

Strengthening Hands

Nehemiah 2:18 “Let *us* rise up and build.” So *they*
strengthened *their* hands for the good work.’

Vision in Nehemiah

2:5 Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favour in your sight, that you ***send me*** to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that ***I may rebuild it.***



How was the vision derived?

- 1:2 **Informed** 'I asked them'
- 1:4 **Borne of Passion** 'I sat down and wept and mourned for days...'
- 1:4 **Matured through Prayer** '... I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven'
- 1:5 **Rooted in God** '"O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant...'
- 1:6 **Based on His Word** 'Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses...'
- 1:11 **Transcending our ability** '...give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.'



How was the vision derived?

- What is the significance of the dates being given? 1:1 - 2:1
- Why do you think this could be significant?



How did the vision help?

- And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province beyond the river, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.

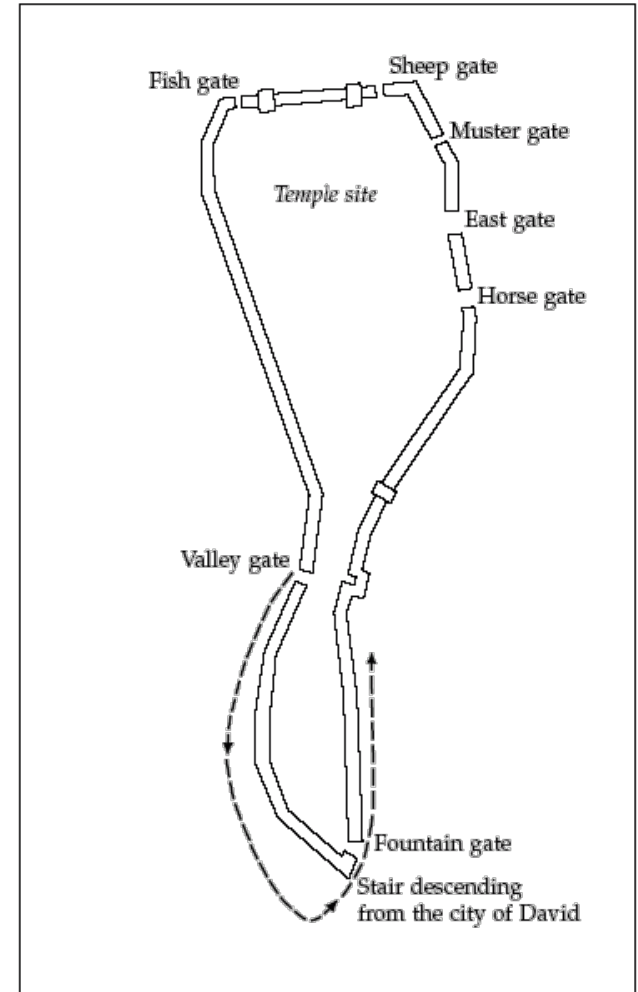


Anticipate resistance

Anticipate resource

Implementing vision: intelligence

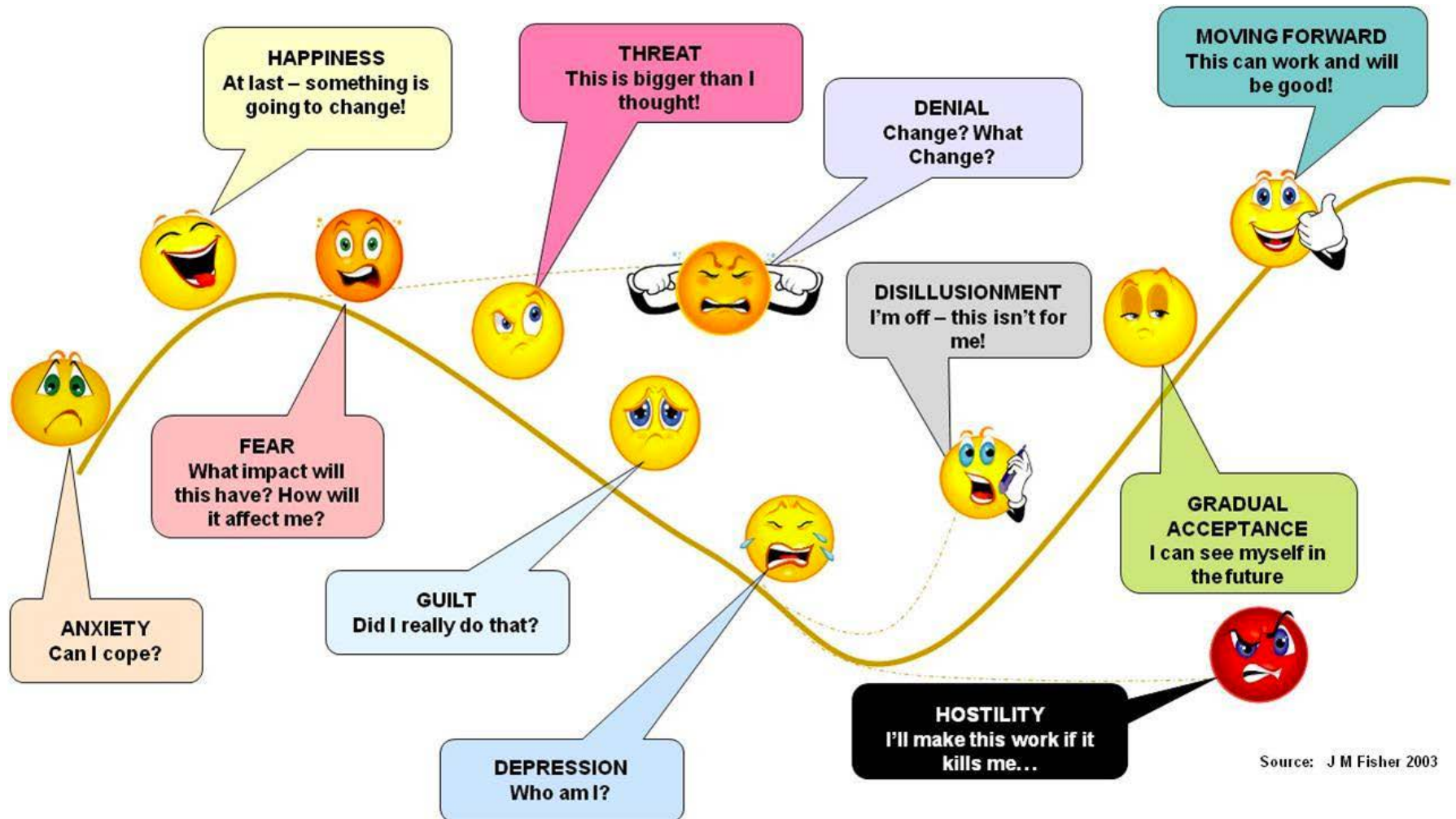
- Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me.
- And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem.
- ...I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate...
- I inspected
- Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool,
- I went up in the night by the valley and inspected
- Valley Gate
- the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work



Mission: communication

- Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.” And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, “Let us rise up and build.” So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

Communicating the vision: emotional cycle



Kotter's Eight Step Model

8-Step Process for Leading Change



Harvard Business Review: Most Difficult of the Kotter Steps

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Organizational Change

Facebook Poll, December 2009

Which of John Kotter's
steps to transformation
is most challenging for
your company?



Mission: communication

Guiding Coalition

Shared Vision

Sense of Urgency

Communicate the Vision

- ‘Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in; how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.” And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, “Let us rise up and build.” So they strengthened their hands for the good work...’

Institutionalise the Change

Empower People

Build on the Gains

Short Term Wins

Vision into action

- **Realistic:** He started with a single project and began with the gates. (Nehemiah 3:1,3,6,13,14,15,28)
- **Visibility:** Nehemiah 3:1,3,6,13,14,15,28, Nehemiah put his best leaders to work first on the gates. You could not come and go from the city without seeing the leaders at work.
- **Vested Interests:** Benjamin and Haahub made repairs in front of their house...Azariah made repairs beside his house...the priests made repairs each in front of his own house...Meshukkam made repairs opposite his living quarters (Nehemiah 3:23-30)



This is maybe not the best way to help your team...



