

CEOs Open Their Kimonos to the Hidden Cocktail of Elite Success

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I hear the foremost occupants of the c-suite open the kimono to their thoughts for hours every day--enough to cherry-pick the essential qualities that mark the true greats in leadership.

When moving climbers of supreme potential into the upper echelons of achievement, I mix a cocktail of three ingredients (or Gs):



- **Grit** - In today's hard-driving society and with the media regularly vilifying our greatest corporate leaders, grit is the most regularly practiced G--unfortunately, in the opposite manner it truly should. The common perception of leaders makes grit out to be that of a bully--to bulldoze employees and the competition in the name of shareholder value and profits. Shareholder interests should, indeed, be the c-suite's foremost goal, but this road is truly paved in a different type of grit--one of leaders conquering their own fears, of maintaining integrity in times when corporate demons combat their better judgment, and being willing to accept

failure by taking the right daunting risks to produce desired outcomes. The most common example I find with leaders facing grit roadblocks is to gracefully let go of people who are causing talented people to leave the company and/or who are polluting the mission of the organization. Which brings me to ...

- **Grace** - Leaders espousing all three Gs will make themselves great, and in turn, their organizations thrive. But at the end of the day, the attractiveness of an organization to talent, both in and outside the company comes from top-down grace. I believe the two powerful ways to show grace in a way that inspires employees are to admit mistakes and ask for input. All too often, leaders feel they need to appear infallible, which has three adverse effects on personnel. First, employees find it taboo to seek help with a challenging problem, hampering innovation and creating strategic and productivity gluts. Second, employees develop inferiority complexes, wondering why they should strive at all if those occupying the prestigious nodes on their career paths are some different breed or species of human to whom they can't even relate. And third, employees will repress their own brilliant ideas, fearing the consequences of imperfection. Such an environment is a breeding ground for failure, and leaders cannot succeed unless their company does so as well.

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- **Gratitude** - You are probably thinking what most executives do when I bring this forward: "One of these three does not belong." In reality, this is the fuel that makes the other two possible. Let's face it. Grit and grace are hard. Gratitude makes them easier--a self-fulfilling dynamic in an accelerating snowball of greatness. Stopping every day for as little as **two minutes** to write down just three things for which you are grateful is massively powerful. Why? We are a species that



naturally focuses on negativity and catastrophe. Look at today's movies and television. Or picture yourself getting the massage of your life while someone is poking you with a needle. Where would your focus be? The unfortunate truth is you are predisposed to ignore the great things you accomplish and place emphasis on the toil you exert every day to bring those very same outcomes about. The fortunate truth is that if you can get yourself to focus on the great things that grit and grace give you for even a brief time daily--especially in writing--you will be subconsciously fueled to exhibit these two amazing qualities again today, and the next day, and the next day. In essence, you become quit-proof.

Are you feeling like leadership and achievement are an uphill climb? Are you falling short of your goals, just waiting for happy hour? Well, there is a happy hour in your mind ready to open for business, and the special is the cocktail of grit, grace, and gratitude. You always have the renewable ingredients at hand and they're absolutely free. Drink up and experience the exhilarating feeling of true success.



Feel free to dive into answering some key questions at the bottom of this page.

1. Think about a challenge you are currently facing. How can you use the three Gs to create a better outcome? Does one G stand out?

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2. In general, what can you put in the "drop" (see picture above) you add to your interactions to create a ripple effect toward your desired outcomes?
 3. Can you think of a person who best embodies the three Gs? How did your last interaction with them exemplify the three Gs, and how can you adopt one or more of those behaviors?
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Laura Berger is available as a speaker, workshop facilitator, and private coach. For more information, visit [Berdeogroup](#)

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