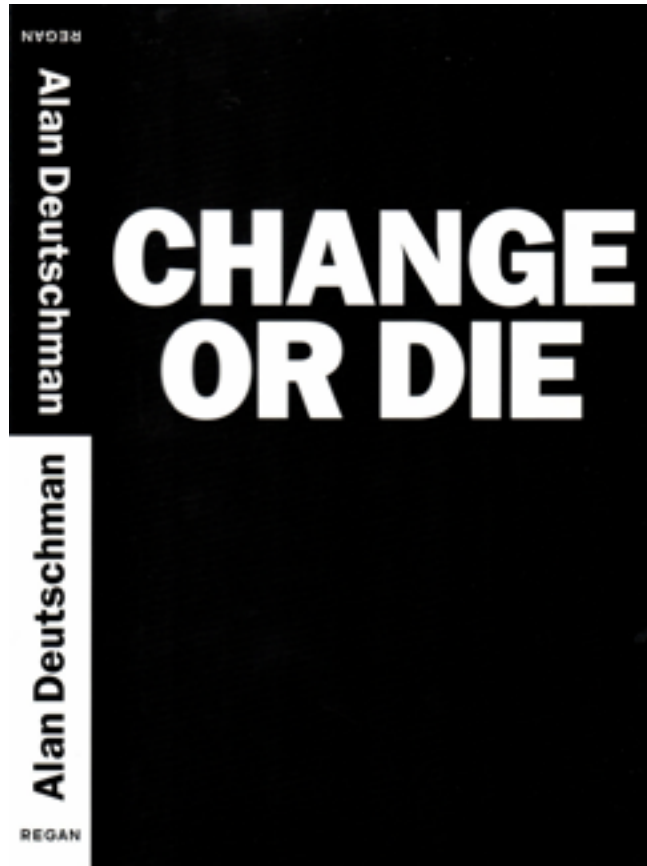


Excerpt from 2007:



INTRODUCTION

The Three Keys To Change

Change or die.

What if you were given that choice? *For real.* What if it weren't just the hyperbolic rhetoric that conflates corporate performance with life or death? Not the overblown exhortations of a rabid boss, or a maniacal coach, or a slick motivational speaker, or a self-dramatizing chief executive officer or political leader. We're talking actual life and death now. Your own life and death. What if a well-informed, trusted authority figure said you had to make difficult and enduring changes in the way you think, feel, and act? If you didn't, your time would end soon—a lot sooner than it had to. Could you change when change really mattered? When it mattered most?

Yes, you say?

Try again.

Yes?

You're probably deluding yourself.

That's what the experts say.

They say that you wouldn't change.

Don't believe it? You want odds? Here are the odds that the experts are laying down, their scientifically studied odds: nine to one. That's nine to one against you. How do you like those odds?

This revelation unnerved me when I heard it in November 2004 at a private conference at Rockefeller University, an elite medical research center in New York City. The event was hosted by the top executives at IBM, who invited the most brilliant thinkers they knew from around the

world to come together for a day and propose solutions to some of the world's biggest problems. Their first topic was the crisis in health care, an industry that consumes an astonishing \$2.1 trillion a year in the United States alone—more than one seventh of the entire economy. Despite all that spending, we're not feeling healthier, and we aren't making enough progress toward preventing the illnesses that kill us, such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer.

A dream team of experts took the stage, and you might have expected them to proclaim that breathtaking advances in science and technology—mapping the human genome and all that—held the long-awaited answers.

That's not what they said.

Speaking to the small group of insiders, they were unsparingly candid. They said that the cause of the health care crisis hadn't changed for decades, and the medical establishment still couldn't figure out what to do about it.

Dr. Raphael "Ray" Levey, founder of the Global Medical Forum, an annual summit meeting of leaders from every part of the health care system, told the audience: "A relatively small percentage of the population consumes the vast majority of the health care budget for diseases that are very well known and by and large behavioral." That is, they're sick because of how they chose to lead their lives, not because of factors beyond their control, such as the genes they were born with. Levey continued: "Even as far back as when I was in medical school" —he enrolled at Harvard in 1955— "many articles demonstrated that eighty percent of the health care budget was consumed by five behavioral issues." He didn't bother to name them, but you don't need an MD to guess what he was talking about: Too much smoking, drinking, and eating. Too much stress. Not enough exercise.

Then the really shocking news was presented by Dr. Edward Miller, dean of the medical school and chief executive officer of the hospital at Johns Hopkins University. He talked about patients whose arteries are so clogged that any kind of exertion is terribly painful for them. It hurts too much to take a long walk. It hurts too much to make love. Some surgeons have to implant pieces of plastic to prop open their arteries, or remove veins from their legs to stitch near the heart so the blood can bypass the blocked passages. The procedures are traumatic and expensive—they can cost more than \$100,000. More than one and a half million people every year in the United States undergo coronary bypass graft or angioplasty surgery at a total price of around \$60 billion. Although these surgeries are astonishing feats, they are no more than temporary fixes. The operations relieve the patients' pain, at least for a while, but only rarely—fewer than 3 percent of the cases—prevent the heart attacks they're heading toward or prolong their lives. The bypass grafts often clog up within a few years; the angioplasties, in only a few months.

Knowing these grim statistics, doctors tell their patients: If you want to keep the pain from coming back, and if you don't want to have to repeat the surgery, and if you want to stop the course of your heart disease before it kills you, then you have to switch to a healthier life style. You have to stop smoking, stop drinking, stop overeating, start exercising, and relieve your stress.

But very few do.

"If you look at people after coronary-artery bypass grafting two years later, ninety percent of them have not changed their lifestyle," Miller said. "And that's been studied over and over and over again. And so we're missing some link in there. Even though they know they have a very bad disease and they know they should change their lifestyle, for whatever reason, they can't."

That's been studied *over and over and over again*. The dean of the nation's most famous medical school said so with confidence. But following the conference, when I searched through the archives of the leading scientific journals, I came across something strange. Something that just didn't fit. In 1993, Dr. Dean Ornish, a professor of medicine at the University of California at San Francisco, convinced the Mutual of Omaha insurance company to pay for an unusual experiment. The researchers recruited 194 patients who suffered from severely clogged arteries and could have bypass grafts or angioplasties covered by their insurance plans. Instead they signed up for a trial. The staffers helped them quit smoking and switch to an extreme vegetarian diet that derived fewer than 10 percent of its calories from fat. In places like Omaha, they shifted from steaks and fries to brown rice and greens. The patients got together for group conversation

twice a week, and they also took classes in meditation, relaxation, yoga, and aerobic exercise, which became parts of their daily routines.

The program lasted for only a year. After that, they were on their own. But three years from the start, the study found, 77 percent of the patients had stuck with these lifestyle changes—and safely avoided the need for heart surgery. They had halted—or, in many cases, reversed—the progress of their disease.

