundsen

Thriving in Uncertainty
CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTION

WHAT DID GREAT COMPANIES SHARE IN COMMON THAT DISTINGUISHED THEM FROM THEIR DIRECT COMPARISONS?

Struggles companies went through from 1972 – 2002

1. Fuel Shocks
2. Deregulations
3. Labor Strife
4. Air traffic Control Strikes
5. Crippling Recession
6. Interest Rate Spikes
7. High Jacking
8. Bankruptcy
9. 2001 terrorist attacks of September 11th



<http://southwest-airlinescreditcard.com/>

An investment of \$10,000 dollars in Southwest Airlines in 1972 would have made you 12 Million by 2002. That would be 63 times better then the general stock market. If this company faced the preciously listed struggles, how is this possible?

A 10X COMPANY'S RESEARCH CHARACTERISTICS

1. The enterprise has sustained truly spectacular results for 15 years relative to the general stock market and relative to its industry

2. The enterprise achieved these results in a particularly turbulent environment, full of events that were uncontrollable, fast moving, uncertain,

3. The enterprise began its rise to greatness from a position of vulnerability, being young and/or small at the start of its 10X journey.



Collins and Hansen point out that the critical question is not what these great companies shared in common but, what did the great companies share in common that distinguished them from their direct comparisons? (p. 7)

“We simply do not know what the future holds”

-Pete L. Bernstein

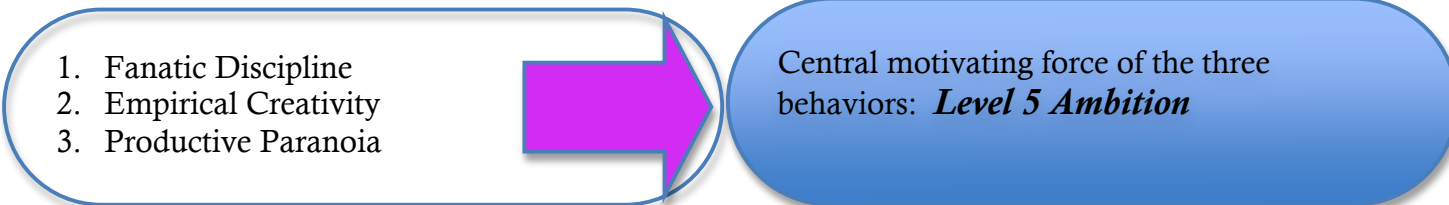
10xers

What are the guiding principles of a 10x company?

In October 1911, two teams set out to be the first people to reach the South Pole. For Roald Amundsen’s team, it was a race to victory. For Robert Falcon Scott’s team, it was a devastating defeat. Collins and Hansen use this life event as a comparison for how a business with good principles can thrive and a business lacking these principles can be defeated by basic unpredictable struggles. The following table will outline the decisions that both leaders made that led to the success of one and failure of the other.

Roald Amundsen	Robert Falcon Scott
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1989 earned a masters certificate for a two month sailing trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert choose ponies instead of dogs to pull sleds. Ponies sweat on their hides and become ice sheets when tethered, struggle in snow, and don’t generally eat meat. However, he felt comfortable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experimented eating raw dolphin meat...just in case he was ever shipwrecked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The men ended up man hauling the sleds after the ponies froze to death
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained his body during practical experiences to see how far he could push himself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used motor sledges. The motor sledge had not been tested in extreme conditions and the engine block cracked on him in the first few days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made a pilgrimage to apprentice with an Eskimo to learn about the south cold and snow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough food planned for conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learned how to use dog sleds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had a 700 mile return to home base for supplies after reaching the south pole
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learned how Eskimos never hurried. They moved slowly and steadily. This would help his men avoid producing a sweat that could lead to ice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They found Scott and his men dead in their tent just ten miles short of a supply depot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He adopted Eskimo clothing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He killed the weaker dogs along the way to fuel the stronger dogs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up supply depot stops and set out black pennants to know how to get back just in case of a storm 	

