Wisdom in a Nutshell

Fred Shea is no ordinary postman. Without meaning to do so, he has touched countless people who look to him as a source of inspiration on the best way to live their lives. Fred Shea is a shining example of someone who took what was ordinary and made it extra-ordinary by enriching his life and the lives of others through exemplary actions and attitude.

You can be a Fred! To assist you on this life-changing journey, author Mark Sanborn outlines four easy principles you can follow: make a difference, build relationships, create value, and reinvent yourself. Be a Fred and turn ordinary situations into golden opportunities to make a difference.
Finding Freds

The best way to find out how to be Fred is to find Freds that can show you how to be one. There are different kinds of Freds and they are everywhere. A Fred can be a waitress who changed your flat tire for you, or the friendly stewardess who made everyone laugh during a boring flight. A Fred can be a generous bartender who lent you money when you were out of cash, or a cable installer who also programs remote switches even if he doesn't need to.

Find a Fred today and prepare to be a Fred tomorrow.

The Fred Principles

Principle I: Everyone Makes A Difference

You make a difference. It doesn't matter if you work for a small business or a giant corporation; or if you are a CEO or a clerk. The work you do plays a significant role in the entire organization.

To instill the first principle, you first have to realize that you can choose to be exceptional. You have the power to make a difference in anything and everything you do. It doesn't matter if you feel that you are only a small part of an organization. There are no ordinary jobs when done by extra-ordinary people. Do your job with pride and dignity, whether you are a director or a janitor. Learn to set high standards.

Making a difference is not as impossible as it sounds. Without realizing it, you are already making a difference in the daily lives of the people around you. The way you interacted with your family today has definitely changed their world for this day. A smile or a frown at an officemate may have the same effects.

What Kind of Difference Did You Make?

Making a difference is simply affecting another person, group or situation. If you respect other people, listen to their opinions and shower them with respect, you are making a positive effect. On the other hand, if you criticize without cause, neglect others and ignore their opinions, you are in fact inducing a negative difference.

Three Difference-Making Strategies

Strategy # 1: Identify when you'll make a difference. Always remember that you can make a difference at every opportunity, but only if you choose to do so.

Strategy # 2: Target the people to whom you'll make a difference. Select the people you want to make a difference to. Your choices may include:

- Customers
- Family
- Boss
- Teammates
- Friends and strangers

Strategy # 3: Be the difference. You cannot ask others to be the difference for you. Instead, make the decision to be the difference yourself! Take the time to reflect and find out how you can make a difference in each activity and event.

There are no ordinary jobs when done by extra-ordinary people.

Principle 2: Success Is Built On Relationships

Relationships spell the difference between performing a satisfactory job and an extra-ordinarily good one. In any job or business, developing personal relationships is the most important objective. Always remember that the quality of relationship you foster is directly proportional to the quality of products and services you offer. Furthermore, you need to invest time to strengthen your personal relationships.

The Seven Bs of Relationship Building

1. **Be real.** Be yourself. If you show your true colors, people will trust you more than someone who pretends to be a person he isn't.
2. **Be interested.** It is not enough that you are interesting. Learn to show your interest in others. This way, you will know how to provide them with more effective, efficient and personalized service.

3. **Be a better listener.** You will learn important information from other people if you choose to listen. Not only will other people appreciate you more, you can use the information you gather to find ways to serve them better.

4. **Be empathic.** Learn how other people truly feel by listening to them and showing your interest. Always remember that everyone feels the need to be understood.

5. **Be honest.** You should always say what you mean, and mean what you say. Never make empty promises and always be true to your word. Be known as someone with high integrity.

6. **Be helpful.** The little things do count. Find ways to be of service to other people, even in simple ways such as opening doors or offering to help carry heavy packages.

7. **Be prompt.** In this fast-paced world, time means a lot. Always respect the value of other people’s time.

Remember that imagination is more important than money spent. If you can use your brain to think of creative ways to create value for your customers, you are definitely gaining an edge on your competition.

---

**10 Ways to Create Value for Others**

1. **Tell the Truth.**
2. **Practice Personality Power.**
3. **Attract through artistry.**
4. **Add good stuff (e.g. enjoyment, enthusiasm, humor).**
5. **Subtract bad stuff (e.g. waiting, defects, mistakes, irritation, misinformation).**
6. **Simplify.**
7. **Improve.**
8. **Surprise others.**
9. **Entertain others.**

---

**Principle 4: You Can Reinvent Yourself Regularly**

You must always think of ways to reinvent yourself. Like Fred the postman, you must start thinking of new and better ways to do things. Find a source of inspiration that will push you to reinvent your work and life.

One way to start reinventing yourself is to meditate about your past and consider how you can improve yourself for the future. Take stock and study what you are now and what you want to be. Find out the most important lessons in life and your deepest desires. Make a list of the people who have influenced you the most.

---

**Principle 3: You Must Continually Create Value for Others, and It Doesn’t Have to Cost a Penny**

Creating value for others doesn’t have to cost a single cent. Fred Shea was able to create value with nothing at his disposal except the mail he had to deliver. Fred was able to do this by thinking creatively and by injecting passion into his work. Creating value for customers without spending anything is probably one of the most important job skills you can master.