If the medical establishment was resigned to the supposed fact that only one out of every ten people can change, even in a crisis, then how did Dr. Ornish's team inspire and motivate nearly eight out of ten of its heart patients to accomplish and sustain such dramatic transformations?

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In 2002 the Justice Department published a study that tracked 272,111 inmates after they were released from state prison in fifteen states. This was the largest study of criminal recidivism ever conducted in the United States. The results were alarming: 30 percent of former inmates were rearrested within six months, and 67.5 percent of them were rearrested within three years. Most of the repeat offenders were felons.

Psychologists and criminologists have come to share the belief that most criminals can't change their lives. Although a movement to "rehabilitate" offenders gained momentum in the sixties and seventies, the idea has since largely been abandoned. Now the experts believe that many criminals can't change because they're "psychopaths" —they're unlike the rest of humanity because they aren't burdened by conscience. They don't have any empathy for others. They're concerned only for themselves. In a word they're *ruthless*.

Psychopaths make up about 1 percent of the overall population, but they're thought to be the norm in prisons. A large number of convicts have been put through "The Hare," the standard test for psychopathy, created by Dr. Robert Hare, a professor at the University of British Columbia, who has been an influential advisor to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The average score for male inmates in North America is "moderately psychopathic." The experts admit that they really don't know what causes psychopathy. They assume that some people are simply born that way. They also believe that psychopaths can't change to be like the rest of us. This conclusion is powerful and convincing, but if you've lived for a while in San Francisco, you've probably come across a strange exception. On the waterfront, taking up an entire city block in an enviable location between the Bay Bridge and the Giants' baseball stadium, there's what looks like a luxury condominium complex. The Delancey Street Foundation is actually a residence where criminals live and work together. Most of them have been labeled as "psychopaths." They typically move to Delancey after committing felonies and having serious problems with addiction—to heroin or alcohol, most commonly. Judges send them to Delancey from the state prisons, where they belonged to gangs and perpetuated violence. They're usually the third generation of their families who have known only poverty, crime, and drug addiction. They've never led lawful lives or even understood the values and ideals of lawful society. They live at Delancey, five hundred of them, blacks and Latinos together with self-proclaimed neo-Nazis, along with only one professional staffer, Dr. Mimi Silbert, who earned her PhDs in psychology and criminology before cofounding the program thirty-five years ago. Aside from Silbert, who's sixty-three and stands four feet, eleven and weighs about ninety-five pounds, the felons run the place themselves, without guards or supervisors of any kind.

Delancey Street would sound crazy if it hadn't worked so brilliantly for so long. Silbert entrusts the residents—remember, many of these people have been diagnosed as *psychopaths*—to care for and take responsibility for one another. They kick out anyone who uses drugs, drinks alcohol, or resorts to threats or violence. Although most of them are illiterate when they first arrive, the ex-cons help one another earn their high school equivalency degrees, and they all learn at least three marketable skills. Together they run the top-rated moving company in the Bay Area, a thriving upscale restaurant, a bookstore-café, and a print shop. In the winter they set up sites around the city where they sell Christmas trees. Whenever I'm a customer of a Delancey

business, I marvel at the honesty, reliability, and politeness of the workers and wish other companies were like theirs. While taxpayers spend \$40,000 a year to support a single prison inmate, Delancey supports itself with profits from its businesses. It never takes money from the government.

After staying at Delancey for four years, most of the residents “graduate” and go out on their own into the greater society. Nearly sixty percent of the people who enter the program make it through and sustain productive lives on the outside.

While the criminal justice system watches more than six out of ten convicts return to crime, Delancey turns nearly as many into lawful citizens. How exactly? What’s the psychology behind transforming the most hopeless 1 percent of society, the ones who experts believe are incapable of change?

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In the early 1980s the managers at General Motors and the workers on its assembly lines viewed on another with hostility and fear. The situation was especially troubled at the factory in Fremont, California. You could tell this right away by the number of beer bottles littering the parking lot. On any given day, more than a thousand of the five thousand workers wouldn’t bother showing up for work. The ones who did show up were distrustful and embittered. They rebelled when their bosses forced them to speed up the production line. They thought GM was trying to eliminate jobs by making the work go faster and by replacing them with robots. They were right: GM’s top executives in Detroit blamed the company’s problems on its unruly employees, and they were investing a staggering amount of money on automation — \$45 billion —so they could cut back on human labor.

Tension pervaded the Fremont plant. Workers and managers battled incessantly. The workers fought with one another so fiercely that the national headquarters of the United Auto Workers had to seize control of the local branch. GM’s vice president for labor relations called the plant’s workforce “unmanageable.” A large percentage of the workers had been there for twenty to twenty-five years, and they were considered impossibly “resistant” to change. Maryann Keller, who was Wall Street’s most respected analyst of the auto industry, wrote that Fremont was “notorious” even among GM plants. Considering the situation hopeless, GM closed down the factory and laid off five thousand workers.

Then something really strange happened. Toyota offered to revive the plant and produce a GM car there—a Chevrolet. The two companies created a partnership names New United Motor Manufacturing Inc. — “Nummi,” which sounded like “new me.” Toyota wanted to recruit fresh new hands rather than rehire the plant’s laid-off workers. But the UAW insisted otherwise, and Toyota reluctantly took back the ornery old hands.

The workers returned with just as much distrust for their new bosses as they had had for the previous ones. The union leaders believed that the rise of the Japanese car companies had come on the backs of the Japanese workers, whom they thought of as “coolie labor”: underpaid and overworked. The workers’ fears seemed vindicated when Toyota said it would need only half as many workers as GM to build the same number of cars. When Toyota people talked about creating a new sense of mutual trust and respect in Fremont, one union leader called it “a load of bullshit.”

But that’s exactly what happened. Three months after the assembly line started up again, Nummi was rolling out cars with hardly any defects, which was an incredible feat. During this time many GM factories struggled to keep their average down to forty defects a car, and plants would *celebrate* when they had “only” twenty-five defects a car. *A Wall Street Journal* correspondent wrote that Nummi was producing “some of the best cars that GM had ever sold.” And Nummi did it with half as many workers. The cost of making cars fell dramatically. Absenteeism at the Fremont factory went from more than 20 percent down to 2 percent, even

though Toyota banned practices that once made the shifts seem tolerable, such as smoking and listening to the radio.

Back at GM's headquarters in Detroit, top executives assumed that Toyota achieved its spectacular results through cutting-edge technology. Detroit sent envoys to Fremont to see what was happening. It turned out that snooping on Japanese technology had been GM's real motive behind making the deal with Toyota in the first place. But there was no gee-whiz gadgetry to see. Nummi's machinery was three decades out of date: It was 1950s technology! The shocking improvements had happened there because the unionized American workers constantly came up with ideas for improving quality and cutting costs. These were the very same workers who had been so hostile and embittered. Now they talked unabashedly about the sense of "family" they felt at the Nummi factory. Toyota's secret wasn't the technology it applied; it was the *psychology*. What did Toyota's executives know that enabled them to win over thousands of workers who had been considered "unmanageable"?