The two men demonstrated different behaviors, yet experienced similar circumstances. Amundsen did not struggle because he possessed the core behaviors of a 10X company. The core behaviors of a 10X:



Amundsen’s philosophy: You don’t wait until you’re in an unexpected storm to discover that you need more strength and endurance. You don’t wait until you’re on the Antarctic journey to become a superb skier and dog handler. You prepare with intensity, all the time, so that when conditions turn against you, you can draw from a deep reservoir of strength. And equally, you prepare so that when conditions turn in your favor, you can strike hard. (p. 15)

Fanatic discipline:

The 10X companies show extreme consistency in their actions. This consistency lines up with their values, goals, performance standards and methods over time. The 10X company is relentless and unbending when it comes to their quest. True discipline requires the independence of mind to reject pressures to conform in ways that would be incompatible with values, performance standards and long

Empirical Creativity:

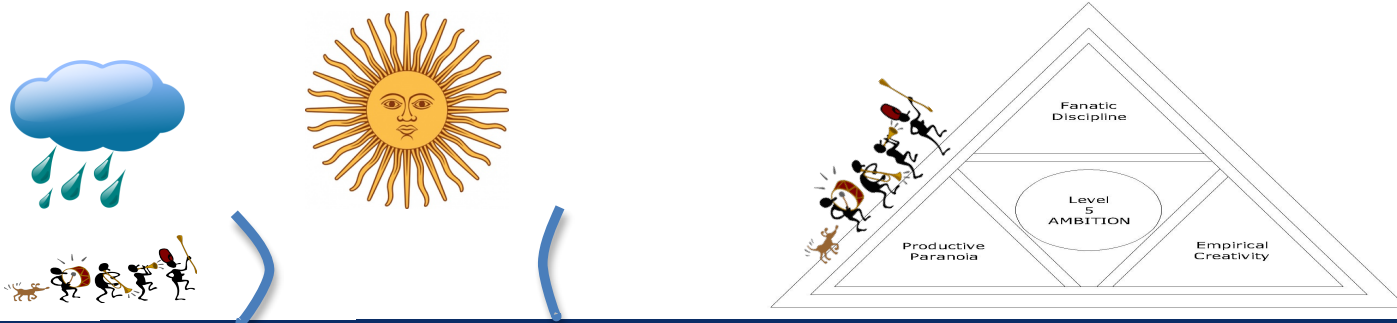
10X companies look primarily to empirical evidence rather than conventional wisdom during times of uncertainty. The leaders want to rely on direct observations, conducting practical experiments, and direct engagement with tangible evidence rather than relying on conventional wisdom, opinion, authority, or an

Productive Paranoia:

10x companies understand that they will have threats and change in the environment. They are attuned to these threats even when times are good. A good 10X leader will take their fear and worry and put it into action. They will plan and develop contingency plans and maintain large margins of safety.

Level 5 Ambition:

10Xers channel their ego and intensity into something larger and more enduring than themselves. They are ambitious, but for a purpose beyond themselves, be it building a great company, changing the world, or achieving some great object that is ultimately not about them.



20 Miles at a time no matter what the conditions

20 Mile March

The idea of a 20 mile march could be compared to the life lesson ‘slow and steady wins the race’. When Collins and Hansen started studying, they believed that 10X companies would be responding to a volatile fast changing world by making radical changes and always being on top of the next big wave time and time again. They found the opposite to be true. They found that 10X companies had clear, concrete, intelligent performance mechanisms that kept them on track. The big philosophy of the 20 mile march gives us a guideline for any area of life on how to become successful. They suggest that the 20 Mile March creates two self-imposed discomforts:

1. Discomfort of unwavering commitment to high performance in difficult conditions.
2. The discomfort of holding back in good conditions

Collins and Hansen discovered that every other company compared to the 10X companies failed the 20 Mile March. The 20 Mile March is the strongest contrast between good and great companies.

