

The Code.

How we lead. How we win. How we live.

Why this exists.

I We are at war

Every market is a battlefield. Every day without progress is a defeat. The Code exists because **average is the enemy** — and average is everywhere.

In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.

— Sun Tzu

II Sweep the sheds

The most successful team in sporting history cleans their own changing room. No one is above the work. **Humility and excellence** are the same thing.

Better people make better All Blacks.

— James Kerr

III No fear. No hesitation.

The warrior acts without fear because the decision was already made — before the moment arrived. The Code exists so we **never have to decide twice.**

Determined, at the moment, is the only way.

— Hagakure

Two pillars. One code.

Everything we do falls under one of two disciplines. Master both and you become the leader this team deserves.

Leading change

How we operate in the world

- Embrace and cherish competition
- Reach for discontinuity
- Be passionate about achieving
- Have the energy to deliver
- Deliver as a way of life
- Keep things simple
- Act quickly and decisively
- Act with integrity

Leading people

How we treat and grow our people

- Coach them beyond what they believe is possible
- Ensure freedom of information
- Hold themselves and others accountable
- Demand, share and reward success
- Generate optimism through a customer-focused vision
- Make tough calls
- Build only the best teams
- Treat people with dignity and fairness

LEADING CHANGE :: LAW #1

Embrace and cherish competition.

Competition is not a threat. It is the proof that what we do matters.

THE MINDSET

Fear competition and you've already lost. Embrace it and you've found your standard. The competitor across the table is doing you a favour — they're showing you the bar.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks study every opponent obsessively — not to fear them, but to beat them. They honour the competition by preparing as if it could destroy them.

THE CALL

Know your competitors better than they know themselves. Run toward the fight. The warrior who welcomes the battle is already half victorious.

How to live this

- Map your top 3 competitors every quarter
- Never dismiss a rival — study them
- Use competition as motivation, not anxiety
- Celebrate when the market gets harder
- Ask: what would the best do here?

The best swordsman in the world doesn't need to fear the second best. He needs to fear the one who has never held a sword.

— Mark Twain

LEADING CHANGE :: LAW #2

Reach for discontinuity.

Incremental improvement is the slowest path to irrelevance.

THE MINDSET

Improvement is not enough. The world doesn't reward those who do the same thing 10% better. It rewards those who rewrite the rules entirely. Think in leaps, not steps.

THE STANDARD

The greatest disruptions in history came from outsiders who refused to accept the existing model. Sun Tzu won battles by refusing to fight them on the enemy's terms.

THE CALL

Once a year, ask yourself: if we started this from scratch today, what would we do completely differently? Then do it. The answer is your discontinuity.

How to live this

- Challenge every process at least once a year
- Ask 'why not?' before 'why?'
- Reward bold ideas, even the ones that fail
- Benchmark outside your industry
- Refuse to be defined by your past success

If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got. The time to change is before you have to.

— Jack Welch

Be passionate about achieving.

Passion is not a personality trait. It is a choice — made every morning. Mediocrity is comfortable. Excellence requires fire.

THE MINDSET

Average teams work. Passionate teams hunt. The difference between a good result and a legendary one is never talent — it is the refusal to accept the good when the great is still possible.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks do not celebrate being in the final — they prepare to win it. The Hagakure teaches that the samurai lives fully committed or not at all. There is no half-measure in pursuit of excellence.

THE CALL

Bring energy that is contagious. Raise the bar in every room you enter. The passionate leader does not just chase targets — they set standards that outlast them.

How to live this

- Set a target that scares you a little — then chase it
- Refuse to celebrate mediocre results with the same energy as great ones
- Bring energy into every room, every call, every meeting
- Ask: is this the best version of this work?
- Leave every team, project and market better than you found it

The secret of joy in work is contained in one word — excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it.

— Pearl S. Buck

Have the energy to deliver.

Energy is not a gift — it is a discipline. It is the fuel of leadership and it must be managed, protected, and given generously to the people around you.

THE MINDSET

Leadership drains. The demands are relentless and the weight is real. But the leader who shows up depleted — distracted, flat, disengaged — sends a signal to the team that the work does not matter. Energy is contagious. So is its absence.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks prepare physically, mentally, and emotionally before every performance. They understand that sustainable high performance requires recovery as much as effort. Energy management is a professional discipline.

