

The Rule of Three

Applications in Leadership, Communication,
and Strategy



What is the Rule of Three?

A writing principle that suggests that a **trio** of entities such as events or characters is **more humorous, satisfying, or effective** than other numbers.¹



*“Veni, vidi, vici”
Julius Caesar*



**3 minutes without air
3 days without water
3 months without food**

Why use the Rule of Three?

Why Three???

Humans are wired to recognize patterns

the lowest number of data points it takes to either establish or discard a pattern

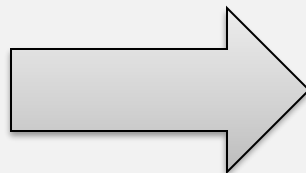
Patterns help guard against false positives and false negatives



A rabbi, a priest, and a Lutheran minister walk into a bar. The bartender looks up and says, "Is this some kind of joke?"



Allows for focus and prioritization



- Top 3 desired takeaways?
- Proposal plus 2 alternatives?
- Top 3 biggest challenges/risks?

Rule of Three

For Leadership

Three Laws of Leadership³

#1: Leadership is Temporary

#2: Leaders are Accountable

#3: Leaders Must Develop Others

Three Laws of Leadership⁴

#1: Law of Superb Execution

#2: Law of Integrity

#3: Law of Ambition

Essential Rules of Leadership⁵

#1: Reduce ambiguity

#2: Be fair

#3: Stay Positive

For Leadership

Follow The Timeless Wisdom Of “The Rule Of Three”⁶

When evaluating a strategic plan

1. What are the **three levers** that will really move the needle?
2. What are the **three potential plan-busters**?
3. What **contingency mitigators** do we have in place?

In assessing values of future leaders

1. Will they **do the right thing**, even if it comes at a personal sacrifice?”
2. If nobody says “thank you” after they did the right thing, **will it matter** to them or not?
3. After successful wins, will they continue to **show humility**, **keep learning**, and **keep building energy** for future win?



Leaders

1. Liked
2. Trusted
3. Respected

People and teams

1. Passion
2. Courage
3. Trust



Fred Hassan*

“The human mind is wired to work naturally with the **Rule of Threes**”

*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Hassan

For Communication

Rule of Three



Communicate Better Using the Rule of Three²

- ✓ Set up your communication in threes
- ✓ Three takeaways
- ✓ Use lists of threes