Elements of a 20 Mile March

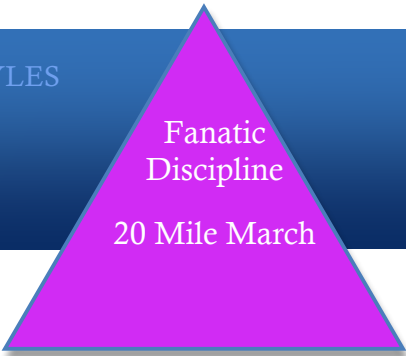
1. Clear Performance Markers- not impossible to achieve even in hard times
2. Self-Imposed constraints – outline how far you will march when facing robust opportunity
3. Tailored to the specific enterprise
4. Largely within the companies control to achieve
5. A proper time frame – long enough to manage, yet short enough to have teeth
6. Imposed by the company upon itself
7. Achieved with great consistency

Fanatic
Discipline



<http://www.michiganadvantage.org/Executive-Committee/John-Brown/>

John Brown became the CEO of Stryker Corporation in 1977. His first order of business was to set a performance benchmark to drive consistent performance. Brown planned to have a 20% net income growth every year. He ingrained the “LAW” into the company culture. Stryker handed out a Snorkel Plaque to the members of his company that did not meet the 20% growth and if you fell behind two years in row, Brown joined your team and worked overtime with you to get your performance back on track. Brown did not try to reach over this 20% mark any year even though rival company USSC was growing faster. Brown was criticized for not moving faster but he did not get rattled and stuck to his 20 Mile March. “John Brown understood that if you want to achieve consistent performance, you need both parts of a 20 Mile March: a lower bound and an upper bound, a hurdle that you jump over and a ceiling that you will not rise above, the ambition to achieve and the self control to hold back” (p.44) After aggressively growing its company USSC was abolished by Clinton health reform and lost 45% of its domestic market share in three years. In 1998 USSC would no longer exist. Stryker is still a leading company (p.43 – 45)



Collins and Hansen discuss how a 20 mile march needn't just be financial. In 2002, following the discipline of the 20 Mile March, the chairman of the Center for the future of Arizona identified the education of Latino children as the state's top priority. Researchers identified a set of principle disciplines that lay within the control of the school – focusing on what they could do rather than factors they couldn't control. The *first discipline* on the list was that *NO* person was to play the blame game. Parents, Teachers, and Administrators had to take responsibility for the problem. *The second discipline* was not to think that the solution is 'out there'. If the students are not learning the school needed to change. *The third discipline* in the report was that no one was allowed to lag behind. When these three disciplines were applied, the Latino students' reading level increased 20%. Progress reports were given throughout the year to hold people accountable. Improving results increased confidence and motivation. This in turn reinforced discipline. Success lay in picking a good program, instilling fanatic discipline to make progress, and sticking with the program to generate sustainable results. Moving from one fad to the next destroys motivation and erodes confidence. (p.57)

20 Mile March Chart
Three Cases Chosen for more see (p. 53)

10X Case	Comparison Case
<p>Stryker Achieved 20% annual earnings' growth. Also Practiced 20 Mile March innovation via lots of product irritations and extensions. Held back on growth in the good times, which enabled it to weather a difficult industry events from 1992 to 1994</p>	<p>USSC Experienced erratic earnings growth. Sought big breakthrough innovation rather than 20 Mile March innovation. Overextended in difficult times, especially from 1992 to 1994; sold out in 1998.</p>
<p>Southwest Airlines Achieved profitability for 30 consecutive years. Unlike the other major airlines, turned a profit in 2002 in the aftermath of 9/11. Constrained growth to ensure profitability and preserve culture.</p>	<p>PSA Had a 20 Mile March philosophy with consistent profitability in its early history but abandoned it in the 1970's. Capitulated to takeover by US air in 1986.</p>
<p>Microsoft Practiced 20 Mile March innovation, consisting of continuous iterations of software products. Often began with imperfect products, then marched to improve year after year to achieve industry dominance. Never overextended financially, so never needed to pause its march</p>	<p>Apple Didn't 20 Mile March during its early history. Experienced inconsistent profit growth, and setbacks in the mid-1980's, early 1990s, and mid – 1990s. Adopted 20 Mile March innovation with return of Steve Jobs, a key factor in its resurgence in the 2000s.</p>

Something to consider...