---

**Increase Your I.Q.**

You need to increase what is called your “implementation quotient”. It is not enough that you have great ideas; you must be able to implement them. Note down the things you want to accomplish to ensure that you won’t forget them. Don’t let a good idea remain just that – an idea. Good ideas serve no purpose when they remain un-acted upon. Bring your ideas to life!
Compete with Yourself
The people around you are not the only competition you have. Always remember that there is always something more you can do. Compete with yourself instead of competing with others. There is nothing to be gained by being at odds with someone. Set high standards and beat them.

Why be a Fred?
This is your decision and your choice. Your career and your life can be extra-ordinary but only you can make it happen. You should not choose to be a Fred because you feel obligated to do so. The best reasons to be a Fred must come from a deeper passion or purpose. Some examples of good reasons to be a Fred include:

- To have a positive effect on others.
- To be a good role model.
- To experience the joy of doing an extra-ordinary job.

Becoming a Fred
Are you ready to become a Fred? If so, that would be good news. After all, a world inhabited by people who take pride in their work would be a better place to live in. First, you should learn that it is easy to be Fred. Why? Because it is inherent in our human nature! Everyone has a passion for significance. Each individual in this world wants to play an important part in the whole scheme of the universe.

Things to Remember on Becoming a Fred
1. You choose. Everything boils down to choice. You can be happy if you choose to be happy. You can also choose to be miserable. Choose to live an extra-ordinary life.

2. Do the right thing for the right reason. Choose to be a Fred without seeking reward or recognition from others. Doing the right thing is a reward in itself.

3. Your possibilities are endless. Explore the limits of your potential. There are countless ways to enrich your life and the lives of others.

Developing Other Freds
Wouldn't it be great if you had Freds working in your company? In today's competitive world where human capital is a precious commodity, developing Freds should be top priority.

To develop Freds, one should remember the following:

F Find
R Reward
E Educate
D Demonstrate

Find
If you want your company to have Freds, you have to look for Freds. This is not as hard as it sounds. Here are some tips to remember:

1. Let them find you. Your organization must be an ideal environment for Freds. Companies that recognize, reward, encourage and value exceptional work are Fred magnets. Always remember that Freds join organizations where they are given opportunities to further improve themselves.

2. Discover dormant Freds. Some people may be Freds without anyone realizing it. Uncover the hidden talents and abilities of your employees. Give your employees enough time to prove their value to the organization. Note down exceptionally-done projects, brilliant meetings with customers and good suggestions.

3. Hire Freds. Know how to ask the right questions during job interviews. Some questions you may ask are:

- Why would anyone do more than necessary?
• What is service?
• Who are your heroes and why?

Reward
Always reward good behavior and exceptional work. Rewards do not have to be monetary in value. One of the best rewards you can give a Fred is a sincere praise spoken frequently both in public and private. Always recognize a Fred's contribution to your organization.

Implementing a Reward Strategy
• Make sure that all employees are aware of the value of their contribution to the company.
• Employees should be informed on the difference they are making to the organization (e.g. increase in sales, recommendations by satisfied customers, etc).
• Always give positive feedback.
• Give awards.
• Have top management personally congratulate a Fred.

Always reward good behavior and exceptional work. Remember to recognize a Fred's contribution to your organization.

Educate
Educate your staff on the Fred principles. Teach your employees how to think and act like a Fred. To do this, you must:
1. Find examples everywhere. Observe the people around you, both in and out of your office. Jot down examples of Fred qualities, and note down the instances when you see the opposite. You may also check out the newspaper for articles you can use.

2. Dissect and debrief. Now that you have the examples, you can now:
   • Identify the specific good idea behind the act.
   • Adapthe idea to your current situation.
   • Look for ways to improve it.
   • Find opportunities for application.

3. Teach miracle working. Teach others that miracles can be performed on a regular basis.

4. Pull, don't push. You can't force your employees to be a Fred. To entice your staff to learn the principles, show them your enthusiasm and involvement in the project.

Demonstrate
Set the example for people around you. If you are a Fred, people will look up to you and aspire to be the same. If you wish to be a Fred, always remember to:

1. Inspire, but don't intimidate. Fred is not Superman. Set examples that can be easily replicated by others.

2. Involve. Ask other potential Freds to join you in enriching other people's lives. This can be as simple as helping others in need.

3. Initiate. It is always better to just do it. If you wait for other people to start, or opportunities to occur, they may never happen.

4. Improvise. It doesn't really matter what your current standing in life is. Use whatever life has given you right now and reinvent yourself for the better.

Go Spread Freds
Here are other ways to increase the number of Freds around you:

1. Recognize the Freds in your life. Think back and rediscover the countless Freds who have enriched your life. Always remember that you should never take them for granted.

2. Acknowledge Freds for their contribution. Show the
Freds in your world that you appreciate their efforts. Think of ways to show them how much they are valued.

3. *Pay Freds back.* The best way to repay a Fred is to be a Fred yourself.