LINCHPIN: ARE YOU INDISPENSABLE?
How to Drive Your Career and Create a Remarkable Future
SETH GODIN

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MAIN IDEA

It’s time to rethink how you do your job.

For generations, you (and almost everyone else) have been conditioned to view what you do each day as a cog in the wheels of the enterprise you work for – to conform, to follow instructions and give an honest day’s work for a day’s pay. It’s time to break that mold and significantly change your life and your career for the better. The days of working for a corporation who will take care of you for life have gone forever.

Instead of working to become a better cog in the giant industrial machine, it’s time to learn how to become a “linchpin” – the vital piece of hardware which holds the wheel onto the axle. You become a linchpin by finding ways to fully utilize all your natural-born talents and to do genuinely great work. Linchpins, like artists, excel because they harness what’s within.

“Every successful organization has at least one linchpin: some have dozens or even thousands. The linchpin is the essential element, the person who holds part of the operation together. Without the linchpin, the thing falls apart. If you want a job where you are treated as indispensable, given massive amounts of responsibility and freedom, expected to expend emotional labor, and rewarded for being a human, not a cog in a machine, then please don’t work hard to fit into the square-peg job you found on Craigslist. It’s time to stop complying with the system and draw your own map.”

– Seth Godin

1. The Decision

It’s time to break the mold and forsake all of the elements of the system which suggest all you can ever aspire to is to become a bigger and bigger cog in the system. Take a rational decision to get off the treadmill and orient your career towards becoming a linchpin.

2. How to Become a Linchpin

Becoming a linchpin is never an overnight exercise. It’s a skill you can get better at over an extended period of time. To grow into being a linchpin, however, there are a few things you can work at:

- Learn how to connect and network
- Be generous and give gifts
- Make great art
- Acknowledge the lizard
- Ship things and get them out there
- Be willing to fail forward
- Never stop learning

3. What Linchpins Do Well

In simple terms linchpins become indispensable because they make vital contributions to their firms. They make the map and then exert the emotional labor required to get people to use that map. Put differently, linchpins excel because they have seven key abilities:
Ever since Henry Ford managed to show the world how cars could be built more cost-effectively with his Model T production line, businesses have been trying to break the production of goods down into a series of tiny tasks, each of which can be performed by low-paid people following simple instructions. Accordingly, for the past three hundred years:

- Schools and universities have churned out educational products based around the concept of teaching students the best way to earn a living is by going to work for a large corporation and steadily working your way towards the top.
- Most employers want workers who are compliant and follow instructions rather than expecting them to do some creative thinking for themselves.
- Society has put forward and promoted the ideal it’s better to fit in than to stand out by doing something exceptional.
- Many people have been taught it’s better to have a steady career working for a large corporation than it is to strike out on your own and do something risky like creating something insanely great.
- The whole emphasis of investors was to look for companies which excelled at turning low-paid workers into high-value producers. If a company had a production line which enabled this to happen, it was worth getting on board.
- Thought leaders have suggested the key to success is to build a business model which is so foolproof even an untrained entry level worker can’t get it wrong. The ideal has always been McDonalds which produces a consistent product using low-wage workers using a foolproof business process.
- Business managers for the last century or more have worked and planned on the basis labor is interchangeable and therefore entirely disposable – any one worker is no better or no worse than any other.

Now those ideas are all well and good but if you look around today’s economy, the first thing you’ll notice is there are plenty of bureaucrats, note takers, liberals, manual readers, laborers who can’t wait for Friday-to-roll-around and map followers. These people are used to being well paid but today they are being laid off, overlooked and underpaid in record numbers.

The system they grew up with was easy to describe:
- Show up for work everyday.
- Do the job your boss assigns you.
- Follow instructions and work hard.
- Stick it out and stay part of the system.
- Be rewarded for your loyalty to your employer.

All of this leads to one key question:

An undeniable fact is in today’s economy, you no longer get a great job where people tell you precisely what to do. Those kinds of jobs are being outsourced elsewhere – physically or digitally – to the lowest bidders. Or these kinds of repetitive tasks are being automated. Put differently, everyone in the world today faces a thought provoking decision:

“What we want, what we need, what we must have are indispensable human beings. We need original thinkers, provocateurs, and people who care. We need marketers who can lead, salespeople able to risk making a human connection, passionate change makers willing to be shunned if it is necessary for them to make a point. Every organization needs a linchpin, the one person who can bring it together and make a difference. Some organizations haven’t realized this yet, or haven’t articulated it yet, but we need artists. Artists are people with a genius for finding a new answer, a new connection, or a new way of getting things done.”