- 10X companies pressed for maximum growth yet always understand that something bad might lurk around the corner.
- For 10X companies, the 20 Mile March platform was in place before they became a big success.

Fire Bullets, Then Cannonballs

In chapter four, Collins and Hansen examine the **Myth** that you have to always be innovating to stay a head and keep improving your business. Collins and Hansen discovered that innovation was often really good for society but, “lethal for the individual pioneer!” (p74). Collins and Hansen point out that we often think that to be successful requires rapid change. The two looked at a number of company comparisons and discovered that most innovators and companies that changed rapidly could not handle the



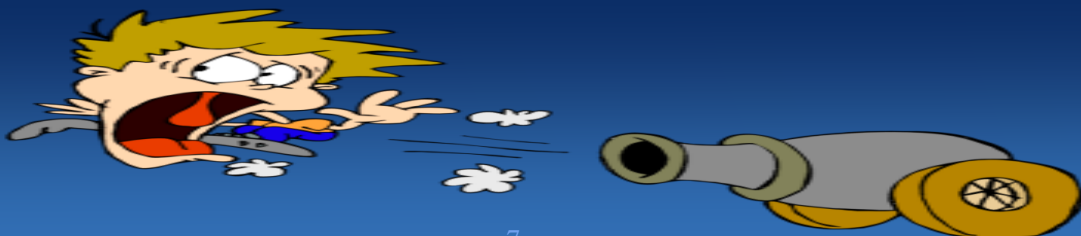
<http://southwest-airlinescreditcard.com/>

VS



http://logos.wikia.com/wiki/Pacific_Southwest_Airlines

Pacific Southwest Airlines was one of the most respected airlines for its fun and respectful flying experiences it provided customers. They prided themselves on customer service, low fares, consistent on-time record, and no frills approach. Southwest Airlines ran their business principals based on the initial approach of PSA in 1971. In 2002 PSA no longer existed as a independent brand. Collins and Hansen did not conclude that innovation was negative, but that shooting a cannonball instead of bullets often-ruined companies. The company must fire bullets and discover and base decisions on empirical evidence that the innovation is a good idea worth firing a cannonball for. PSA fired a Cannonball in 1968 called “Fly-Drive-Sleep”. The idea grew from the knowledge that if people are flying, they usually need a car and a hotel when they arrive at their destination. The company bought up California Hotels and a permentaly docked boat called the Queen Mary. It also bought up rental companies in twenty locations and more than two thousand cars. The company failed to profit every year after the initiative. The innovative idea made sense but PSA could have fired off bullets and bought a couple of hotels and partnered with some rental companies rather than trying take it all on at once. In 1970, the company fired another uncalibrated fireball by buying up Jumbo jets. The company did not fill the seats and was unable to profit from the cannonball. The uncalibrated cannonballs continued until the company needed to be bought out.





“You may not find what you are looking for, but you find something else equally important”

Fire Bullets, Then Cannonballs

If you're not firing cannonballs, you need to be firing bullets and this means that as 10X company, you still make mistakes but you learn from the mistake and move on. Collins and Hansen refer to this as good process. South West Airlines bought Muse Air in the 1980's that was a move outside the companies proven model and it failed. The difference is that great companies may make big mistakes, yet learn something from them. You need to learn everything you can from a mistake so you do not repeat it. The 10X companies retreat to discipline and only fire the next cannonball under empirical validation. Apple gave Collins and Hansen one of the best models for **bullets, cannonballs, and disciplined creativity**:

Bullet One: Get apple into retail stores. Steve Jobs knew and acknowledged that he needed assistance and guidance so he recruited the help of Mickey Drexler, the CEO of Gap.

Mini bullet – Drexler told Jobs not to just open forty stores but rather buy a warehouse and build prototype stores until he had it right. They designed, tested, redesigned until they had the model they wanted.

Bullet Two: launched two stores in Virginia and Los Angeles. Once the stores were proven successful they rolled them out with great consistency.