THE CALL

Protect your energy fiercely — sleep, movement, recovery, clarity. Then bring that energy fully into every room you enter. The team reads you before you speak. Arrive ready.

How to live this

- Protect sleep, recovery, and physical energy as a priority
- Arrive to meetings present — not distracted or depleted
- Build rituals that sustain your energy across the week
- Notice and name energy killers in the team — and remove them
- Give your best energy to people and work that matter most

Energy and persistence conquer all things. The secret of getting ahead is getting started — then sustaining the momentum that others let fade.

— Benjamin Franklin

Deliver as a way of life.

Intent without execution is just noise. We are judged by what we finish, not what we start.

THE MINDSET

Delivery is not a department. It is a character trait. The culture of a team is not what it says in its values document — it is what gets done, on time, every time, without being asked twice.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks do not accept excuses for missed commitments. The warrior class of feudal Japan measured honour by follow-through. The standard is not effort — it is outcome.

THE CALL

Do what you said you would do. By when you said you would do it. If something changes, flag it early — never silently miss. Delivery is the only currency that buys trust.

How to live this

- Never miss a deadline without flagging it in advance
- Close every open loop — follow up until it's done
- Measure yourself by outputs, not activity
- Own the result, not just the effort
- Build a reputation: the person who always delivers

The superior man is satisfied and composed; the mean man is always full of distress. What you do speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Keep things simple.

Complexity is the enemy of execution. Simple scales. Complicated collapses.

THE MINDSET

The best strategies fit on one page. The best instructions need no manual. Complexity is often a disguise for confusion. Leaders who cannot simplify do not yet understand the problem.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks run plays everyone can remember and execute under pressure. Sun Tzu won with clarity of command, not complexity of formation. Simple is repeatable. Repeatable is powerful.

THE CALL

Strip every plan, every meeting, every message to its core. If it takes more than one sentence to explain what we are doing and why, start again. Simplicity is not laziness — it is mastery.

How to live this

- Reduce every plan to a single clear objective
- Cut meetings in half. Say the same thing in less time
- If the team can't repeat it, it's not simple enough
- Remove one layer of process every quarter
- Ask: could a new starter understand this on day 1?

If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough. Perfection is achieved not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.

— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Act quickly and decisively.

Speed is a form of respect. For the customer, the team, and the opportunity. Hesitation is a choice — and it has a cost.

THE MINDSET

Markets don't wait. Opportunities close. The leader who moves at 80% information beats the leader who waits for 100% — every time. Speed is not recklessness. It is discipline applied to time.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks make decisions in real time under pressure — without deferring upward. Sun Tzu's greatest victories came from speed of movement when the enemy expected stillness. Strike first. Adapt fast.

THE CALL

Move. Then refine. A good plan executed now beats a perfect plan executed too late. If you are waiting for permission to act, you have already lost a step on everyone who isn't.

How to live this

- Set a decision deadline and honour it
- Act on 80% information — refine as you move
- Remove blockers the same day you find them
- Never let a week pass without visible forward movement
- Be known as the person who moves things forward

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent — it is the one most responsive to change.

— Charles Darwin

Act with integrity.

Integrity is not what you do when people are watching. It is what you do when they are not. It is the bedrock on which everything else is built.

THE MINDSET

Trust is the currency of leadership — and integrity is how you earn it. Once broken, it costs ten times more to rebuild than it did to build. Leaders with integrity do not need to manage perceptions. Their actions speak before they do.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks have a saying: no dickheads. Talent without character destroys culture. The standard is that how you win matters as much as that you win. The Hagakure teaches that the warrior's word is his bond.

THE CALL

Do what you say. Say what you mean. Admit when you are wrong. Take responsibility before you take credit. These are not policies — they are the daily practice of a leader worth following.

How to live this

- Do what you said you would — every time, no exceptions
- Own your mistakes before anyone else names them
- Never say one thing and do another — even small things
- Take responsibility before you take credit
- Be the same person in every room — with the CEO and the intern

If it is not right, do not do it. If it is not true, do not say it."