Be prepared for Opposition

- **Apathy:** but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors (Nehemiah 3:5b)
- **Anger:** When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed (Nehemiah 4:1a)
- **Ridicule:** Sanballat ridiculed the Jews (Nehemiah 4:1b)
- **Criticism:** Sanballat in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble--burned as they are?" Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building - if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!" (Nehemiah 4:2-3)
- **Fight:** They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. Nehemiah 4:8: it is a 'fifth column' approach, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work." (Nehemiah 4:11)

Responses to Opposition

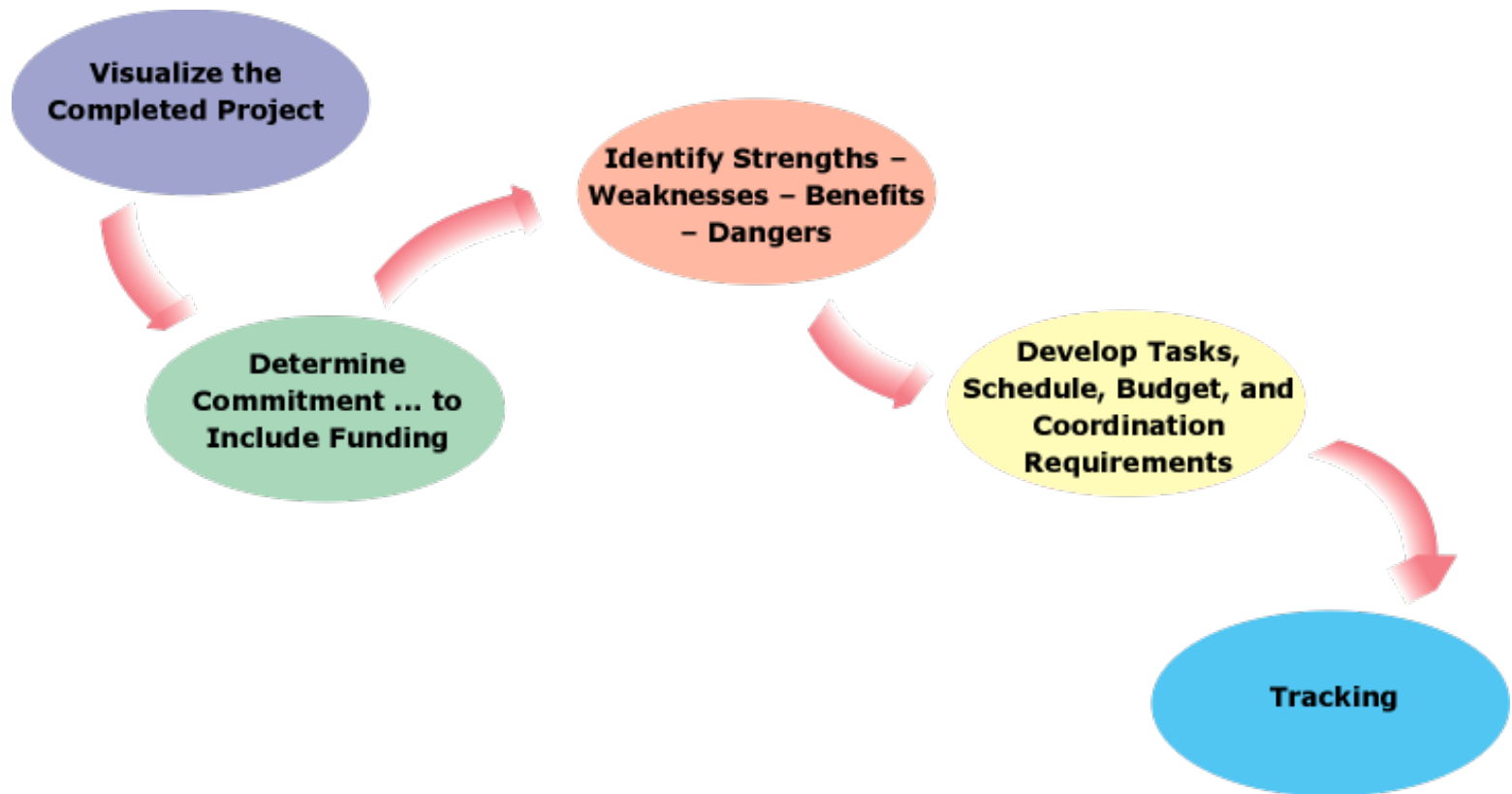
- **Keep on Praying:** Hear us, O our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders. (Nehemiah 4:4-5)
- **Keep on Working:** so we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart. (Nehemiah 4:6)
- **Keep on Encouraging:** After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." (Nehemiah 4:14)
- **Keep on Leading:** The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall. (Nehemiah 4:16b)
- **Keep on Watching:** At that time I also said to the people, "Have every man and his helper stay inside Jerusalem at night, so they can serve us as guards by night and workmen by day." (Nehemiah 4:22b)

