

EXCERPT

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS
TO EXTRAORDINARY RESULTS

Work That Counts

RICHARD LEE

Foreword by *Crucial Conversations*
coauthor Joseph Grenny



Early Praise for *Work That Counts*

“The concepts and message in *Work That Counts* are spot on! Richard nails what is required to drive healthy change and performance in organizations of all sizes. This book is a great resource for top leaders and their teams.”

—John Donahoe, CEO, Nike; former CEO, eBay,
Bain & Company, and ServiceNow

“Take out your highlighter. Dog-ear this book. Open your planner. Turn ahas into commitments. You are now sitting at the feet of someone who can help you change your relationships, teams, and organizations for good. He has done so with mine.”

—Joseph Grenny, coauthor of *Crucial Conversations*,
Crucial Accountability, and *Influencer*

“When Richard Lee brought *Crucial Conversations* into Google, it revolutionized my understanding of common workplace interactions, and became required reading for all members of my team several years ago. *Work That Counts* has the same potential to transform how individuals and leaders work. In Richard’s inimitable way, *Work That Counts* walks the reader through the theory and practice of helping people work together efficiently and effectively. Everyone working in a team environment (that is, all of us!) can now take concrete steps to make both themselves and those around them more productive and more effective.”

—Benjamin Treynor Sloss,
engineering vice president, Google

“If you want to get the right things done in teams in any organization, then there is no better guide than Richard Lee’s book, *Work That Counts*. It will help you turn your obstacles into the assets you need to make things happen.”

—Greg McKeown, author of *Essentialism*

“Richard Lee offers a guide worth more than money. It will save you time, frustration, and dramatically increase your likelihood of success. Whether it’s a large global company, or an aspiring start-up, you will benefit from his well-earned wisdom.”

—Ken Coleman, former executive vice president,
SGI; member of multiple boards (AAA, MIPS, City National Bank);
executive coach to Silicon Valley’s most innovative CEOs

“Work That Counts unlocks the potential of anyone to have more impact in their personal life, team, or organization. Lee offers profoundly powerful insights that enable you to understand what is holding you back and how to change it. Reading it was a joy and an inspiration.”

—Todd Pierce, former CIO, Genentech/Roche; former executive vice president of operations and mobility, Salesforce

“As the leading health care provider in the country, we strive to innovate and find better ways to lead, manage, and deliver services to save lives. *Work That Counts* offers a simple yet powerful framework that can be used at all levels to encourage collaboration across an enterprise, which ultimately leads to the most important thing—better patient care.”

—Melanie Gao, director of executive development,
HCA Healthcare’s Leadership Institute

“Work That Counts is an excellent guidebook for all human relationships. Richard Lee has created an elegantly simple three-part model as a framework to optimize efficiency in any organization. He then uses the model as a road map to provide step-by-measurable-step processes illustrated with vivid use cases. As a crowning touch, he applies the same model to personal life. A must for every business bookshelf.”

—Jerry Weissman, author of *Presenting to Win*,
The Power Presenter, and *In the Line of Fire*

“Philanthropic organizations can grow very rapidly and have sizable and complex multi-location operations. As such they have the same team building and cross department challenges as for-profit companies. Richard’s model outlined in *Work That Counts* is just as relevant, and maybe even more so for nonprofits, where the key to success is building a well-run mission driven organization, not one driven by profits.”

—Mark Perry, general partner, NEA;
former executive vice president/CFO/vice chairman, SGI

**Praise for the Work That Counts:
In and Across Teams™ Program**

“Thank you for your time and passion! Work That Counts is very insightful to the challenges that each of us face daily and the tips are invaluable.”

—Robert Jones, director of sales compensation
and performance management, Facebook

“The principles of Work That Counts have made a significant impact on our company and culture. We had a solid foundation of alignment, collaboration, and empowerment, but Work That Counts put sustainable clarity and structure into our everyday behavior. Everyone can benefit from these concepts.”