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The Ornish heart patients, Delancey ex-convicts, and Nummi auto workers are classic examples of the psychology of change. They may seem like very different situations, but they all show what's gone wrong with our common beliefs on this issue.

We like to think that the facts can convince people to change. We like to think that people are essentially "rational" —that is, they'll act in their self-interest if they have accurate information. We believe that "knowledge is power" and that "the truth will set you free." But nine out of ten heart patients didn't change even when their doctors informed them about what they had to do to prolong their lives. Ex-convicts knew how hard their time could be if they were arrested again, but it didn't make a difference.

After we try "rationally" informing and educating people, we resort to scare tactics. We like to think that change is motivated by fear and that the strongest force for change is crisis, which creates the greatest fear. There are few crises as threatening as heart disease, and no fear as intense as the fear of death, but even those don't motivate heart patients to change.

The fear of losing their jobs didn't compel the Fremont workers to change.

The fear of along prison sentence didn't intimidate most criminals to "go straight." Even after they were incarcerated for years under awful conditions, they still weren't deterred. What if the laws demanded even harsher punishment? That only made the problem worse, actually. In the decade leading up to the 2002 Justice Department study, the states built more prisons and judges imposed longer sentences. The result? The rearrest rate actually went up by five percentage points, from 62.5 percent to 67.5 percent.

Finally, we often believe that people can't change or that they "resist" change. We think that this is simply human nature. Our most distinguished experts—the MDs and PhDs and MBAs who run the health care and criminal justice systems and the largest manufacturing corporations— think that it's naïve and hopeless to expect the vast majority of people to change. They know that patients don't listen to their doctors. In fact, even when patients with severe heart disease are prescribed "statin" drugs, which dramatically lower cholesterol counts and reduce the risk of cardiac arrest, they typically stop following their doctor's orders and give up taking the medication within a year— and all that's involved is popping a little pill once or twice a day.

The people who run things know that ex-cons rebel against the authority of their parole officers. They know that assembly workers struggle against the power of their bosses. So the experts, disgruntled with the ignorance and incorrigibility of the masses, take on the heroic role of saving us from ourselves and from one another. They come up with coronary bypass surgery as a quick fix, or they argue for building more prisons and requiring longer sentences or simply locking up criminals for life, or they try to "automate around the assholes," as one GM executive crudely described the company's grand strategies in the years when it closed down the Fremont plant. They remake their fields around their belief in the impossibility of change. The Ornish

and Delancey and Nummi cases are shocking because they prove that dramatic change is possible even in the situations that seem the most hopeless.

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Change or Die is a short book about a simple idea. Whether it's the average guy who has struggled with a stressful life for so many decades that he has become seriously ill, or the heroin addict who commits felony after felony, or the managers, salespeople, and laborers who try to make it through unnerving shifts in their business, or virtually anyone who comes up against unexpected challenges and opportunities, people can change the deep-rooted patterns of how they think, feel, and act.

I wrote this book because I believe passionately in this idea. My mission is to replace those three misconceptions about change— our trust in facts, fear, and force (the three Fs) — with what I call “the three keys to change.” In the pages to follow I'll introduce you to Mimi Silbert, Dean Ornish, and many others who have come upon the “missing links” of changing behavior. To make sense of these astonishing examples, I'll draw on ideas that have emerged from psychology, cognitive science, linguistics, and neuroscience. I'll show the paradoxical ways in which profound change happens and how we can deliberately influence and inspire change in our own lives, the lives of the people around us, and the lives of our organizations. I'll argue that change can occur with surprising speed and that change can endure.

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Then I tried to think of case studies that contradicted what the Johns Hopkins dean was saying. I was familiar with Dean Ornish's ideas because I lived just down the street from the University of California at San Francisco's medical school, and a number of my friends were doctors or students there. I also knew about Delancey Street because I had hired its ex-convicts as movers and had eaten at their restaurant and bought several Christmas Trees from them. When I researched the success rates of those two programs, the odds for changed totally flipped —assuming you knew what Dean Ornish and Mimi Silbert knew. The great need for spreading that knowledge much more widely through the populace inspired the research for this book.

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CASE STUDY:

Criminals

This chapter is going to build up our theory of change by looking in closer detail at how the Delancey Street program transforms chronically drug-addicted felons into sober, productive, law-abiding citizens. But first, to introduce you to one of the key concepts behind the success of Delancey, I'm going to tell a true story about a few people I know and like who work in the corporate world. Just so there's no confusion, let me make it very clear that their not addicts or convicted criminals.

Psych Concept #4

The power of Community and Culture

In 1996, when he was thirty-one years old, David Risher was working as a marketing executive at Microsoft's headquarters in the suburbs of Seattle. His colleagues respected his intelligence and liked his calm, soft spoken, gracious manner. They thought that he could become one of the top people there at the world's wealthiest and most successful company. Still, Risher was curious enough to interview for a job at a small company that had been around for only a year and was losing money. It was called Amazon.com, and its founder Jeff Bezos, had been one of Risher's classmates at Princeton University. They hadn't known each other in college, which seemed odd, since Princeton is a small school and nearly all the students live in the dormitories on campus. It turned out that they had belonged to the same "eating club," an old house where 150 members hung out and threw parties and gathered for three meals a day in a large dining room. Though Risher had been the club's president, he hadn't known Bezos. That was probably because Bezos spent so much of his time down the street at the campus's computer center. Bezos graduated with a 4.2 grade point average in his major, electrical engineering and computer science, meaning that he received mostly A-pluses, which count as 4.3 and are rarely awarded.

When Risher went for his job interview, Amazon was renting space in an old brick building on Seattle's skid row, a dismal block with a needle exchange, a defunct pawnshop, a grocery store with barren shelves, and an outreach service for troubled youths. Inside, the offices looked cheap. Bezos believed in frugality. He hated spending cash on things that didn't seem to matter. Even though he had made a lot of money working on Wall Street in his twenties, he drove a Honda and lived in a small apartment. At Amazon he built his own makeshift desk by buying a cheap wooden door at Home Depot to serve as the work surface and sawing off two-by-fours for the legs. His employees followed his example and built their own desks the same way.

When Risher entered Bezos's office, he saw a white board on the wall. Bezos had scribbled two hundred marketing ideas that Amazon could pursue.

"Prioritize this," Bezos said, handing him a magic marker. Bezos wanted him to rank the ideas from one to two hundred.

Risher was up for the challenge. The two men realized that they were very much alike: They were both so compulsively analytical that it was kind of comical. Risher's wife made fun of his penchant for "numbering things." Bezos *talked* in ranked lists. He liked to enumerate the criteria, in order of importance, for every decision he made—even why he married his wife MacKenzie. The number one reason for that particular choice: He wanted someone inventive and resourceful enough to get him out of a Third World prison.