– Seth Godin

Instead of staying on the treadmill and trying to become a better cog, it’s time to seize the opportunity to strike out in a different direction. The time is ripe to start moving towards becoming a linchpin because it is linchpins who will be the essential building blocks of the high-value organizations of tomorrow.

Linchpins are actually a relatively new phenomena. Traditionally, economists have broken the world down into two different classes:

1. *The bourgeoisie* – who had the capital to invest in building factories and hiring people to work for them. Since members of this class owned their factories, they had considerable bargaining power and therefore prestige.

2. *The proletariat* – working class people who did the best they could by picking and choosing the optimum employment openings throughout their careers.

Today, however, anyone with a computer and an Internet connection owns the factory. Workers can self organize online. Anyone with a new idea can find capital to bring it to fruition through electronic means. A third economic class of people are emerging who neither follow instructions issued by someone else nor do they own large enterprises. These people create value and then capture part of that added value by thinking creatively. They have all the technical, manufacturing and distribution capacities they need to do their own thing. These are the linchpins of society.
Becoming a linchpin is never an overnight exercise. It’s a skill you can get better at over an extended period of time. To grow into being a linchpin, however, there are a few things you can work at:

### The Pathway

1. Learn how to connect and network
2. Be generous and give gifts
3. Make great art
4. Acknowledge the lizard
5. Ship things and get them out there
6. Be willing to fail forward
7. Never stop learning

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Linchpins never exist in isolation. To become a linchpin, you’ve got to connect with others in meaningful ways. You need an audience for your ideas in order to become more influential. Fortunately, the Internet is very good at amplifying ideas that resonate and helping them spread. If you can come up with solid and original fresh thinking, you can and will prosper.

“Only a human being can nurture relationships. It has to be done with flair and transparency, and it can’t be done from a script. The individual in the organization who collects, connects, and nurtures relationships is indispensable. This isn’t about recording the information in a database somewhere. This is about holding the relationships as sacred as they deserve to be. The memories and connections and experiences of the person in the center of this culture are difficult to scale and hard to replace. Which makes this person indispensable. Not anyone who has that job – only the people who have that job and act like linchpins.”

— Seth Godin

A well-known example of this is Frank Eliason, the online face of Comcast Cable. He noticed customers were getting frustrated with Comcast and were using Twitter to vent their feelings so he tweeted back. The tweeters were stunned that a real person (who used his real name) was listening and they quickly switched camps. Instead of being angry at Comcast’s service (or lack thereof), they instead became raving fans. This shows how much a genuine connection can mean. Linchpins intuitively know this and use it to their advantage.

To become a linchpin, you have to make genuine and authentic connections all over the place. Doing this means throwing away the script the company supplies you with. It never works. Instead, you have to be prepared to tell the unvarnished truth. The best connectors are always genuine and transparent – which is why telemarketing from a carefully worded script has such an abysmally low conversion rate. To become a linchpin, you have to think clearly and then communicate your thoughts to others. You have to enter into a two-way dialogue and be worth knowing.

When people buy something, it is rarely a life-or-death necessity purchase. Instead, people are buying a part of the relationship you’ve established. The actual product or service offered is just an extension or embodiment of that relationship. Aspiring linchpins understand this and provide a context for the genuine exchange of value which occurs. To get people to like what you have to offer more, you have to get to like them more at a personal level and project that feeling. This thought lies at the heart of almost all relationship building.

Counterintuitively, linchpins make money by giving away lots of gifts. This isn’t a matter of reciprocity where the recipient feels obligated to pay for the gift they receive. Rather, by giving away loads of gifts, linchpins build a community of people who appreciate what they have to offer and this awareness always leads to more commercial opportunities in the future.

“Thomas Hawk is the most successful digital photographer in the world. He has taken tens of thousands of pictures, on his way to his goal of taking a million in his lifetime. The remarkable thing about Hawk’s rise is that his pictures are licensed under the Creative Commons license and are freely shared with anyone, with no permission required for personal use. Thomas is both an artist and a giver of gifts. The result is that he leads a tribe, he has plenty of paid work, and he is known for his talents. In short, he is indispensable.”