—Mark Mordell, chairman and CEO, Avidbank

“Work That Counts is very interactive and practical. The framework is one I am able to use daily in my work.”

—Christine Landon, senior director
of talent and growth, eBay

“The Work That Counts workshop was outstanding. I love the simplicity of the model and tips like the conversation starters.”

—Wendy Roberts, technology education director, PayPal

“I’m truly impressed with how Work That Counts has targeted the key skills needed by both managers and individual contributors in today’s business world. It approaches cross-functional collaboration in a pragmatic, actionable way.”

—Judy Heyboer, former senior vice president of HR,
Genentech/Roche, and executive coach

“Work That Counts can help anyone who has ever been frustrated by an unproductive team experience. A straightforward, easy-to-remember model accompanied by pragmatic, actionable strategies that can be used by both team leaders and team members, for work within a team or across multiple teams.”

—Linda Lubin Thompson, former vice president
of HR operations, Synopsys; leadership consultant
and executive coach, L2T Leadership Development

“I think Work That Counts is starting to gain traction within the Bay Area. This reminds me of how Situational Leadership II and Crucial Conversations first started, and I think it could become just as big. I have had an opportunity to participate and am gearing up to train it—it was a great experience.”

—Shelina Pabani, former director
of global retail training, Apple

Praise for Richard Lee

“Richard Lee’s clear and pragmatic coaching made a huge impact on our executive team by strengthening our ability to get the right things done quickly.”

—Jeff Maggioncalda, then CEO of Financial Engines,
now CEO of Coursera

“Richard Lee was incredibly engaging and masterful.”

—Patrick Keating, chief learning officer, Stanford University;
former director of global leadership, Cisco Systems

“Throughout my career, there have been two examples of significant impact that stand out. Both involved Richard Lee. He led a merger that had the best integration strategy I’ve ever seen. He also led a profoundly powerful and innovative leadership development program that helped shape and build the culture of SGI.”

—Ken Coleman, former executive vice president, SGI; member of
multiple boards (AAA, MIPS, City National Bank);
executive coach to Silicon Valley’s most innovative CEOs

“Richard Lee’s off-sites with my executive team and extended management team have been remarkably successful. His insights on leadership and organizational effectiveness are acutely relevant and useful. He has a unique ability to coalesce a team quickly, surfacing the best ideas with a foundation of support and ownership.”

—Carl Redfield, then senior vice president
of manufacturing, Cisco Systems

“Richard Lee is one of the best team facilitators with whom I have worked. Under varying challenges of dysfunctional teams, he was able to help me reach my team transformation objectives in record time.”

—Jim Cates, former CIO, Altera, Brocade, and Synopsys

“Richard Lee ensures learning and organizational solutions create powerful and lasting business impact. High energy, innovative, insightful yet practical. He is an outstanding facilitator.”

—Steve Umphreys, former senior vice president of HR, Salesforce and Zuora

“Richard Lee is a very talented and effective consultant and trainer who drives impactful business outcomes by aligning and building individual, team, and organizational capability.”

—Joan Cronin, former vice president of HR, Applied Biosystems

“Richard demonstrated the unique ability to establish instant credibility by engaging members of our senior management in their language, at their level. His energy, enthusiasm, and insight into techniques for building strong teams quickly led us to identifying the common challenges that faced our cross-functional organization.”

—Brian Dexheimer, former senior vice president, Seagate Technology

*As a program, Work That Counts (previously named Leveraging Impact) is delivered in up to a full-day workshop by our authorized trainers or through certification of in-house trainers, as well as online and on demand. Licensing and authorization through Leveraging Impact LLC are required to provide this training material. All rights reserved.

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| INTRODUCTION |

The Impact Challenge

How Three Interdependent Mindsets Drive Impact

Over the past thirty years, I've worked with thousands of ambitious, competent people at the world's most innovative companies, and I've found that they all share the same frustration. People at every level of a corporation or organization of any size, even those who devote the most energy, time, and passion to their work, say they feel undervalued and unable to make the kind of difference they believe they are capable of making. They are putting in a lot of effort and seeing results that fall far short of their hopes.