During his visit Risher met fifteen of Amazon's thirty employees. "I was blown away because everyone was super-smart," he recalls. How had Bezos recruited such a bright team? Later, over dinner, Bezos told him, "I'd rather interview fifty people and not hire anyone than hire the wrong person."

Bezos had followed this philosophy from the company's earliest days. In 1995, when Amazon was preparing to launch its website and begin selling books, Bezos's colleagues urged him to hire a bunch of people and do it fast. They would bring in one job candidate after another, after another, but Bezos refused to hire any of them. His behavior was perplexing. The company was growing quickly and they desperately needed to hire. "Our attitude was that we need a body in here," says Paul Barton-Davis, who was Amazon's third employee. But Bezos had a very particular idea of who he wanted. He was looking for people who were frugal and resourceful and loved to analyze information and try new things and take big risks — people like *himself*.

Back when hardly anyone had ever heard of Amazon, a tiny start-up company that hadn't yet sold a dollar's worth of stuff, it was ridiculously difficult to get a job there, even if you had inside connections. Even when you applied for a job answering the phones in the customer service department, Bezos's colleagues would compile a one-hundred-page dossier about you.

One of the early employees, Eric Dillon, referred four of his friends, and Bezos wouldn't hire any of them. "It was brutal," Dillon says.

When Dave Risher decided to accept Bezos's offer and go work for Amazon, his peers at Microsoft were stunned. They were all paid partly in company stock that was rising rapidly at the time, and they stood to make fortunes if they hung around for just a few years. "In '96 *nobody* left Microsoft to go to another company," Risher says. "When people left Microsoft, it was to retire."

Risher was summoned to meet with Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's number two executive—a big, bald man with a booming voice and a personality that can be forceful and intimidating. Then he met with Bill Gates, the company's cofounder and number one executive and the world's richest and most powerful businessperson. "They said I was the stupidest guy they ever met," Risher recalls. It wasn't just that Risher was walking away from millions of dollars. Ballmer, Gates, and thousands of others at Microsoft shared an ideology. They believed that Microsoft was the most important and exciting place to work. The fact that a promising executive would want to work for someone else simply didn't fit their frame, so they dismissed it as stupid.

In 1996, Amazon brought in \$16 million in revenue. Three years later, its annual revenues had gone up a hundredfold to \$1.6 billion. By its tenth anniversary, the figure surpassed \$8 billion. What's really fascinating is that the company's "culture"—its collective "personality," or the values, myths, habits, practices, and belief systems of its people—remained pretty much the same even as thousands upon thousands of new recruits came on to the payroll. Ten years into its life as a company, when Amazon had twelve thousand employees, you could walk the hall and still see people sitting at desks built from doors, and you could overhear them talking about the five top reasons, in order, why they picked a certain mountain in the Cascades for the hiking trip they had planned for the coming weekend.

Not long after he had hired Risher, Amazon had become too large for Bezos himself to continue his practice of interviewing and approving all the new hires. But by then he didn't have to do so any longer. The first few dozen people create a culture that's self-perpetuating. Their personalities make up a company's cultural DNA, the genetic code that replicates again and again. Bezos hires a bunch of people, like Risher, who in turn hire many others. The newcomers arrive at a place that already has its own set of well-defined values, beliefs, practices, skills, quirks, and even delusions. Since they depend on Amazon for their livelihoods, they have a strong incentive to model their behavior on the people around them, especially on the stars and higher-ups. The newcomers try hard to fit in. If they can't fit in, they quit. If they fit in particularly well, they rise and become role models for the newer hires. The overall effect is that the culture created by Bezos and Barton-Davis and Risher is sticky.

"Cultures are these fantastic things," Bezos told me around the time of Amazon's tenth anniversary. "Cultures are not so much planned as they evolve from that early set of people. Once a corporate culture is formed, it tends to be extremely stable. It stays around. It ends up building on itself."

Cultures stuck for *decades* at a number of well-known companies, such as Microsoft, General Motors, and IBM, but my all-time favorite example is Anheuser-Busch, the company that sells about half the beer consumed in the United States, including the best-selling brand, Budweiser. Busch's executives were very well paid, and they could afford the most expensive wine from France and California, but they always kept kegs of Bud on tap in their beautiful homes in the suburbs of St. Louis. When they traveled on business to New York, they went to lunch at the fanciest restaurants, such as Le Cirque, but their assistants called ahead to make sure that they would be served Bud, which wasn't typically on the menus. When the executives arrived, six-packs of longnecks would be waiting in silver ice buckets on their tables, as if Bud were what everyone drank there.

When the Busch boys attended Oktoberfest in Munich, they would sample the most acclaimed German beers, and still, they'd say to one another that the award winners just didn't taste as good as Bud. Even after more intensely flavorful "microbrews" became popular throughout the United States, the Busch people still told one another that their mass-produced, cheaper, more watery Bud had the most appealing taste.

If you left another company and became an executive at Anheuser-Busch, you'd have to act "as if" you felt Bud was really the best beer, and after you acted that way for a long enough

time, you wouldn't have to fake it anymore. You would actually start to believe it yourself. That's how persistent and influential a company's culture can be.

If you really wanted to test the full power of culture and community, if you wanted to push it to the utmost limits, here's an experiment you could try: You could take a bunch of drug-addicted, violent, unskilled, psychopathic criminals and hire them to work at an entrepreneurial company with a reputation for customer service. And you could use this experience to reshape them into law-abiding, sober, peaceful, caring, cooperative, skilled workers striving to achieve the American Dream. That's exactly what Dr. Mimi Silbert has done for thirty-five years at Delancey Street.

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Normally when I go to interview corporate executives in the San Francisco Bay Area—at Google or Yahoo, for example—I wear jeans and sneakers. I don't worry if I haven't shaved in a couple of days or if my hair is somewhat disheveled or my shirt is wrinkled and untucked. And I look as if I belong at a Silicon Valley company. But when I was getting ready to interview Mimi Silbert, I made sure to put on my best dark suit, a freshly pressed shirt, and polished dress shoes. I was clean shaven and combed. I knew that the ex-convicts at Delancey would be neatly dressed and groomed, and I didn't want to feel embarrassed for looking slovenly.

When I arrived at the Delancey Street Restaurant in the middle of the afternoon, I was greeted by an African American waiter who was as large as a linebacker. He was so courteous and polished that he could have been working at the Ritz. He took me to a private dining room overlooking the bay and brought a tray of fresh fruit and cheese that easily could have fed a dozen hungry people.