— Seth Godin

The idea of giving things away as gifts certainly conflicts with the central premises of capitalism but gift giving is incredibly powerful today for several reasons:

- The Internet has made giving digital gifts impressively cost effective. Artists can afford to give away far more digital gifts than they ever could physical gifts because the cost of each marginal act of generosity is so low it can often be approximated as zero.
- When you give a person a gift, you’re concentrating on doing your very best work. You’re not thinking: “How much work do I need to do in this instance to justify what I am charging?” When you give a gift, your very best work can and will come shining through.
- The more gifts you give away, the larger your audience (or tribe) becomes and the easier it becomes to make an impact. Linchpins never function in isolation but always utilize the support of fellow linchpins.

Gifts work for many reasons. For one thing, they signal that you have plenty more to share. When a business coach writes a 200-page e-book which is crammed with incredibly useful tips and secrets, a business manager who receives it will think: “Gee, if this guy can afford to give away all of this valuable information for free, he must have loads more business wisdom up his sleeve somewhere. We’d better get him to come and do some consulting with us.”

Gifts also build your “tribe” – your circle of friends, acquaintances, coworkers, customers, contacts and hopefully raving fans who are familiar with and appreciative of your work. The bigger your tribe becomes, the wider your reach and the more commercial opportunities which may become available to you in the future. The Internet is constantly changing the nature of your tribes by expanding the pool of people who can be exposed to the kinds of things you have to offer.
To see how this works in practice, take the example of the painter Monet. He often gave away his paintings to his family and friends (circle 1) as gifts. From time to time, he also sold a painting or two to art collectors (circle 2) who paid handsomely. After Monet’s death – meaning no more Monet originals would ever be made – his paintings were then sold and resold to other collectors who wanted to own them or who saw an opportunity to make more money in the future.

The Internet has created an additional circle (circle 3) which is your tribe – your followers or fans who are aware of your work and like what you produce. People from the tribe may ultimately end up becoming friends. They may also be willing to pay for a souvenir edition of what you make or pay to hear you speak in person or do some consulting work for them.

“This circle is new. It’s huge and it’s important, because it enables you to enlarge the second circle and make more money, and because it enables you to affect more people and improve more lives. This third circle changes art for all artists, forever. It means that you can share your gift with more people, cheaper and quicker, than ever before. When you focus on the second circle, when you work to charge people more often, your art suffers. Instead, we profit most when we make the first and third circles as big as we can. Generosity generates income. This works whether you are selling paintings or innovation or a service.”

– Seth Godin

Linchpins understand this dynamic and use it to advantage by finding creative ways to give more gifts.

“Art isn’t only a painting. Art is anything that’s creative, passionate, and personal. And great art resonates with the viewer, not only with the creator. An artist is someone who uses bravery, insight, creativity, and boldness to challenge the status quo. And an artist takes it personally. Tom Peters, corporate gadfly and writer, is an artist, even though his readers are businesspeople. He’s an artist when he takes a stand, he takes the work personally, and he doesn’t care if someone disagrees. His art is part of him, and he feels compelled to share it with you because it’s important, not because he expects you to pay him for it. And I think it’s art when a great customer service person uses a conversation to convert an angry person into a raving fan.

Art is a personal gift that changes the recipient. An artist is an individual who creates art. The more people you change, the more you change them, the more effective your art is.”

– Seth Godin

Linchpins lift what they do to such lofty heights it becomes art. It changes the recipient forever. A business linchpin doesn’t go down a checklist of jobs the boss has given but comes up with new ways to make emotional connections with customers all the time. For many people obsessed with bottom line profits alone, this definition of art is difficult to come to grips with because art of this kind cannot be accurately quantified. You can’t plug this kind of thing into a spreadsheet where it can be managed like the other resources of the firm.

Art is what you do with your heart and soul and not just where you’re paid to spend your time. Linchpins become such an integral part of their work processes everything falls apart when they’re not there. Linchpins are literally irreplaceable because they work to make everything better. They care so much about what they’re doing they end up injecting some impressive personal touches into their work.