Bullet Three: After the fall, Steve Jobs did not try to re-invent the company but he reestablished the trademark Macintosh personal computer

Mini Bullet (discipline) – Cut company perks, stopped funding corporate sabbatical program, improved operating efficiency, lowered overall cost structure, got people to work all day and all night

Bullet Four: The iPod. This idea was based on the empirical evidence that young people share music online. MP3 players allowed people to take their music anywhere but it had limited capacity. Apple developed a MP3 player to work with MAC that was better than anything on the market. Apple developed the iPod and software.

Fired Cannonball: Apple, after gaining empirical data from their iPod and Macbook, set out to develop iTunes. The platform became accessible on pc computers and turned Apple into one of the most dominant companies in the world.



Fanatic discipline and empirical creativity are an excellent combination to become a 10X business. The Apple story illustrates that it is not one big successful venture but single disciplined creative steps based on empirical evidence that lead to success.

Leading Above the Death Line

In this chapter, Collins and Hansen explore three core values/practices rooted in the research of developing a great enterprise with productive paranoia.

Productive Paranoia 1: Build cash reserves and buffers. You must prepare for bad events before they happen

- 10X companies carried 3 – 10 times the ratio of cash to assets and 80% of the time carried higher cash to assets and higher cash to liabilities ratio to the comparison groups studied.
- Collins and Hansen point out that 10X companies prepare for a “black swan” event (low probability disruption). Because 10X companies can’t predict when the event will happen they like to have big margins of safety and lots of options before the “Black Swan” happens.
- In 2001, Southwest Airlines had \$1 billion in cash on hand, the lowest cost per seat, and highest credit rating. They never overplayed the market and this gave their company a big edge after 9/11

Productive Paranoia 2: Bound risk and manage time based risk.

Collins and Hansen used three categories to research if 10X companies took more risk with greater rewards. They had three categories:

1. Death Risk
 - Kill or severely damage the enterprise
2. Asymmetric risk
 - Potential downside is greater than the upside
3. Uncontrollable risk
 - Risk that forces the enterprise into events that the company has little ability to manage.

Collins and Hansen discovered that 10X companies took less risk than the comparison companies. Look at the chart comparison (p.109):

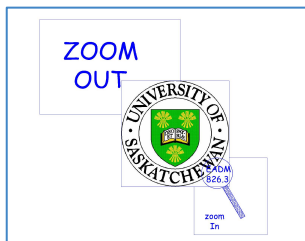
Type of Decision Made	10X Companies	Comparison Companies
Number of Decisions Analyzed	59	55
Decisions Involving Death Line Risk	10% of decisions	36% of decisions
Decisions Involving Asymmetric Risk	15% of decisions	36% of decisions
Decisions Involving Uncontrollable Risk	42% of decisions	73% of decisions
Low Risk Decisions	56% of decisions	22% of decisions
Medium Risk Decisions	22% of decisions	35% of decisions
High Risk Decisions	22% of decisions	43% of decisions

“If you come at the world with the practices of building a great enterprise and you apply them with rigor all the time – good times and bad, stable times and unstable – you’ll have an enterprise that can pull ahead of others when turbulent times hit”

- Collins and Hansen

Productive Paranoia

Productive Paranoia 3: Zoom out of the situation room to view upcoming changes and then zoom in to respond effectively.



Collins and Hansen point out that most of us deal with the situations right in front of us; we like to check the tasks off our lists, but the problem exists when we can't see the gorilla in front of us because our eyes are only focused on what we have zoomed in on. Collins and Hansen state that the research shows that 10X companies have the ability to see through a double-lens. The leaders are focused on the objectives but are hyper vigilant about changes in their environment as well. (p.114) 10X companies studied showed that they could zoom out from an objective and gather empirical evidence before responding to an environmental change. The 10X companies stuck to their principals and did not abandon disciplined thought and disciplined action. The 10X companies defined themselves by recognizing the defining moments that disrupted their initial plans. They changed focus, re-arranged agendas, and because they already have buffers in place, it made it easier for them to adapt.

