

# CLARK RAY



# 10<sup>th</sup> man

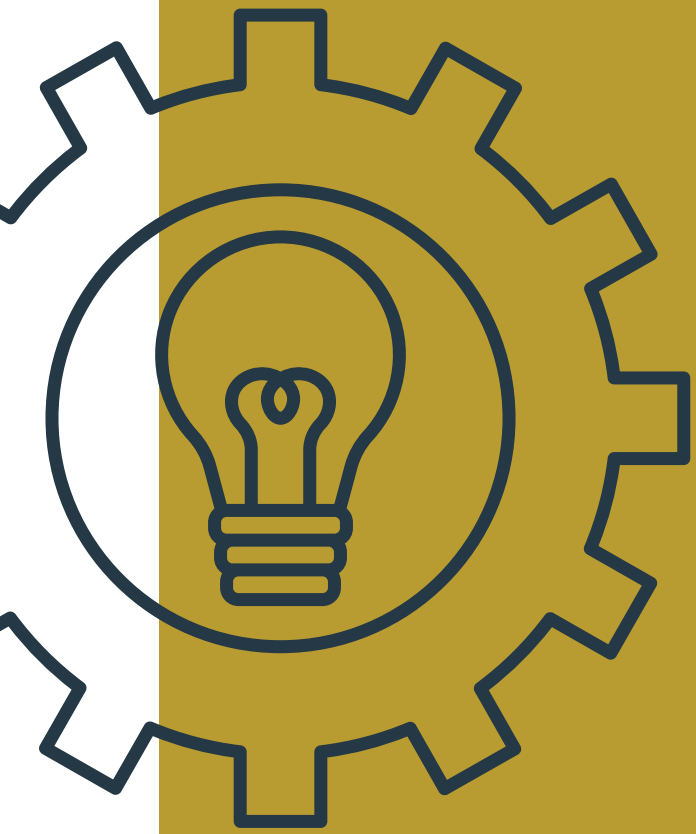
A BRIEF INSIGHT INTO BECOMING  
The person everyone calls when the sh\*t hits the fan.



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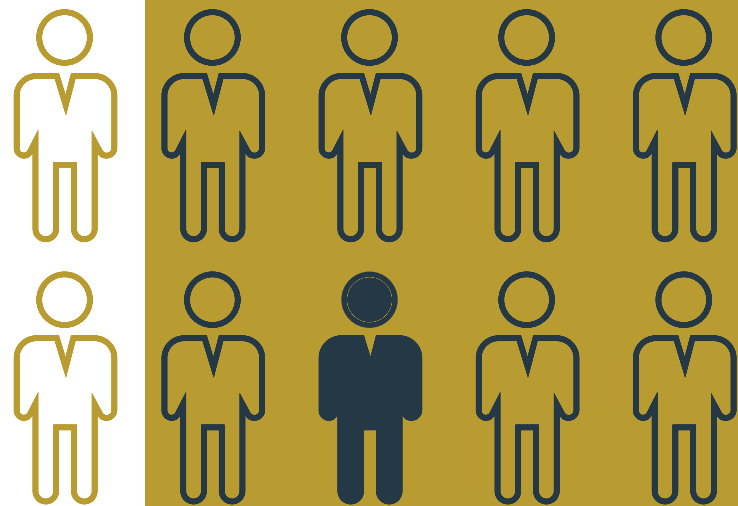
# 01

## PROLOGUE

Why being the 10th man is so important.

Why so few take up the challenge.

And why it should be you.





# PROLOGUE

## How far will you go to prove a point?

Would you, for instance, expose the flaws in a person's reasoning, knowing it might offend?

'Ah, but I would use tact and empathy', you might say.

Of course, I would expect no less. But would you be prepared to *lie* to save their feelings?

A purely hypothetical situation, but one we all face to a lesser degree on an almost daily basis.

*'Does my bum look big in this?'*

When faced with questions like this, there are several options:

Say nothing. Or worse, some lame excuse for an answer like: 'It's a lovely colour'.

It's an option, I suppose.

You could literally lie:

'No, that shade of mauve completely hides the fact your arse qualifies for it's own postcode.

Definitely not an option.

Or you could say what you actually think, as well as you can:

'You're an extremely attractive person who happens to have a beautiful/big/massive backside' (choose your own level of risk here).

During discussions with clients, I often sense a threshold beyond which they're afraid to pass.

I know the conversation is getting closer to this point by the increasing tension in the room if I venture beyond the expected parameters.

Everyone knows why, but no one is saying.

There can be any number of reasons:

Fear of reprisals from a specific member of the team, often the boss.

Fear of speaking out loud that which everyone knows but is too afraid to take responsibility for.

But, whatever the reason, I have to ignore it.

It's next to impossible to fix a problem without any discussion of the thing that's causing it.

Some people find this concept hard to grasp.

Surely, it's kinder to play nice, they suggest.

It is, up to a point.

Diplomacy, tact, and courtesy always help.

But nothing gets solved by dancing round the various elephants in the room.

And a satisfactory outcome is always worth any temporary discomfort.

Welcome to the world of the 10th man.