— Marcus Aurelius

The strength of the

WOLF

is the pack, and the strength of the

PACK

is the wolf

Rudyard Kipling

Coach people beyond what they believe is possible.

People do not know what they are capable of. The leader's job is to show them — before they show themselves.

THE MINDSET

The greatest thing a leader can do is expand someone's ceiling. Most people operate at 60% of their potential because no one has ever demanded, believed in, or invested in the other 40%.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks invest in developing leaders at every level — not just at the top. James Kerr writes that the best coaches create environments where people become more than they thought possible. That is the standard.

THE CALL

See more in your people than they see in themselves. Set expectations that stretch them. Then stand beside them as they reach. A good coach is remembered long after the results are forgotten.

How to live this

- Know your people's ambitions, not just their job titles
- Give feedback that challenges, not just feedback that reassures
- Assign stretch goals — then provide the support to reach them
- Celebrate growth, not just results
- Measure yourself by how far your people have come

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.

— William Arthur Ward

Ensure freedom of information.

A team that hoards information hoards failure. Transparency is not a risk — it is the foundation of speed.

THE MINDSET

Information withheld is power misused. Leaders who control by controlling access create teams that cannot think, cannot act, and cannot grow. Share everything that helps people win.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks share game plans across the entire squad — every player knows the system, not just their role in it. Sun Tzu: the general who keeps his troops informed wins before the battle begins.

THE CALL

Default to sharing. If you are unsure whether someone needs to know something, they probably do. Build systems where information flows freely — and where no one is ever the last to find out.

How to live this

- Share context, not just conclusions
- Over-communicate on progress — silence breeds assumption
- Never let anyone be surprised by news you already had
- Build systems where information flows without being asked
- Treat transparency as a competitive advantage

An investment in knowledge pays the best interest. A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.

— Benjamin Franklin

Hold themselves and others accountable.

Accountability is not punishment. It is respect. It says: I believe you are capable of more — and I will not accept less on your behalf.

THE MINDSET

A culture without accountability is a culture that protects mediocrity. The highest form of respect a leader can show is to hold people to the standard they are capable of — even when it is uncomfortable.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks hold each other accountable peer-to-peer — it does not flow only from the top. No one is exempt from the standard. The team's culture is defined not by what it celebrates but by what it tolerates.

THE CALL

Start with yourself. Hold yourself to a standard so visible that the team internalises it without being told. Then name underperformance clearly, early, and with care — because silence is not kindness.

How to live this

- Hold yourself to the standard before you hold anyone else
- Name missed commitments directly — do not manage around them
- Make expectations explicit — never assume alignment
- Follow up on everything you said mattered
- Build a team culture where peers hold each other to the standard

The price of greatness is responsibility. You will never do a great wrong if you refuse to do a little wrong.

— Winston Churchill

Demand, share and reward success.

Success that is not shared becomes resentment. Success that is not demanded becomes mediocrity. The leader must do both — and do them together.

THE MINDSET

High standards and high recognition are not opposites — they are the same philosophy. You cannot demand excellence from people you do not celebrate. And you cannot celebrate people you have not genuinely challenged.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks celebrate wins without losing hunger for the next one. They debrief ruthlessly, recognise fully, and reset fast. James Kerr writes: champions have a short memory for failure and a long memory for what winning feels like.

THE CALL

Set the bar high and make it visible. Then when people clear it, celebrate loudly and specifically. Recognition tied to the standard reinforces both. Silence after a great performance is a form of failure.

How to live this

- Set clear, high expectations — then hold the line on them
- Celebrate wins: publicly, specifically, immediately
- Share the credit — always more than feels natural
- Never let a great performance go unrecognised
- Make success contagious — build a culture that hunts for it

A rising tide lifts all boats.

— John F. Kennedy

Generate optimism through customer vision.

Optimism is not naive. It is strategic. The leader who shows the team what is possible pulls them toward it. The leader who focuses on obstacles pushes them away from it.