Speed and Outcomes

Behaviors that Correlate with Successful Outcomes	Behaviors that Correlate with Unsuccessful Outcomes
Hypervigilance, constant worry about changes that might signal danger.	Arrogance; minimization or ignorance of the potential significance of change; late recognition of threat
Adjustment of decisions then speed to the pace of events, whether fast or slow – “go slow when you can, fast when you must”	Failure to adjust decision speed to the pace of events, deciding too slowly or too fast depending on the situation.
Deliberate, fact driven decisions; highly disciplined thought, no matter how fast.	Reactive, impulsive decisions, lacking fanatic discipline and strategic rigor.
Focus on superb execution once decisions are made; intensity increased as needed to meet time demands without compromising excellence.	Compromise in excellence of execution for the sake of speed; failure to increase intensity to ensure superb execution when moving fast.



Look up before you hit the Gorilla!


 Productive
Paranoia

Specific Methodical and Consistent

In 1979 Howard Putnam, then the CEO of Southwest Airlines developed a recipe that would ensure 10X status through a time in the air industry that was known for deregulations. The regulation act was going to unleash competition and battles for market share. Putnam strengthened the airlines approach to do business through 10 steps:

1. Remain a short haul carrier
2. Utilize the 737 as our primary aircraft for ten to twelve years
3. Continued high aircraft utilization and quick turns. Ten minutes in most cases
4. The passenger is our #1 product. Do not carry air freight or mail, only small packages which have high profitability and low handling cost.
5. Continued low fares and high frequency of service
6. Stay out of food services
7. No interlining...costs in ticketing, tariffs and computers and our unique airports do not lend themselves to interlining
8. Retain Texas as our #1 priority and only go interstate if high-density short haul markets are available to us
9. Keep the family and people feeling in our service and a fun atmosphere aloft. We're proud of our employees.
10. Keep it simple.

Putnam's list gave a framework for decisions to be made easily and quickly. The most amazing thing about Putnam's list was that the elements on the list only changed 20% in a quarter of a century. Collins and Hansen refer to Putnam's list as a SMaC recipe. The list is specific, methodical, and consistent. These core practices can last for decades. They should not be confused with tactics. Tactics change from situation to situation. Collins and Hansen used to believe before conducting their research, that a company's specific practices should change frequently as conditions change. The 10X companies proved to have specific, durable, and long lasting practices. A list of companies SMaC strategies:



Do Not Cut R & D during industry recession



Do not Grant stock options to the CEO but only employees



Do not hype; better to make people angry by underestimating your next success than overestimating.

Do not use loss reserves to manage earnings.



Do not wait to develop perfect software to enter the market; get good enough to launch then improve.

“The research found that the signature of mediocrity is not an unwillingness to change; the signature of mediocrity is chronic inconsistency”
- Collins and Hansen (p.138)

Return on Luck

In this chapter, Collins and Hansen try to figure out if luck played a major role in companies thriving during uncertainty. What if everything else studied only made up 1X and 2X success and to become a 10X company was based on luck? Collins and Hansen defined luck as an event that meets three

Three basic questions around luck:

1. Is luck a common or rare element in the histories of 10X and comparison cases?
2. What role, if any, does luck play in explaining the divergent trajectories of 10X and comparison cases?
3. What can leaders do about luck to help them build great companies?

tests: (1) some significant aspect of the event occurs largely and entirely independent of the actions of the key actors in the enterprise. (2) the event has a potentially significant consequence, and (3) the event has some element of unpredictability. (p. 154). Using this criterion, Collins and Hansen describe cases of good and bad luck events that took place inside the study groups. The cases showed that the 10X companies had 230 significant luck events. The luck that the 10X companies experienced was no different than the luck any other company received. They did not receive a substantial amount of good luck and both types of companies had the same amount of bad luck. The comparisons of the companies showed that it was not what company got the most luck but what the companies did with the luck. Often the 10X company could take what was considered bad luck and

create a good luck outcome. People instigate success in decision making not luck. Collins and Hansen refer to Bill Gates as someone most people would say was lucky. Bill Gates was born at the right time, lucky to have learned programming by 1975, lucky to grow up in an upper middle class home, and lucky to read Popular Electronics. The fact is that many people from the same era had the same luck as Bill Gates, but Gates made a huge return out of his luck by having fanatic discipline towards programming, using empirical creativity using Basic to code, productive paranoia that someone was going to do the programming better than him, and level five ambition to do something with his programming skills.