clarity
credibility
connection

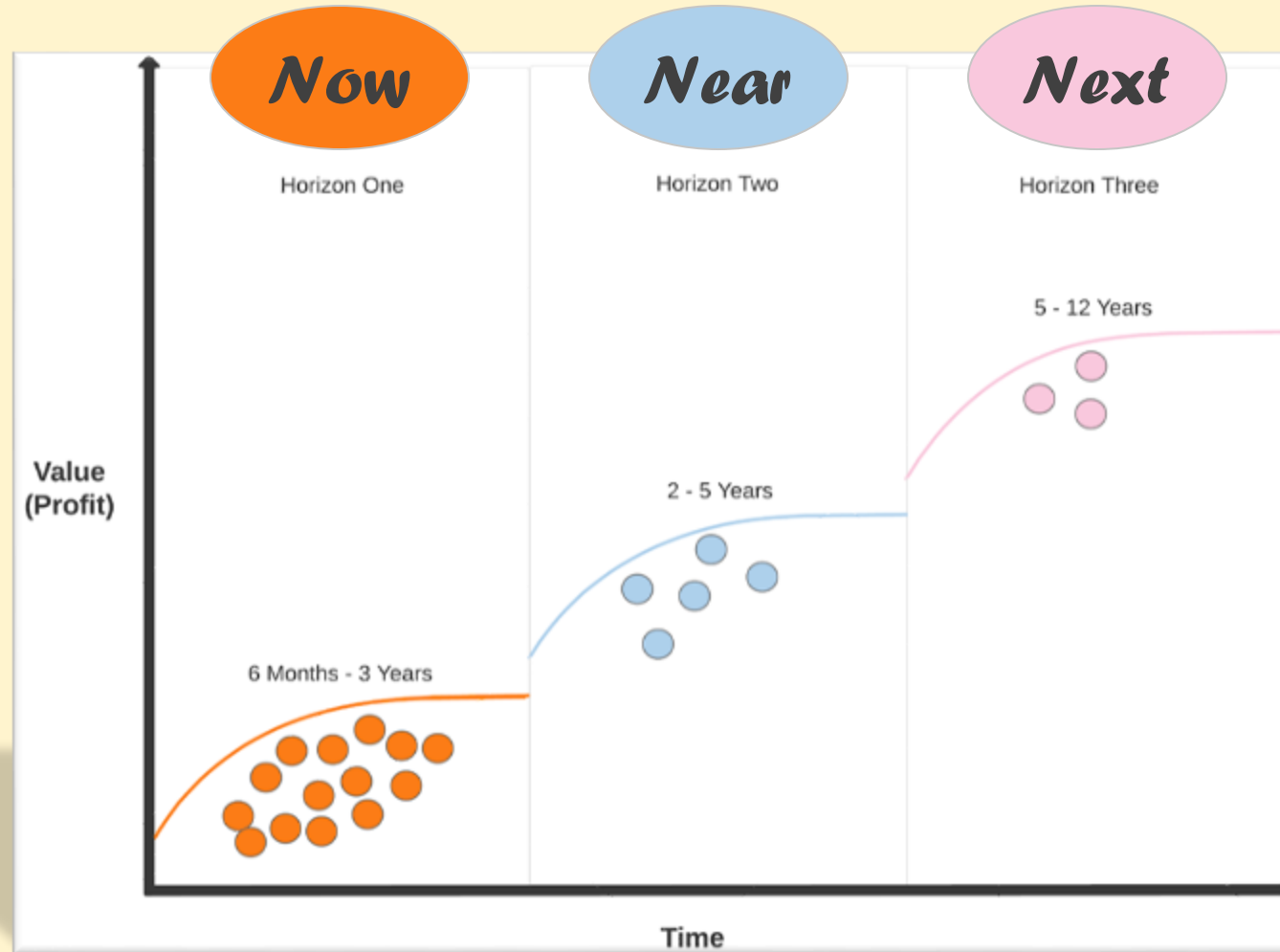


Ensure productive meetings with “routinely distracted multi-tasking bosses”⁸

1. Top three most-important items you need decisions on.
2. Grab your boss's attention within three seconds.
3. Be prepared to walk away in three minutes.