Silbert burst in, followed by her dog, Amnesty. Like Jeff Bezos, Mimi Silbert exudes energy and laughs uproariously every few moments. Through two hours of conversation, she only rarely mentioned any terms that you might hear in an academic course or read in a psychology book. Even though she studied existentialism in Paris with the famed philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and earned doctorates in philosophy and criminology from the University of California at Berkeley, where she worked as a professor for a brief time, Silbert expresses disdain for theory. The way she describes it, three of the most influential ideas behind the psychology of Delancey Street were inspired by experiences in her life rather than theorizing in the academy.

Her first formative experience was growing up in a poor immigrant family. And pursuing the American Dream. She was the only child of Eastern European Jewish immigrant parents who spoke Yiddish with her at home. They lived very close to her entire extended family—grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins—in a small, tight-knit immigrant community in Boston. It was the kind of place where everyone knew one another and they looked out for and took care of one another. When children misbehaved, family members or neighbors caught them and made sure their parents heard about it. The sense of community instilled the notions of accountability and responsibility.

Silbert's extended family strived to join the middle class as some of their former neighbors had done. As a child she learned the work ethic by filling in as a soda jerk in her father's corner drugstore. The whole clan prospered, and when she was twelve they moved from small rental apartments in the "ghetto" to little houses they bought in the suburbs.

Silbert was a cheerleader as a teenager. Her family put such a strong emphasis on education that she stayed in school until she earned two PhDs. Then she taught at Berkeley while also working as a therapist. By her late twenties she had married and given birth to twin sons. End the story there and it would be uplifting, but conventional, just one of millions of tales of immigrants who achieved upward mobility by helping one another, learning the culture of their new country, believing in education, and working hard.

But that's not where the story ends. While she was a professor and a therapist, Silbert also worked as a consultant to state prisons and trained parole officers. "It didn't take me long to

realize that everything we did with the prison population was wrong," she says. The problem wasn't that prisoners had psychological disorders or that they were psychopaths. The real issue was that they were poor. "It was not a matter of therapy," she says. "The bulk of people filling up the state prisons are just the underclass. It is primarily poor people. They're people who have no idea how the American middleclass system works. It's a different culture, language, and attitude. It became clear to me that they needed to learn what I had learned."

The problem was that families had remained stuck in the underclass. Millions of poor people had become demoralized. They had lost the hope of moving up in American society. Generation after generation after generation remained poor and relied on financial assistance from the government, reinforcing the belief that they were hopeless and powerless.

"We're a country based on mobility," Silbert says. "But in 200 years we've already lost mobility for a huge section of the population. They receive welfare. They're not needed. They're essentially powerless in society, and it's the most corrupting thing I know. Because they live at the bottom of things, they're always passive recipients. People say that power corrupts. I can't say strongly enough how much powerlessness corrupts."

KEY #1

Relate

To overcome their demoralization, the chronically poor needed a new relationship to inspire new hope and help them learn new skills and new ways of thinking. Silbert's breakthrough idea was that the new underclass could learn exactly the way she had learned as a child in a Boston ghetto in the forties and fifties. Delancey Street would simulate the kind of extended family or close-knit immigrant neighborhood where she had picked up the habits, practices, and beliefs that had enabled her to succeed. She would put them in "a community culture based on old-fashioned American values."

Silbert's second enlightening experience came from working as a therapist in private practice. When she conducted sessions with clients, she was the one who learned from the experience. When her clients thanked her for helping them, *she* was the one who felt better. Therapy was astonishingly therapeutic *for the therapist*. Whether or not her clients actually learned anything or felt any better, Silbert knew for sure she had. "Everybody needs to be *me*," she thought. And this sparked another powerful idea: At Delancey the convicts could develop self-respect from helping one another, even though their own knowledge and skills were limited. If someone knew how to read at the sixth-grade level, he could teach someone else who hadn't gotten beyond the second-grade level. That student, in turn, could teach another skill to someone else. The idea is called "each one, teach one."

Silbert's third insight came from working as a consultant to fifty police departments. Her job was to help train new recruits to become police officers. Since cops are often drawn into dangerous encounters that require quick action, their best way to prepare is by "role-playing" — simulating situations and repeating the proper behavior until it becomes instinctive, until they can do the right thing in a split second "without thinking."

If we train civilians to think, feel, and act like cops, then why can't we *train* criminals to think, feel, and act like lawful citizens? If psychopaths acted "as if" they cared about other people, would they really start to care? And what if criminals trained *one another* instead of having professionals train them?

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Those were Mimi Silbert's inspirations for Delancey Street. Now let's look at her ideas in action:

Criminals choose to live at Delancey when judges offer the program as an alternative to serving time in prison. At first, many offenders see Delancey as a "get out of jail free" pass. They're still thinking within their longtime frame—their "criminal mind"—so they think that Delancey is a scam that they're shrewdly exploiting. Instead of submitting to prison guards and parole officers who love to "kick their butts," they're scheming to get away with "one more con" by taking advantage of San Francisco liberals who like to "kiss their butts." They don't go to Delancey believing or expecting that they can change how they live.

Look at a few typical examples:

Deborah was a heroin addict at twelve, a street prostitute at thirteen. She dropped out of the ninth grade. Her baby drowned in the bathtub while she was taking a heroin fix. She spent five years in prison. She went through many programs and hospitals, playing what she called "the cure game," but she knew she would always be an addict. She tried to kill herself three times. Then, "to beat a prison case," she went to Delancey.

Christina was a junkie and hadn't been out of jail for longer than three months at a time since she was twelve. She chose Delancey instead of serving two consecutive sentences of twenty-five years to life for robbery and violence.

Gerald has a scar on his neck from the 102 stitches he received after a knife fight at Folsom Prison. He had been incarcerated three times, for a total of fifteen years, for armed robbery and other felonies. One time he was sent back to prison after only a month of freedom. He came to Delancey as a way of getting out of a twenty-year prison sentence for drug crimes. Delancey requires a commitment of only two years. The decision was easy.

The pimps, prostitutes, thieves, drug lords and other gangsters who arrive at Delancey are usually addicts. At one point Delancey did a formal survey and found that 85 percent of its incoming residents were heroin addicts for an average of ten years. More than 40 percent were alcoholics. (The numbers add up to more than 100 percent because 60 percent abused more than one substance.) Typically they were hooked since adolescence or even childhood. "Some took alcohol to school in milk cartons in the second grade," Silbert says.

KEY #2

Repeat

Learning and practicing, day after day, how to live without threats, violence, drugs, or alcohol, and how to dress, walk, talk, and act like a middle-class citizen.

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When new recruits arrive at Delancey's complex in San Francisco, the first thing they have to do is overcome their addictions. The rule that no one can use drugs or consume alcohol starts from day one. There's no methadone for heroin addicts. They have to quit "cold turkey." They're put on living room couches and served homemade chicken soup for the bad flu that results. Alcoholics have a harder time, actually—you can die from alcohol withdrawal—so they're sent to a local hospital, always accompanied by longtime Delancey residents to make sure they don't run away.

"From now on, you're an ex-dope fiend," Silbert tells the Delancey newcomers.