Executing the vision

- **Planning:** Nehemiah 3 breaks the big vision down into smaller manageable and quantifiable steps by dividing the wall into sections.
- **Partnerships:** Nehemiah understood the importance of harnessing the power of relationships. He had already learned the power of relationships through the investment that his former boss made in the project. In Jerusalem, he partnered with 40 groups of people to do the physical work of the vision. Even the jewelers!
- **Focus:** Ezra and possibly Malachi helped in communicating the vision by orienting the entire vision execution around the ways of God and pointing people to God and his Law (Nehemiah 8)
- **Team Training:** In Nehemiah 6, we read of struggles with famine and oppression. Nehemiah appreciates them, values them, and works to implement godly rules to create a fair working environment. Vision will never come to pass if your team is not cared for well.

A balanced approach

- Nehemiah 4:9: "But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves."
- Nehemiah prayed like it depended on God and worked like it depended on him.



A word of caution

- The book of Proverbs has a number of clear practical principles regarding strategy and planning:
- Proverbs 14:15: "A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man **gives thought** to his steps."
- Proverbs 15:22: "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with **many advisers** they succeed."
- Proverbs 16:3: "**Commit to the Lord** whatever you do, and your plans will succeed."
- Proverbs 16:9: "In his heart a man plans his course, but the **Lord determines his steps.**"
- Proverbs 20:18: "Make plans by **seeking advice**; if you wage war, obtain guidance."



Strategic focus based on Matthew 28:19, 20

- Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age

	Strategic Aim	Strategic Aim	Strategic Aim
Go	Devise strategy for reaching adults and young	Determine our growth objectives/ size	Empower church members to evangelise
Disciples	Determine a programme for discipling the church	Engage all members of the church as disciples	Succession plans and training programme
Teaching	Devise a teaching programme	Devise an evaluation tool for the programme	The programme should cover the whole of scripture
Behaviour	Define what a disciple looks like	Determine the priorities for our fellowship	Devise broad programme of events to meet all needs of church

Strategic focus based on Acts 2:42

- 'And they devoted themselves to the apostles ' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers'

	Strategic Aim	Strategic Aim	Strategic Aim
Bible Teaching	Devise a teaching programme	The programme should cover the whole of scripture	Development of a comprehensive biblical evangelism strategy
Fellowship	Devise broad programme of events to meet all needs of church	Determine the priorities for our fellowship	Measure the quality of fellowship in the church
Prayer	Ensure that prayer is at the heart of all we do	Encourage all church members to be people of prayer	
Worship	Ensure that the activities of the church are Christ centered	How do our lives demonstrate that we are each Christ-centered	

Strategic goals based on Matthew 28:19, 20

- Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age

	Strategic Aim	Strategic Aim	Strategic Aim
Go	Devise strategy for reaching adults and young	Determine our growth objectives/ size	Empower church members to evangelise
	Public Events for Gospel preaching	Determine optimal size to be sustainable	Survey members re: personal evangelism
	Friendship evangelism activities (relational focus)	Are we missional - prepared to plant a church	Teach and train in personal evangelism
	Outreach Team	Are we a gathered church or community church	Monitor effectiveness of personal evangelism

Action Plan

Strategic Aim	
Go	Devise strategy for reaching adults and young
	Public Events for Gospel preaching



Survey attitudes to Family Service
Determine attendance of unsaved at evangelistic events
How many conversions in the past 5 years
Capacity of church to effectively evangelise