At work or at home, we often feel unnoticed, unheard, or simply unable to get things done. This leaves us feeling frustrated, wondering whether we'd be more successful if other people weren't standing in the way of our goals. After all, we know what we personally value and what strengths we bring to the table. Our lives are full of barriers, it seems, that make realizing our values and strengths impossible.

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Whether it's because of red tape at work or a conflict of wills at home, the necessity of working with others is a challenge that can make us feel lost and confused. At any stage of our lives and careers, problems emerge that require us to step up and figure out how to move forward. From dealing with volatile adolescents or aging parents to accomplishing tasks with people in distant departments or on separate teams, or for a difficult manager, it's a real struggle to *make our work count*—to make the kind of impact our diligent efforts warrant.

The fact is that life is frustrating, and the needs of others often seem to overshadow ours at unexpected times. Coming home from work, you may be hoping for some peaceful time to recuperate, only for your spouse to task you with doing laundry. You may have planned to arrive to work early to get some “deep work” done before your boss arrives, only to open your in-box to an urgent task he or she sent you late the night before. Our plans become ruined, leaving us feeling out of control and disempowered, unable to do our very best work.

While understandable, our frustrations often govern the way we behave at work and in life, and they prevent us from seeing our reality differently. The fact is we simply can't accomplish much by ourselves. Working with others is not only an unchangeable fact of reality, it is also a basic human need. We need to work with others and *be* with others, but we often forget that navigating this successfully takes insight and skill.

As an organizational consultant and executive coach, I led hundreds of management and executive off-sites for teams that were working hard but were frustrated because the barriers seemed endless. They were tireless in their quests to improve and strived for ever-greater results. I interviewed all the key people at these compa-

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nies and hosted retreats to tackle the issues that surfaced during those confidential interviews. This “behind the scenes” vantage point offered me a window into what enabled people to make an amazing impact and what got in the way. I saw firsthand what it took to make a difference in working in their teams, and the issues that came up over and over again, plaguing their ability to realize their dreams.

I will never forget a CEO I met early in my career who brought his executive team together on a Saturday morning to deal with a pressing problem. Customers were voicing concerns about the relevance of the company’s primary product. As he got increasingly frustrated with the lack of progress his team was making, he finally told them to “lead, follow, or get out of the way.” What did he mean by that?

Essentially, this executive was giving the people on his team three options. (This, by the way, is how people who let their frustrations grow often speak to the people around them.) By *lead*, he meant they should be directing others by telling them what to do. By *follow*, he meant they should get in line and follow that direction. And by *get out of the way*, he meant they could opt out or leave—either stand back and watch or get off the team. I found myself disturbed and somewhat offended at the time but couldn’t articulate why. These were all capable and seasoned executives, coming in on a Saturday morning to solve an important issue. Why was he dismissing their views?

After decades of working with stellar execs, teams, and organizations, I’ve come to realize that “lead, follow, or get out of the way” is a common yet toxic and simplistic philosophy. Of course, there is always a time and place for leading and following, but to assume either one of those roles exclusively neglects to address the real challenge, which is to lead *with* other smart and capable people around us.

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While this is harder to do, the rewards, both at home and at work, are great. Once you learn to see the people around you—including those who work above and below you—as *partners* instead of barriers, you will notice not only the increasing quality of your interactions but also the impact of the effort you expend.

THREE LINKED MINDSETS

Going from leading or following to “leading with” may seem daunting, but it doesn’t require any drastic action. There’s no need to fire your talent or reorganize your entire operation, as many management gurus might suggest. All it requires is a willingness to see things differently, along with using and strengthening the associated skills.

Over the years, I have noticed that three key problems repeat themselves in almost all organizations in very different segments. From health care giants and big tech companies to hopeful start-ups, I saw the same three problems. And perhaps surprisingly, these issues also seem to resonate at home.