"The problem of drugs is not really physical," she explained to me. "The real issue is: How do you make your life work without drugs or hatred? We don't use the language of drug programs that says you're 'sick' or 'in recovery.' Our environment is not a therapeutic environment. It's a learning environment." They don't bother exploring the particular reason why anyone was a junkie or drunk or a gangster: "Cause is irrelevant. We don't ask why. We know you can do it. Don't look for the cause; just know that impossible change is possible. Therapy starts on the inside, going for self-knowledge, which doesn't always change behavior. Self-knowledge is a wonderful gift, but if you're a self-destructive person and your life doesn't work, you have to start from the outside in—how you dress, how you walk, how you speak. At Delancey you spend one year learning an entirely new *outside*."

Those are the first things that the newcomers are taught by the residents who've been there longer—how to dress, walk, speak, and groom themselves as if they were part of the middle class rather than the underclass.

KEY #3

Reframe

The newcomers' arrival at Delancey's "Intake Department" is known as "immigration." They're told to think of themselves as members of a large extended family in a tight-knit community of immigrants who have to help one another if they are going to learn the ways of their new country and survive there. That country is the belief system of the prosperous, peaceful bourgeoisie, which Delancey embraces and embodies in microcosm.

Delancey is also modeled on a corporation. It's a hierarchical organization where performance and experience are the ways to move up. The only people who don't have job titles are the immigrants, who are assigned to grubby maintenance work. While they're living in open, communal quarters and spending their days pushing brooms, they see that residents who've been there longer live in private rooms and hold more prestigious positions. The veterans have risen to the middle (working as waiters or chefs or movers) or the top (running the restaurant or the moving business, which have many workers and take in millions of dollars of revenue every year).

MORE OF KEY #1

Relate

Delancey divides the immigrants into small groups, which function like immediate families within the extended family. Everyone is assigned to a group of ten people, all the same sex, and they share a barracks-style dormitory space. These small cells are the only aspect of Delancey that *isn't* hierarchical. They're called *minyans* after the Jewish tradition that ten members of a congregation may join together and hold a prayer service without the leadership of a formally educated and ordained rabbi. Aside from Silbert, there aren't any trained professionals at Delancey. There are no psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, social workers, or parole officers. "You can't have a healthy culture of change if there's a 'we' and a 'they.'" Beside herself, there are only criminals and drug addicts, and they're put into self-directed teams. "The ten people become the rabbi," Silbert says.

Nine of the members are "immigrants." The tenth person, who serves as the leader, is a longer-time resident who has assimilated to the Delancey culture. The leader is the first among equals; there's no hierarchy in the group. The idea is that all ten are responsible for and accountable to one another. Their group meetings, held three times a week, can be loud and acrimonious. "When a minyan leader yells at you, as a parent would, he talks to everyone else,

too," Silbert says. The entire group shares the blame for the failings of any one of its members. "By not caring, the others are equally responsible." If one person breaks a rule—stealing someone else's possessions, for example, even if it's just a T-shirt—the others are supposed to report it. "Minyans break the 'code of silence' of the streets, where no one talks," Silbert says.

If your peers catch you breaking the rules—and there's nowhere to hide, since the residents are constantly together—you'll be punished. The big taboos—drugs, alcohol, threats, and violence—get you thrown out of Delancey without question, but lesser transgressions get you extra dishwashing, the all-purpose disciplinary action. You might be sentenced to an extra hour or an extra month's worth depending on the circumstances. But the most powerful punishment is the disapproval of the community.

The minyan leader serves as an initial role model for the other members. "We don't start with asking people to take responsibility for themselves," Silbert says. "They don't have it yet. They just feel victimized. We develop change by asking people to see it in someone else."

The minyan meetings aren't a forum for people to talk about themselves and their own feelings. They're about criticizing others unsparingly, and harshly if necessary, for their mistakes, flaws, failures, and weaknesses. "What's critical is the constant feed back of your peers," Silbert says. "We do 'groups' but we don't do 'therapy groups.' A group is where everybody talks to you about what they see in you. If one person says something critical to you, you can say, 'Screw him.' If everybody says it, you realize, 'That's the impact I have on people, whether I intend it or not, and I have to change.' See, that's peer pressure, ultimately, in any family."

People are blind to their own faults—denial, denial, denial—but their flaws are easily seen by everyone around them. Silbert's brilliant way of combating denial is to eschew the whole idea of "therapy" and rely on peer pressure in a small, self-contained society that has a very strong culture. Another ingenious idea is having the immigrants learn to take responsibility for themselves by first asking them to take responsibility for other people.

The problem with asking criminals to care about other people is that they don't feel anything, at least not at first. They're not empathetic. Early in life they learned *not* to care, which is a necessary form of psychological self-defense when you're trapped in a culture of violence, poverty, hopelessness, and early death. "People don't understand what it's like to be a third-generation criminal," Silbert says. "The only way to survive is not to give a damn. And drugs are a good way, because they stop you from feeling."

Silbert doesn't expect the immigrants to care for each other, at least not at first. She asks them to act "as if" they care. Alcoholics Anonymous relies on the same approach, telling new members, "Fake it until you make it."

Psych Concepts #5

"Acting As If"

It's obvious that what we believe and what we feel influences how we act. That's common sense. But the equation works in the other direction as well: *How we act influences what we believe and what we feel.* That's one of the most counterintuitive yet powerful principles of modern psychology.

This same concept is actually one of the most important foundations of ancient religious practices. In both the Jewish and Christian traditions "inner faith and outer action likewise feed each other," write David Myers, who studies the intersection of psychology and spirituality as a professor at the aptly named Hope College. "Throughout the Old and New Testaments, faith is seen as nurtured by obedient action. For example, in the Old Testament the Hebrew word for 'know' is usually a verb, designating something one does. To know love, one must not only know about love, one must act lovingly. Philosophers and theologians note how faith grows as people act on what little faith they have. Rather than insist that people believe before they pray, Talmudic scholars would tell rabbis, get them to pray and their belief will grow."

One way to grasp this idea is to think of a couple that decides to adopt a pet. Let's say the wife really wants a dog but the husband resists the idea—he has never had pets and he isn't

naturally drawn to them. At first he grumbles about having to feed or walk the dog. Still, after several months of activity taking care of Fido, He'll probably develop a real affection for the furry creature. The act of caring ultimately instills the *emotion* of care.

If you grew up in a violent subculture where many people were killed at tragically young ages, and your psychological self-defense mechanism was to avoid caring for others, and you never learned how to care for people, then you never really experienced what caring feels like. It's a new habit or skill that you need to learn, practice, and master (Key #2), and once you do, then a whole new way of thinking begins to make sense (Key #3). The "acting as if" concept explains why *repetition* helps to promote *reframing*. Repeated personal experience over a long time is what conditions our gut-level emotions and strongly held beliefs. It takes new first hand experiences, repeated over and over and over again, to begin to change our "frames." Reframing isn't something that happens just by hearing another person explain a new way of looking at things. You have to *do* things a new way before you can *think* in a new way.