Don't Confuse Luck with Return on Luck

Great-Return on Luck- Poor	Defining Moments in and 10X journey	Essential Skill for 10X results
	Can lead to hitting the deadline	A sure path to mediocrity
Bad --- Luck---- Good		

“Look, if you had one shot, or on opportunity to seize everything you ever wanted in one moment would you capture it? Or just let it slip?

-Marshall Bruce Mathers III, “Lose Yourself”

Questions

Critical Evaluation

1. What does a 20 mile march look like in an ever changing education system? Collins and Hansen refer to your march as a 15 – 30 year perspective.

- The education system seems to have its own storm of turnover with the belief that teachers and principals are effective when they are transferred every five years?
- A new initiative every three years or, as we call them in our school, the next big wave. Teachers don't even want to try out the big wave because they know they can catch the next one...school plus, project criss, literacy, math, and one standardized type of assessment from the ministry and one filled with all types of new ways to assess.
 - The question of focus for schools should be what can we base a SMaC on?

2. How does a human resource leader in schools model level five ambition?

- In class we talked about engaging staff and the importance of staff being what makes companies or public sectors thrive, yet that's not a solution. I often hear the phrase, "just get them to buy in" or "create ownership". Those are easy words to say, but how do you actually engage your staff and nurture level five ambitions if they do not already have it built into their character? Would teachers respond to a leader like Steve Jobs?
 - I believe the hiring process becomes very important in finding that person who already has level five ambitions. I believe any teacher or employee with level five ambition will develop the empirical creativity, productive paranoia, and fanatic discipline.

3. Does the education system fire bullets or cannonballs when it comes to new initiatives?

4. What are risks and big threats in the education world?

- If we can not see the risk around us are we moving forward? In business you are always concerned about hitting your sales objectives and some other business out performing you. Those same risks are in the education world when it comes to provincial testing...the problem is that as educators, if our students don't perform well there is no real discipline...it's just the beginning of the 'blame game'

5. What types of reserves do you build up as a principal or human resource leader so you can go through rough weather?

- Not being an administrator or human resource manager it is tough to see problems that are not just people problems in the education sector. I have come to believe that no matter what position I am put in that it is my character/actions that allows me to thrive with student behavioral issues, parent issues, and "the buy in" to new initiatives. Who you are and what you do effects all past and future situations that you will deal with.. especially as a teacher.

When looking to relate the ideas in Great By Choice to the Education World, I found myself drawing some strong similarities and connections between running a company and running a classroom. There are a couple of main messages that I am contemplating from the book. Number one being, the importance of a leader having clear goals and an unbreakable determination to reach them. As teachers, our goals should be focused on student learning as opposed to a monetary focus for companies. Schools, just like businesses could adopt the 'hurdle' philosophy. Goals are necessary but there is a ceiling on how high and how fast these hurdles (goals) are taken so that we are not overextended and exhausted when trying to complete the race. Today's teachers are faced with the constant and persistent push to change whether it be the strategies we use to teach, the words we use when we teach, standardized testing vs. relying on teacher's professional judgement, and the list goes on and on. Often, we are led to believe that these fast action decisions and changes are necessary and unavoidable, however after reading the book, I am beginning to see that it may be a good way to 'get killed'. Are these decisions being made simply to jump on another bandwagon or are they based on empirical evidence? Number two, as a leader I need to begin to model these characteristics outlined in the book to other staff members where I work. I need to model level five ambition, decision making based on evidence, create a disciplined work environment vs. an environment where sporadic decisions are made, and create a sense of productive paranoia in our school. I believe a great school/school division is created by choice and not chance. The question now is whether the human resource department can recruit, hire, and position employees in the right places to allow greatness?