First, people were frustrated that they didn’t feel like they could make decisions and act. They often felt stymied into inaction, waiting for approval. At work, this often reflected the degree of trust between themselves and their manager. If their manager fully trusted them, they tended to feel more empowered to act. But in complex organizations, with multiple functions, counterparts, levels, and geographies, managers rarely had the authority to fully delegate decision making—to the extent you’d probably want it.

In situations like these, it’s easy to check out and resign yourself

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to the idea that making an impact is impossible. In this book, I'll show you how to develop an *empowered mindset* instead, so that when this feeling crops up, you can leverage the resources around you and find a strategy that will work. We'll define what the team leaders need to do to be more empowering, and what the team members need to do to be more empowerable. It is through fine-tuning this empowered relationship that we can build a level of trust that provides people with the fuel to take action and drive decisions. People have the very same issue in their personal lives, whether it's between two lifelong partners or with their kids, parents, or friends and relatives.

The second problem involves conflicts arising from trying to agree on the right decision. Where should we go on vacation this year? Should we invest in that remodel? Are we saving enough, or spending too much? And at work, consider the conflicting priorities of multiple teams and functions, all with their own sets of priorities. Sure, let's hope the organization has a viable strategy and vision that helps align people, but everything is changing at such a fast pace. It's like playing three-dimensional chess. What is the right thing? But as teams, and teams of teams, people need to figure out individually and collectively what's the right thing to do, often in the moment.

To address this dilemma, I'll teach you to develop an *alignment mindset* so that people are more likely to focus on the right decisions and actions. This requires us to think more broadly—beyond our immediate manager, department, or direct report—to how many different teams we are on. Considering and leveraging the many teams we interact with and depend on, and who may depend on us, either at home or at work, will ensure that our conversations will become more constructive and beneficial for everyone.

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The third problem deals with the ongoing dilemma of working with others. Wouldn't life be so much easier if we simply didn't need to deal with conflicting goals, perspectives, and personalities? Sometimes you want to scream! But go ahead; maybe they aren't really listening anyway. A person could get cynical. Think of the challenges you've faced when trying to work out the details of that dream vacation, or working with your team to figure out an innovative solution to that problem that won't go away. Some people get hyper passionate; some seem to say, "Whatever." And just when you're about to get the breakthrough, people give up, or they just get louder. There is a better way. And it works.

The solution to this third problem is developing a *collaboration mindset*. This mindset enables us to partner far more effectively with others to achieve goals, instead of seeing people as obstacles. How do we embrace the natural tension that occurs during a disagreement? How do we talk it out so that we can consider conflicting perspectives, yet build a foundation for resolution? I have found that these skills apply just as readily at home as they do in our organizations at work.

DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

The most important insight here is that these three mindsets and related skills are interdependent. If even one of the three is weak, it will disproportionately diminish your impact and results—not by a little, but by a lot! This is indeed a very big deal.

Imagine if you simply don't feel able to reasonably act and drive decisions—everything comes to a standstill. Or if you aren't aligned

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with others on the right thing to do—we'll get chaos, or even worse, embarrassingly bad results. And if you can't partner well with others, you'll either alienate them or, at a minimum, not take advantage of the power of the team.

Stories abound in the news making headlines of the consequences when these three mindsets are problematic. A world-leading aerospace firm has a fleet of jets out of service because its safety mechanisms weren't completely tested, and it was released with a safety package that included (or excluded) optional but critical features.

At the time of this writing, the world is combating the COVID-19 pandemic, and health departments in the United States are struggling to get on the same page to produce arguably the easiest of deliverables: tests for those who need them. The stories are horrifying, and yet on a certain level you understand them, because we've all experienced roadblocks like these to some degree, at home and at work. As you read *Work That Counts*, you will inevitably see parallels to our global response to this pandemic, and how utilizing these three mindsets could have produced faster and healthier outcomes.