“I’m always amazed when I meet a writer who can’t use a computer, or a lawyer who’s uncomfortable with LexisNexis, or an executive who needs a corporate IT person to help him navigate an e-mail system. If you’re a marketer unable to leverage your skills by using online tools, you’re merely linked to the machines owned by the corporation. That’s power they don’t deserve. The world just gave you control over the means of production. Not to master them is a sin.”

– Seth Godin
In the human brain, there is one section which researchers have designated as the “lizard brain.” It controls and regulates all the features of normal life. You don’t think consciously and deliberately about breathing because your lizard brain is handling that automatically. It’s also telling your heart to beat and maintaining all other normal body functions.

In a similar way, much of modern society has been geared up to produce replaceable cogs in a giant machine rather than to encourage people to become linchpins. Many companies are set up as “factories” – places where people go to follow instructions, earn a paycheck and then go out and spend that paycheck buying stuff churned out by other factories. Factories of one kind or another have been the backbone of the economy for more than a century.

We live today in a consumer culture. People are taught the more stuff they own, the greater the amount of social approval they will receive from other people. Therefore, people aspire to get a high paying job not so they can make a contribution to society but so they can earn lots of money and buy heaps of great stuff. That’s unfortunate because it means when you go to school, you will have been taught how to be a factory worker:

• Fit in and follow instructions.
• Always use a sharp pencil and take good notes.
• Show up every day and look forward to lunch.
• Don’t ask questions and never challenge those in authority.
• Meet all deadlines and be prepared to cram for tests.

Being good at school doesn’t automatically mean you will be good at work. In fact, most of what they teach at school is completely irrelevant in the real world. What they should be teaching at school are two things:

- Learn how to solve real world problems for yourself – more along the lines of “What’s the most important thing to be doing next?” rather than the more typical school quiz questions like: “When and where was the war of 1812?” In an always-on world where Wikipedia is just a mouse click away, memorizing facts and figures just doesn’t impress people any more. Being able to do creative and interesting new things always will.
- Learn how to become a good leader – because leadership is a skill and an art rather than a gift. Schools shouldn’t be trying to drill compliance into students. They should be taught things like how to be socially smart, how to make good connections and what’s involved in building a tribe.

To become a linchpin, you’ve got to acknowledge the lizard is always out there lurking in the background. Society is geared up towards churning out cogs over and over. You’ve got to avoid falling into the trap of becoming one yourself and instead gear up to do great art. In a way, this is recapturing what you were good at before you went to school. Just about every four-year-old is a great artist. You’ve got to recapture that spark.

“In creativity is an instinct to produce.”

– Bruce Ario, poet

In a famous incident, Steve Jobs confronted an engineer who was reluctant to let anyone else see the code he was working on and said, “Real artists ship.” To become a linchpin, you’ve got to get your stuff out there where it will hopefully make an impact. You can’t become a linchpin by keeping your brilliant work a secret. The only way you’re going to make the desired emotional connection is to create solutions and hustle them out the door.

Shipping is the vital connection between your work and the outside world. If you can be counted on to always ship quality work on time, you become absolutely indispensable. There are three things you can do to enhance your likelihood of consistently shipping on time:

1. Start getting feedback as soon as possible – rather than when you’re ready to ship. Most people leave this to the last minute but linchpins learn to get everyone involved as early as possible when changes are easy to make. Then, as the project nears completion, put a strict limit on the number of people who have input into what’s coming together.
2. Step up and accept responsibility for shipping on time – and drive everything towards that date. Don’t accept decision by committee because everyone can hide behind joint responsibility. Put your name on the project and become the go-to person for it and then be prepared to soar or crash on the strength of what ends up shipping.
3. Be careful and deliberate about how you define success – because this will be a huge motivation to ship. In simple terms are you trying to please the critics or are you trying to make art? Make sure you use a metric which serves your actual needs rather than one imposed by the somewhat arbitrary influences of society.

To ship on time, you’re going to have to fight the resistance. In addition to avoiding all of the myriad time wasters like surfing the Internet aimlessly for hours on end learning useless stuff, there are also tons of other urges you’ll have to overcome as well:

• This has to be perfect before we can ship it.
• If we ship this on time, we will be asked to do more in the future?
• People will laugh at us for what we produce.
• We will feel more motivated tomorrow so let’s hold off.
• We don’t have enough resources to advertise so why bother?
• Not everyone will like what we do or support us.
• Our project will show that we lack skills.
• We still have to collect more data yet.
• We can’t become a linchpin by keeping your brilliant work a secret. The only way you’re going to make the desired emotional connection is to create solutions and hustle them out the door.