For Strategy

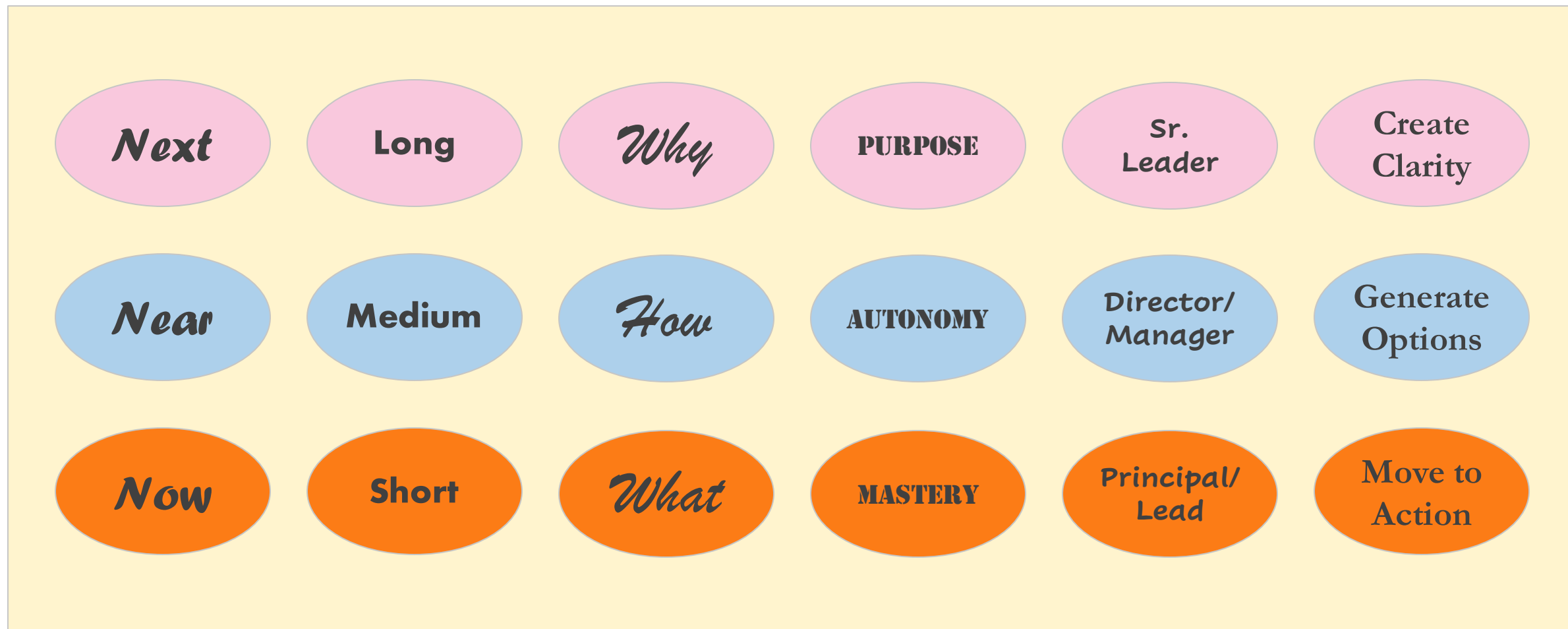
Three Horizons Framework



<https://lucidspark.com/blog/mckinseys-three-horizons-of-growth>

For Strategy

Three Horizons Model

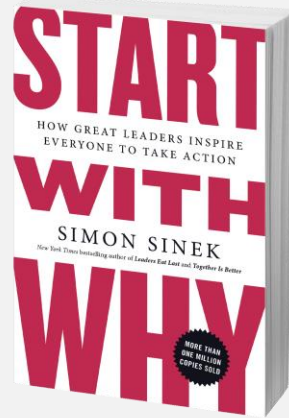


Leave you with 3 things



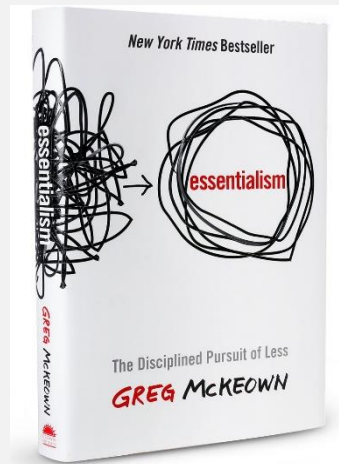
People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it.⁹

Simon Sinek



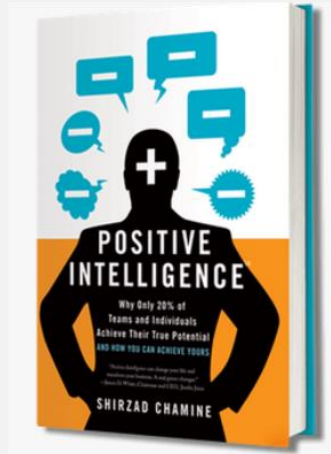
I have been ... every powerful table that you can think of... They are not that smart.¹⁰

Michelle Obama



No matter what you do, your job is to tell your story.

Gary Vaynerchuk



"A team is not a group of people who work together. It is a group of people who trust each other." – Simon Sinek ¹¹

"Saying no often means trading popularity for respect." – Greg McKeown ¹²

"Attitude reflect leadership" – Remember the Titans ¹³



Takeaways

1. Use the "Rule of Three"
 2. Lead with Why
 3. Own your Path
- D.** Don't be afraid to break the rules



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