All three mindsets are required to ensure our work truly counts. I like to think of them as a Venn diagram, overlapping in certain areas. I've heard people say, "Well, you can't collaborate if you aren't aligned," almost giving up before even getting started. To which I responded, "Yes, but you can't get aligned without collaboration." And, by the way, don't forget the fuel!

All three mindsets need to be strong and in sync, so that we can make the impact commensurate with our ability—for ourselves, our team, and our organization. And perhaps even more important, so that you and your family can live the kind of life you've always wanted.

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That's what this book can do: provide a road map for you to get more out of life and work, to drive ever-better results with less frustration, and to form even stronger relationships—at home or in any complex organization.

The Model



After being introduced to the Work That Counts training, participants coined the term *ACE framework*.

ACE:

Alignment
Collaboration
Empowerment

It's simple yet powerful.

You can think of these three mindsets as levers—tools that enable you to amplify the effect of virtually anything you do (strategy, skills, processes, etc.), allowing you to significantly strengthen or weaken a result without increased effort.

In the example of a physical lever, think of the ball launcher that many of us use at the dog park. This launcher or lever that you place the ball in gives you much more power to throw the ball a greater

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distance. As Archimedes said centuries ago, “Find me a lever long enough, and I shall move the world.”

Just imagine if you and your organization, routinely, as a reflection of your culture, were effectively empowered with the fuel to take action and drive decisions. Imagine if you were aligned on priorities and goals to do the right thing not just for your immediate team, but for the overall organization, and that you and your colleagues stood out in partnering with others to achieve goals, especially cross-functionally.

People would engage differently, with the bigger picture in mind, drive faster innovation and better results, and build a more collaborative culture. With the skills and insights from this book, anyone in any organization can make meaningful progress toward leveraging your impact both in and across teams. You can make a bigger difference, commensurate with your talent and capabilities, for you, your team, and your organization.

Although ACE is a great way to remember the three mindsets, we’re going to explore them in the following order. First, you need to have the fuel to take action and drive decisions, so that’s our starting point, the empowered mindset. Then we’ll move to the alignment mindset to ensure you are able to choose to do the right thing for your real team. And third comes the partnering aspect, the collaboration mindset, to partner with others in and across teams to achieve your goals. On to the fuel, the empowered mindset. Are there some areas at work or at home that you’d like to be able to take more action or drive more decisions with, or that you wish others around you would?

Since publication, more praise for *Work That Counts*

"Work That Counts is an excellent book offering insights that are immediately actionable that have practical impact on managing your organization."

—STAN MERESMAN, Board Member and Chair of the Audit Committees at:
Snap Inc., DoorDash, Medallia, Cloudflare, Guardant Health, and formerly LinkedIn

"A masterpiece! Richard Lee's *Work That Counts* is based on decades of his personal experience and success in creating and delivering to both small and large enterprises, incredibly effective tools for building teams that not only meet their goals, but most often, go well beyond. His concepts seamlessly weaved together with a remarkably clear and personable approach, contributed to our executive and operational teams' success in creating one of the largest and most successful pharmaceutical manufacturing companies in North America."

—JAMES A. CUSUMANO, former Chairman and CEO of Catalytica Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

"Work That Counts was a delight to read and offered fresh insights—and it applies to many of our most pressing challenges in healthcare today. Within days of completing the book, I was able to use those insights to make a critical decision, which will ultimately drive better healthcare solutions."

—MARTIN RUBENSTEIN, M.D., Medical Director, University Medical Partners

"Work That Counts delivers on Richard's extensive hands-on experience in a well-organized and clearly-written way that provides the kind of practical insights I could have used in the General Counsel's office at the Treasury Department."

—STEPHEN LARSON, former Acting General Counsel, United States Treasury Department

More praise for the training program *Work That Counts—In and Across Teams*®

"Work That Counts—In and Across Teams is an impactful training program that transformed the way our leadership team conducts meetings. Richard delivered a condensed version of the program on the first day of our leads offsite, and the next day we all saw each member using the skills, having their handout at their side, and putting aside their individual agendas for the good of the team. I was shocked and pleased to see the skills being put into place so rapidly after the workshop! Highly recommend this program!"