“If you want to produce things on time and on budget, all you have to do is work until you run out of time or run out of money. Then ship. No room for stalling or excuses or the resistance. On ship date, it’s gone.”

– Seth Godin

“When you set down the path to create art, whatever sort of art it is, understand the path is neither short nor easy. That means you must determine if the route is worth the effort. If it’s not, dream bigger.”

– Seth Godin
“What happens when the conversation doesn’t happen, the product doesn’t sell, the customer is not delighted, your boss is not happy, and the people aren’t moved? Make more art. It’s the only choice, isn’t it? Give more gifts. Learn from what you did and then do more. The only alternative is to give up and become an old-school cog. Which means failing. Trying and failing is better than merely failing, because trying makes you an artist and gives you the right to try again.”

— Seth Godin

If your first attempts to become a linchpin don’t go to plan, take heart. Everyone passes through the same litmus test. You can’t and won’t win all the time, but an occasional loss doesn’t make you a loser. It just means that you might need to back up and look for different areas where you can create art. The situation where you can’t monetize what you’re good at is exceptionally rare. More than likely, you’ve just got to come up with a better approach which will work. Focus on giving more to the right people in the right way. Ultimately, what you’re doing will be valued and your efforts will be rewarded.

If you surrender at the first hint of trouble, all you’ll end up with is a life and career filled with conformity, compliance and obedience. If you give yourself to your art and keep working at it, eventually you’ll figure out how to position yourself as a linchpin in your field. You’ll find a niche where money flows as a consequence of being very good at what you do and end up making a great living. This will be at the intersection of your humanity, dignity and generosity.

“Nothing about becoming indispensable is easy. If it’s easy, it’s already been done and it’s no longer valuable.”

— Seth Godin

“If young men miscarry in their first enterprise, they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is ruined. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges, and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened, and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who teams it, farms it, peddles, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always, like a cat, falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days, and feels no shame in not ‘studying a profession,’ for he does not postpone his life but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Linchpins don’t need authority. It’s not part of the deal. Authority matters only in the factory, not in your world. Real change rarely comes from the front of the line. It happens from the middle or even the back. Real change happens when someone who cares steps up and takes what feels like a risk. People follow because they want to, not because you can order them to.”

— Seth Godin
Linchpins really come to the fore when the situation at hand is so complex it’s not covered by a user manual or the company’s own operational manual. This is not a concern because a genuine linchpin makes his or her own map anyway.

“There is no map. No map to be a leader, no map to be an artist. Here’s the truth you have to wrestle with: the reason that art (writing, engaging, leading, all of it) is valuable is precisely why I can’t tell you how to do it. If there were a map, there’d be no art, because art is the act of navigating without a map.”

Seth Godin

The fragmentation of almost all consumer markets has created the situation where consumers value product leadership more than ever. We’re all looking for people who are going places to follow and linchpins fit that bill very concisely. At one time, the world of commerce was static. Companies made products and then built a team to go out and sell whatever was available. Those days are gone. Today’s markets are interactive and much more decentralized. Marketing hinges on leadership which is why linchpins are so invaluable. Linchpins help customers figure out which way they want to go and how to get there.

“You must become indispensable to thrive in the new economy. The best ways to do that are to be remarkable, insightful, an artist, someone bearing gifts. To lead. The worst way is to conform and become a cog in a giant system.”

Seth Godin

Most organizations get things done using teams nowadays. Teams are different from factories. A factory has an owner who issues instructions to the boss. Those instructions are then conveyed to the foreman who controls what the workers do hour by hour. Things get done because the person with the checkbook dictates what has to happen. Modern companies are different. What needs to get done is hazy and often gets changed on the fly. In these more obscure situations, a linchpin is great to have involved. Linchpins exist to make great things happen all day every day. They make good choices and ensure the right things happen which is what you want. Having a linchpin around always inspires everyone else to live their own game and do better as well.

