

Attention

To give your positive or negative attention to something is a way of giving energy. The most damaging form of behavior is withholding your attention

—Masaru Emoto, *The Hidden Messages in Water*¹

Step 3 of the evolution helix is Attention (Figure 1). It's what we do and where we expend our energy each day. Our intentions (discussed in Part III) focus our attention on doing the things that make us Unnatural Leaders.

¹NY: Atria Books, 2011.



Figure 1. Attention, step 3 of the evolution helix

One of the biggest challenges we face is being distracted from our intentions. Leadership is messy; it's full of interruptions, context switching, and ball juggling. It's the difference between manager and maker time². Often, it's all too easy to arrive at the end of the day only to find that we never got chance to work on the important stuff.

You may have heard of the invisible gorilla experiment³. In the experiment, you are asked to watch six people pass a basketball, wearing either a black or white t-shirt. During the video, your task is to count the passes made by the players wearing black shirts. (If you haven't watched the video and tried the experiment, have a go at it now and come back.)

At the end of the experiment, you confirm if you managed to accurately count the number of passes. This, however, is not the objective of the experiment.

While focusing all of our attention on counting the passes, the majority of us completely miss someone wearing a gorilla suit walking through the scene.

²<https://unnatural.io/link/bp41>

³<https://unnatural.io/link/bp42>

When we are very focused on an activity, we screen out much of the world in order to achieve our task. As leaders, this is extremely dangerous. It's all too easy for us to focus on the urgent demands and the valuable day-to-day execution and completely miss an opportunity or a critical threat—even when we have compelling intentions.

In Chapter 14 we will look at tools that help us focus our attention *and* keep an awareness of potential opportunities and threats.

Having intent helps us cut through the distractions of our busy lives and focus on what we want to achieve. Intention works at both the conscious and subconscious levels of the brain, activating areas that affect what is filtered in and out of our awareness.

In this, Part IV, we look at tools and techniques that allow us to perform as Unnatural Leaders. These tools build on the intentions of Part III and focus on our personal evolution, (Chapter 14), the growth of our teams (Chapter 15), and building long-lasting, mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships (Chapter 16).

We are measured by the things that we do, how and what we deliver, the cultures we build, and our strategic operation.

Let's take a look at how we can *execute for success!*