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# **PRACTICALLY RADICAL**

## **Not-So-Crazy Ways to Transform Your Company, Shake Up Your Industry, and Challenge Yourself**

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**WILLIAM C. TAYLOR** is a writer, speaker and entrepreneur. He was cofounder and founding editor of *Fast Company* magazine which sold for \$340 million six years after it was launched. Mr. Taylor previously wrote a regular business column for the *New York Times* and the *Guardian* and currently writes a management blog for the *Harvard Business Review*. Mr. Taylor is an adjunct professor at Babson College. He is the author of *Mavericks at Work* and has co-authored three other books on business strategy. Mr. Taylor is a graduate of Princeton University and the MIT Sloan School of Management.

The Web site for this book is at [www.PracticallyRadical.com](http://www.PracticallyRadical.com).

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**MAIN IDEA**

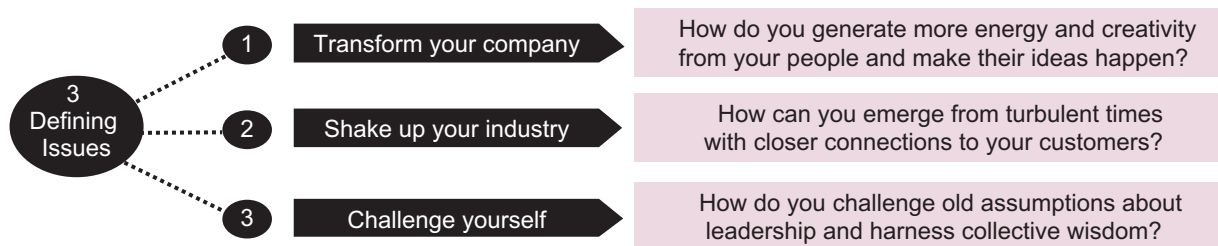
*"Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them."* – Albert Einstein

*"If all you ever do is all you've ever done, then all you'll ever get is all you ever got."* – Unknown Texas genius

Today's markets are distinguished by disruption, hyper-competition and constant ongoing change. With that in mind, there's little point trying to be marginally better than your competitors who are probably locked into the same battles as you are for a declining market. To stand out today, you've got to become known for something special – something radical yet practical. The big money today comes when you embrace one-of-a-kind thinking in a me-too world.

As counterintuitive and paradoxical as it may sound, today's recession hit markets are the perfect opportunity to transform your company, shake up your industry and challenge yourself to move to a higher level of performance. Instead of downsizing your dreams, change the game to your advantage and get noticed by embracing one-of-a-kind ideas. Don't merely try and win the game you find – become a game changer by thinking differently and thinking big. Do this and you will not only separate yourself from the pack you'll also build sustainable competitive advantages which last for years to come.

**Three Defining Issues for Leaders**



**Issue #1 – Transform your company** . . . . . Pages 2 - 3

Making far-reaching change in long-established corporations is very hard work. Tunnel vision and the fact everyone tends to look in the same place for new ideas adds to the challenge at hand. To turn a fresh and compelling idea into game-changing performance, you've got to find a way to break from the past without completely disavowing it altogether.

**Issue #2 – Shake up your industry** . . . . . Pages 4 - 5

Most industries today feature too many competitors chasing too few customers with me-too products which are indistinguishable from each other. Forget about that. The best way to control the future is to have an active hand in shaping it and the brutal reality is the future belongs to specialists who bring passion and commitment to what they do. Instead of attempting to be reasonably good at lots of different things, pick one thing you can be insanely great at and focus everything you do on that. Be the most of something.

**Issue #3 – Challenge yourself** . . . . . Pages 6 - 7

The reality is you can't do new and exciting things with your organization by applying the same old assumptions about what it means to lead. There's a vast difference between championing ambitious goals and assuming you know best how to realize those goals. The fierce personal sense of personal infallibility which used to distinguish high achievers is today a precursor of failure. To solve problems and make good things happen, you've got to realize you don't have all the answers. You have to make it possible for others to contribute their ideas in a productive manner.

**The ten questions every game changer must answer** . . . . . Page 8

1. Do you regularly and consistently see new opportunities the competition does not?
2. Do you personally have new ideas about where to look for fresh ideas?
3. Is there one thing you're better at than everyone else – that you are the most of?
4. If your company were to cease operations tomorrow, who would miss you and why?
5. Have you figured out how your organization's past can help shape an exciting future?
6. Do you have customers who can't live without you?
7. Do your people care more about your customers than your competitors do?
8. Are your people being inspired to do their best work?
9. Are you consistent in your commitment to change?
10. Is your organization learning as fast as the world is changing?