"Acting as if" isn't easy. Many people don't make it through Delancey Street. Around one third of the immigrants drop out or get kicked out of the program within the first few months. They return to state prisons, and in many cases, they realize that's where they would rather be. "The horror of prison is that it becomes comfortable," Silbert says. "Repeat offenders always have friends to come home to. And they very quickly learn to live by the rules of prison society—hatred, bigotry, gangs. The very rules that prevent you from living on the outside."

But most immigrants stay at Delancey because the first few weeks open them to the astonishing possibility that their lives could take a different course. They see that they have been able to live without drugs and violence, if only for a short time. Silbert, like Ornish, recognizes the power of "short-term wins" for inspiring change. The Delancey immigrants see the longer-time residents—people *just like themselves*—who've lasted for two, three, or four years at Delancey and now run its profitable businesses and are treated respectfully by outsiders.

In the beginning the immigrants are still thinking with their criminal minds, so the situation still doesn't make much sense to them. The tangible facts don't fit their frames. They've long believed that the only way for people like themselves to become powerful and prosperous is by dealing drugs, so some convince themselves that Delancey must be a scam, an elaborate cover for a drug operation. Deborah stayed at Delancey because she believed "there must be something 'dirty' going on," and she wanted to get in on the action.

So they spend that first year pushing a broom or a mop and being told to pretend they care about the others there even though they're surrounded by the kinds of people they've always hated. The Delancey population has roughly even numbers of blacks, whites, and Latinos who've mostly been members of ethnic or racial gangs. Would-be Nazis covered with swastika tattoos live alongside Silbert, whose family members were sent to the Nazi death camps. The "peer feedback" she gives them is: "Look in the mirror. I've got to tell you, you're not what Hitler meant by a master race."

What's fascinating is that even while she's humiliating these immigrants, Silbert doesn't bother to argue about their beliefs. "There's a rational for everything," she says, "even gratuitous violence and crime if you follow their version of reality." She can't appeal to their conscience because they've lived without conscience. "In the early years," she says, "the average Delancey Street person was a first-generation criminal, and I could say: 'This is what your mother scrubbed toilets for?' You could connect to a *feeling*. That's not true anymore. Now their grandparents write them saying 'Come back to the gang, sell drugs, and take revenge.' The gang mentality is based on vengeance. Prisons in California are controlled by gangs, and you have to hurt people if you want to be a part of the gang. This is a population who are considered 'psychopaths' or 'sociopaths.' They feel no guilt. They have no conscience in the traditional sense."

The immigrants don't feel any remorse for what they've done in the past, and Silbert doesn't ask them to, at least not at first. Delancey keeps them busy pushing that broom and being taught to read and write by other residents, and in turn teaching others whatever useful skills they possess, and practicing new ways to walk and talk, and acting "as if" they care for people around them. "We don't let them mope," Silbert says. "We keep them busy. Don't talk about the streets. We're busy; we've got things to do. People need you." Then a very strange thing starts to happen at some point during the first brutally difficult year. "Every success every

minute begins to show them their strengths," Silbert says. "And all of a sudden the act `as if' becomes real."

MORE OF KEY #3

Reframe

When criminals grasp that they *can* live without drugs, violence, or cruelty, when they realize that they *have* already lived that way for nearly a year, this new knowledge becomes extraordinarily difficult to deal with. When they begin to have real feelings for the people around them, they're overwhelmed by guilt for how they treated people earlier in their lives. These criminals are quickly overtaken by remorse and self-hatred. "They've been diagnosed as `psychopaths,' but they're actually consumed and paralyzed by guilt," Silbert says. That's when Delancey finally asks them to feel bad about their histories. "This great new self overlays the old self," says Silbert, "and you need to dissipate the guilt of everything you've done."

Many religions hold rituals of repentance, and Delancey's own ecumenical ceremony is known as "Dissipation." During a long weekend, as many as eighteen residents take turns spending hours telling their life stories. "We want the facts of your story but we need the emotions," Silbert says. "You look at every single thing you did and feel sorry. Let yourself feel it. In the early years of Delancey Street, Dissipation was the first time they had cried since they were children. Now, for many, it's the first time they've ever cried. It's the first time they've had feelings. You have an audience, and people say to you: `That's not you anymore. That's who you used to be.' You've `balanced the scales' some and you're not bad. Then you can face it. Forgiveness is torturous if you're not ready to forgive yourself."

"Balancing the scales" is a crucial idea at Delancey. Silbert tells the criminals: "You've done a lot of horrible things, and you can't undo them, but you can do good things until one day the scales will tip." When she talks with me, she explains her moral calculus: "All of us rise to the best of ourselves and sink to the worst of ourselves. I'm really big on the idea that nothing is either/or. You're not either good or bad. You're not either healthy or sick. Every day you don't do the right thing, then *that* day you're an asshole. There's no reaching the `healthy way.' You chose it by doing it.

"I purposefully avoid theory if I can," she says, "but I studied under Sartre, existentialist theory, for a minute, and that's what this is. It's all about replacing determinism with the concept of choice, self-respect, and control of your own life. I also try to teach that there actually are rights and wrongs. If you do something good, you should feel good about it, and if you do something wrong, you've got to press the pause button and say, `Oh, shit.' You should admit to it and fix it. We're dealing with people who've taken a lot society, and they need to make restitution. We do endless volunteering with kids, seniors, AIDS foundations, and on and on. I say: "You've got to be a more responsible citizen than anyone else when you're here and when you graduate because you're `balancing the scales.' "

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Delancey Street doesn't just teach moral principals. It teaches how to live in capitalist society. Silbert is an insider among San Francisco's corporate elite: She's a close friend of Howard Lester, the long time head of the Pottery Barn, and Mickey Drexler, the former chief of the The Gap, which has its headquarters a few blocks down from Delancey on the waterfront. It's obvious why they admire her accomplishments in business: "At Delancey we're running companies with people who didn't know how to do anything and had failed at everything in their lives," Silbert says, laughing.

Delancey began when John Maher, an ex-convict, approached Silbert for help in writing a grant proposal for federal money. She refused. Instead she convinced him that his program should be self supporting, and she became its cofounder. Delancey has never taken money from the government. Even though it does receive some donations from Silbert's corporate friends, such as Gap clothing, the program depends primarily on the profitability of its businesses, which are run and staffed entirely by its own residents. "We live on the edge," Silbert says. "We purposefully set it up so at any time we can fail. I say 'If we go down, I will take my degrees and earn several hundred dollars an hour, and you will go to shit.' It's hard for people to understand that they're needed and respected and accountable. It's best taught through other people. As you move up here, you have responsibility for an increasing number of people."