“Every successful organization is built around people. Humans who do art. People who interact with other people. Men and women who don’t merely shuffle money, but interact, give gifts and connect.”

Seth Godin
Linchpins always know their industry inside and out. What sets them apart, however, is the fact they combine that knowledge with smart decisions and a propensity to make generous contributions. This allows them to become trailblazers and map makers more often than not. A good linchpin acts like an exceptionally talented mentor. He or she transfers emotion and confidence to everyone else in the organization.

“Forty years ago, Richard Branson, who ultimately founded Virgin Air, found himself in a situation in an airport in the Caribbean. They had just canceled his flight, the only flight that day. Instead of freaking out about how essential the flight was, how badly his day was ruined, how his entire career was now in jeopardy, the young Branson walked across the airport to the charter desk and inquired about the cost of chartering a flight out of Puerto Rico. Then he borrowed a portable blackboard and wrote, ‘Seats to Virgin Islands, $39.’ He went back to his gate, sold enough seats to fellow passengers to completely cover his costs, and made it home on time. Not to mention planting the seeds for the airline he’d start decades later. Sounds like the kind of person you’d like to hire.”

— Seth Godin

Linchpins do the right things in extraordinary ways. You could almost swear they have superpowers and you’d be right. Linchpins bring big and bold ideas to the table and inspire everyone to do the impossible. They are world-class in what they do and lift others to a higher level of performance day-in and day-out.

“You can either fit in or stand out. Not both. You are either defending the status quo or challenging it. Playing defense and trying to keep everything ‘all right,’ or leading and provoking and striving to make everything better. Being slightly remarkable is a losing strategy. Blander than bland can work, and it has. Indispensable linchpin works and it is the future. But the in-between spaces are scary.”

— Seth Godin

To become a linchpin, you’ve got to become an artist of one kind or another. Artists always shake things up. In very basic terms, artists take common inputs and come up with striking and original outputs. They are difficult to predict and impossible to pigeonhole because art can never be measured or forecast with precision. This is why both consumers and investors like artists—they do things which improve the status quo all the time.

When a band goes on tour, they strive to create performance art each and every night. If the band approaches a tour as a cookie-cutter opportunity to make money, they morph from being artists to a production line in a souvenir factory. Art is never a process which can be described to two decimal points of accuracy.

“Do not internalize the industrial model. You are not one of the myriad of interchangeable pieces, but a unique human being, and if you’ve got something to say, say it, and think well of yourself while you’re learning to say it better.”

— David Mamet

Note that becoming a linchpin involves more than merely being different. Admittedly, standing out is helpful and essential but in and of itself this is not enough. To genuinely succeed in becoming a linchpin, you’ve got to:

◆ Exert emotional labor and generate the interactions your organization and your people care about.

◆ Bring all your natural-born instincts to the surface and give them full permission to flower and bloom.

◆ Find practical and workable ways to turn everything you do into a form of art—even the tasks other people might consider to be dull routines and standard customer interactions.

◆ Learn how to lead and become a leader worth following.

◆ Get into the habit of giving great gifts all the time—especially to people who cannot reciprocate.

◆ Forget about trying to build a resume with all the right schools or the right pedigree on it. Focus instead on making the right connections for yourself.

◆ Inject more humanity into everything you do.

◆ Master all the tools of production which the digital age have made available to anyone and everyone to harness.

◆ Take risks and break the mold for your organization.

◆ Put forward interesting and provocative insights.

◆ Discipline yourself to see and live in the world as it really is rather than the world the way you wish it was.

◆ Bring creativity to everything you do.

◆ Become a thought leader for everyone else you work alongside.

◆ Ship what you produce and get it out there into the marketplace for people to enjoy and use.

◆ Discard conventional thinking and everything your lizard brain tells you to do.

◆ Stand out.

◆ Find ways to touch and acknowledge the humanity inside everyone you interact with as you go about your business each day.

◆ Aspire to change the world.

◆ Become totally and completely indispensable.

“Becoming a linchpin is a stepwise process, a path in which you develop the attributes to make you indispensable. You can train yourself to matter. The first step is the most difficult, the step where you acknowledge that this is a skill, and like all skills, you can and will get better at it. Every day, if you focus on the gifts, art, and connections that characterize the linchpin, you’ll become a little more indispensable.”

— Seth Godin