—JEANNE TARI, Head of Content and Development Strategy, Facebook

"The *Work That Counts* self-paced course helped me explore ways to leverage my impact as both a team leader and a team member. The course provides plenty of opportunities to apply the framework and skills to a real-world commitment throughout the session. As a result, I finished the course with a plan to turn my insights into actionable results."

—JEFFREY FANSELOW, formerly VP of Learning & Development,
Viacom CBS, and Program Manager, VMware

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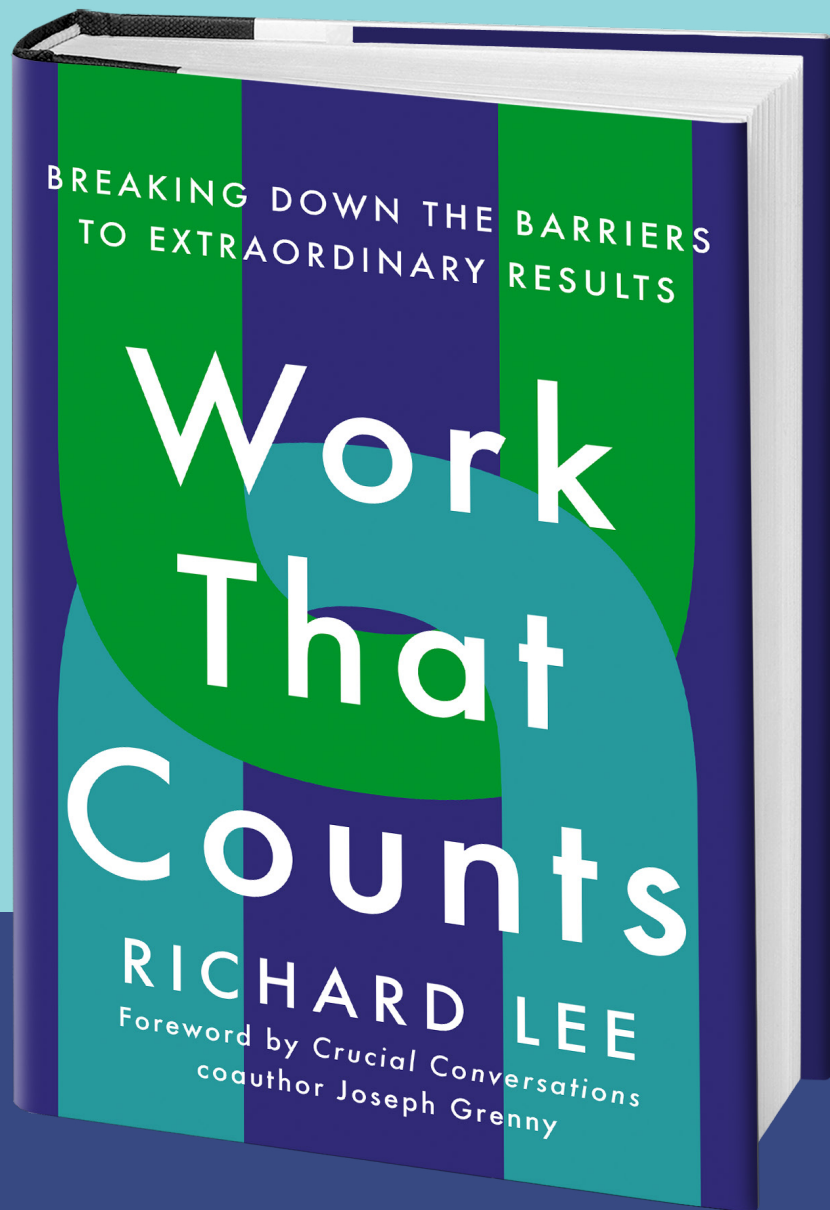
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