While Delancey is an entrepreneurial company in its own right and a training academy for future workers and managers in American capitalism, it also resembles a commune in many ways. The Delancey people don't just work together. They *live* together. No one at Delancey receives a salary, not even Silbert. The revenues from the businesses belong to the community, which provides food, clothing, and housing for the residents. Silbert was influenced by a visit to a kibbutz, an Israeli communal farm. But she prefers the metaphor of Delancey as a large extended family.

Delancey, like Amazon and other companies, has succeeded because of the strong, self-perpetuating culture that endures and builds on itself even as thousands of new people pass through in the course of many years. Silbert established and entrenched the culture by embodying its values herself, especially during the early days with those first 50, 100, or 150 people.

Psych Concept #7

Walk the Walk
(Don't Just Talk the Talk)

Howard Gardner, a professor of cognitive science at Harvard and a MacArthur Foundation "genius" award winner, writes in his books *Leading Minds* and *Changing Minds* that leaders persuade us not just by the stories they tell but also by the lives they lead—by personifying the beliefs and ideals they're advocating. In the business world this has long been known as "walking the walk" and not just "talking the talk." It's the simplest of ideas, and yet it's rarely practiced beyond a symbolic gesture here or there. More than anyone I've ever encountered in two decades of reporting on American business, Mimi Silbert really walks the walk—and her example shows the full power of this idea.

Silbert didn't just talk about being a "family."
She lived it:

Family members care for and love one another passionately. Not long after Delancey opened, Silbert divorced her husband and had a decade-long romance with her cofounder John Maher, a former child alcoholic and heroin addict who had spent years in prison for robbery and larceny.

Family members live together. Silbert and Maher resided at Delancey, and Silbert's twin sons, David and Greg, grew up there, hanging out with former pimps and prostitutes. Maher raised his two children there as well.

When some family members are able to make money, they help to support the others. In the early years, before the launch and ultimate success of Delancey's first business, the moving company, Silbert continued to work on the outside as a therapist and consultant, and she put every dollar she earned into Delancey.

"To get the culture started, you have to believe in it, live it, show it, be part of it," Silbert says. "You have to be willing to jump in a hole with people. The leader has to be willing to do it

with people. 'Change' was a verb and it should stay a verb. It has to happen in action. You have to do it. I don't think a leader can accomplish major change without being willing to slice yourself open and become part of the change. I say, 'You guys force me to be my best self because I live in a glass house.' “

The leadership of Maher, a former criminal and addict, was crucial to creating the Delancey culture. Maher became a local celebrity in the Bay Area, and his brother graduated from Delancey and was elected to San Francisco's Board of Supervisors, which runs the city along with the mayor. But when Maher began drinking again, he got into a car accident on the Bay Bridge in 1985 while intoxicated, and Delancey forced him to quit. Its rule against alcohol and drugs had to apply to everyone, even the founder. Maher, who had a history of heart disease, died three years later at age forty-eight

As of 2005 Delancey had more than fourteen thousand “graduates,” and while a small percentage eventually return to old addictions or wind up back in prison, overwhelmingly these ex-cons remain lawful, sober, and self-reliant. Deborah graduated in three and a half years and became a sales manager for a nationally known brand. Christina became a manager at a construction company in Sacramento. Gerald became the maître d' at the Delancey Street Restaurant, an experience that would easily qualify him to hold the same position at any number of other restaurants in San Francisco.

In most parts of the nation, companies won't consider employing ex-felons and public housing won't take them. Former convicts return to crime and drugs partly because those are their only options in a culture that demonizes them. But Delancey's local reputation has made it easier for its graduates to find work in northern California. “I teach our people that their goal is to change peoples' perception through good human interaction,” Silbert says. “At the restaurant with customers, you've shown that change is possible.”

Silbert and the Delancey residents have successfully lobbied to change a number of California state laws that curtailed the freedoms of former felons. They've gotten ex-cons the right to vote. Delancey residents run a polling place at the residential complex. They've gotten the right to be elected to school boards, the right to be licensed as real-estate brokers, the right to be admitted to the bar as attorneys, and the right to hold wine and liquor licenses, and what's even more impressive is that Delancey's graduates have done all of those things. If you've run a million dollar company for Delancey Street, you want and expect opportunities when you re-emerge into the greater society.

In recent years Delancey has expanded, replicating the program in Santa Monica, New York City, Santa Fe, and Greensboro, North Carolina. Slowly Delancey is beginning to change the public's perception of ex-convicts in those localities. Meanwhile, Silbert still lives in San Francisco at the original Delancey, which for the past thirty-five years has been *her* therapy. She preaches “physician, heal thyself,” and takes her own medicine. “I get flat,” she says. “All of a sudden, I just don't have any feelings, or I start feeling like a victim. Feeling sorry for myself. And I could get in my bed, surround myself with white chocolate truffles, and think of all the ways I've been betrayed. But then I'll run to the dining room, grab a bunch of new guys, and start talking 'as if' I care. And all of a sudden I'm excited again.”

CHANGE 101

Cheat Sheet #2

(Crib notes on the theory so far)

CASE STUDY: CRIMINALS

CONVENTIONAL STRATEGY OF THE THREE FS: FACTS, FEAR, AND FORCE

Society tries to deter people from lives of crime and drugs with the threat of long, punitive prison sentences. Upon release, parole officers assert strict authority over them.

Why this fails

FRAMES: People who think with a “criminal mind” instilled by three generations of crime, addiction, and poverty, have no real understanding of the sober, law-abiding life.

REPEAT: Criminals lack the basic habits and skills they need to assimilate into middle-class culture—from the ways to walk and talk to the educational and vocational training.

COMMUNITY: Criminals think, feel, and act in ways that help them survive in the violent cultures of the underclass and prison.

THE CHANGE STRATEGY OF THE THREE Rs

KEY #1 (RELATE): A new relationship with veteran Delancey residents provides new arrivals with hope. They look to the veterans as role models for change. Delancey also gives them an entirely new relationship with their peers, forcing them to learn to become responsible for and accountable to other people.

Psych Concept: Shot-term wins. After several months of living without threats, violence, drugs, or alcohol, the new residents realize, to their surprise, that they are indeed capable of being sober and peaceful.

Psych Concept: Walk the walk. Cofounder Mimi Silbert, who has lived for thirty-five years among the four hundred addicted ex-convicts, personifies the program’s values and ideals.

KEY #2 (REPEAT): They receive daily training so they can change their “outsides” —how to dress, walk, and talk like members of the middle-class—and practice sobriety and non-violence.

KEY #3 (REFRAME): They learn an entirely new view of the world—the “middle-class mind” instead of the “criminal mind.”

Psych Concept: Recasting a life’s story. Through the ritual of “Dissipation” and by learning the idea of “balancing the scales,” the ex-convict find a way to deal with the guilt they come to feel about their earlier lives and to see their lives in a different way.