THE MINDSET

People move toward what they can see. The leader who paints a vivid, credible picture of the future gives the team something to run toward — not just away from. Vision is the engine of momentum.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks lead with purpose — every player knows why they play, not just how. The best customer-centric companies are led by people who feel the customer's problem as their own. That empathy is the vision.

THE CALL

Be the most optimistic person in the room — not with blind faith, but with evidence and will. Then make the customer's world so real to your team that solving their problem becomes personal.

How to live this

- Start every team meeting with a customer story, not a number
- Name the future state clearly — make it vivid and real
- Refuse to let the team dwell on what cannot be changed
- Connect every objective to a customer outcome
- Be the most energising version of yourself — every single day

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.

— Helen Keller

Make tough calls.

Avoiding a hard decision is itself a decision — and usually the worst one. Leaders are not paid to be comfortable.

THE MINDSET

Tough calls delayed become crises. The longer a hard truth is avoided, the more expensive it becomes. Decisiveness in the face of discomfort is one of the rarest and most valuable traits a leader can possess.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks cut players who undermine team culture — regardless of talent. Sun Tzu moved without hesitation once the moment arrived. The standard is that we do not let things fester.

THE CALL

When you know the right call, make it. Do not wait for consensus on decisions that are yours to make. Be kind in how you deliver it — but never kind enough to delay it.

How to live this

- Name the problem out loud — do not manage around it
- Decide with the information you have — not the information you wish you had
- Address underperformance early and directly
- Do not let discomfort become delay
- Be the person the team trusts to call it as it is

In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing.

— Theodore Roosevelt

Build only the best teams.

A players hire A players. B players hire C players. The team you build is the most consequential decision you will ever make.

THE MINDSET

Talent is the multiplier. Every hour you spend with an exceptional person compounds. Every hour you spend compensating for the wrong person costs double. Build the team first — everything else follows.

THE STANDARD

The All Blacks are ruthless about selection — not cruel, but honest. James Kerr writes that the team's standard is maintained because every player earns their place. No passenger is allowed on the bus.

THE CALL

Hire people who raise the average. If you are the smartest person in the room, you are in the wrong room. Build teams where everyone makes everyone else better — and where the standard is contagious.

How to live this

- Hire for character first, capability second
- Move on poor fit early — delay helps no one
- Protect the culture from passengers alone
- Invest disproportionately in your highest performers
- Ask of every hire: does this raise the bar?

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. Great teams are not collections of talent — they are cultures of trust.

— African Proverb

Treat people with dignity and fairness.

How you treat people when it costs you nothing reveals nothing. How you treat people when it costs you something reveals everything.

THE MINDSET

Dignity is not a reward for performance. It is a baseline. Every person on your team — regardless of role, rank, or result — deserves to be treated as a human being first. Leaders who forget this do not lead. They control.

THE STANDARD

James Kerr writes that the All Blacks seek to leave the jersey in a better place than they found it — which means leaving people better too. The warrior code of Bushido demands that strength be paired with compassion. Power without grace is tyranny.

THE CALL

Treat every person you lead as someone's most important person. Because they are. A leader is remembered not for the results alone, but for how people felt in their presence — seen, valued, and respected.

How to live this

- Learn the name, story and ambition of every person you lead
- Never belittle, dismiss or embarrass anyone — in public or in private
- Give feedback in a way that preserves dignity
- Be as courteous to the junior as to the senior
- Ask yourself: would I be comfortable if this person heard what I just said about them?

I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university.

— Albert Einstein

THE CODE :: WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU

Six essentials. Zero excuses.

— 01.

Deliver. Always.

Do what you said. By when you said it. No excuses.

— 02.

Act with integrity.

Be the same person in every room. Always.

— 03.

Move fast.

Speed is respect. A good plan now beats a perfect plan later.

— 04.

Build great people.

See more in them than they see in themselves.

— 05.

Embrace competition.

The competitor is doing you a favour. Run toward the fight.

— 06.

Leave it better.

Every team, market and person you touch — better than you found it.

I commit to the
CODE. 

I lead with **courage**, not comfort.

I **deliver** without excuse. Every time.

I **act with integrity** — when people are watching and when they are not.

I **build people up** — beyond what they believe possible.

I **treat every person** with dignity and fairness.

I **leave everything better** than I found it.