# PROLOGUE

In the autumn of 1973, rumours of an impending attack on Israel by a coalition of belligerent states began to circulate.

However, Israeli and US intelligence assumed that the coalition, led by Egypt, would not attack.

At least not any time soon.

The Egyptian army was suffering from a shortage of spare parts and a poorly trained army, according to sources.

Besides, it would soon be Ramadan.

Nothing to worry about.

On October 6, 1973, the coalition launched a surprise attack against Israel on what was, for Israel, the holy day of Yom Kippur.

Although lasting only a few weeks, the Yom Kippur war drew the U.S. and the Soviet Union dangerously close to direct confrontation.

As well as highlighting the consequences of underestimating security threats, it led to the loss of territory, the resignation of Prime Minister Golda Meir and the adoption of a new approach to decision-making in the intelligence community.

It has come to be known as the 10th Man Rule.

The job of the 10th Man is to challenge received wisdom and argue against consensus.

So important is this role in decision-making, that Israeli Intelligence subsequently formed an entire department dedicated to looking into obscure possibilities and unlikely alternatives.

The role of the 10th man is not simply to be the most awkward bastard at every meeting.

Nor are they simply there to find fault, advise caution or to offer the most risk-averse solution.

It is too nuanced and responsible a role for that.



## The 10th man and World War Z

In the 2013 film: World War Z, we see Brad Pitt trying to save us from the zombie apocalypse.

At one point, an agent of Mossad explains to Pitt's character why Israel was better prepared for a zombie attack than the rest of the world.

He explained that Israel's security council had 10 advisors that looked into world events. If the first 9 dismissed an issue or potential danger, then it was the job of the 10th man to overrule them on principle and look into the issue no matter how far-fetched the scenario appeared.

That way Israel would always be prepared for black swan events... and is what allowed them to build a wall for keeping out the zombies.



# PROLOGUE

In the 1997 film, 'The Devil's Advocate', the Devil, played by Al Pacino, tells the young hotshot lawyer, Kevin, that he always tries to ensure he is under-estimated.

The more unlikely an outcome, the more likely he is to triumph.

Where confidence is high, his chances of success are that much higher.

"Don't get too cocky my boy.

No matter how good you are don't ever let them see you coming...

Be the little guy. You know...

The nerd.

The leper.

The shit-kickin' surfer. Look at me."

**The devil loves it when we are so sure of our own wisdom that we ignore potential pitfalls.**

It's always the little things that trip us up.

The thing that should never happen.

From collapsing department stores (Sampoong Department Store, Seoul, 1995) to Chernobyl, to the sinking of the 'Herald of Free Enterprise', disasters happen when nobody thinks to ask:

'What if..?'

Someone has to have the nerve to say what needs to be said, and find a way to say it so that those involved don't balk or go on the offensive.

It's a tightrope.

Not for the faint of heart.

But consider what might happen if someone were to suggest a course of action counter to the needs of the business...

And everyone agrees to it.

It happens far more regularly than we might care to acknowledge.

Groupthink is very much alive and kicking arse in modern business.

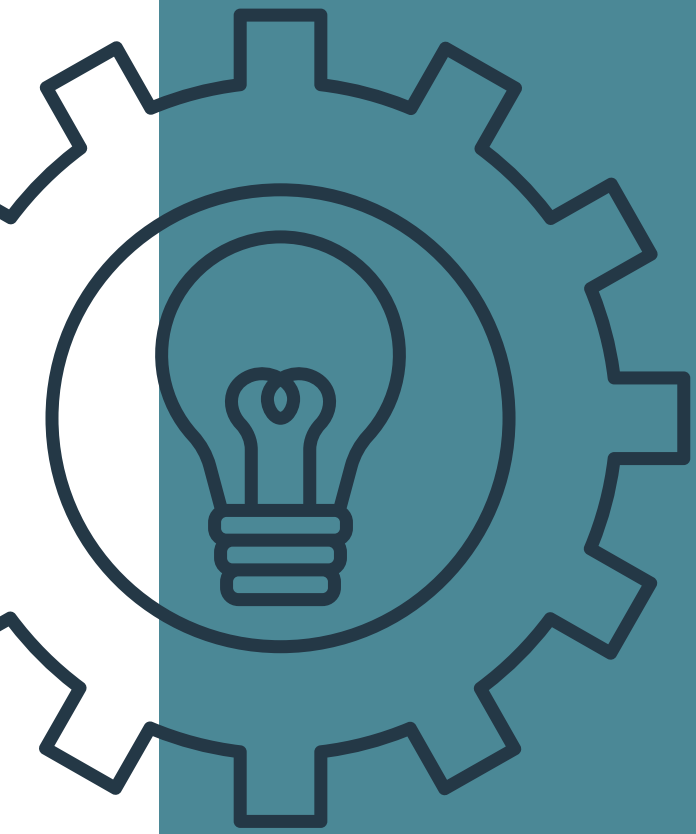
Usually for want of someone brave enough to step in and check the progress of such folly.

We will discuss the dangers of Groupthink a little further on in this little essay, but enough for now to know that every organisation, every government, every business needs a 10th man.

It may as well be you.

In fact, it should be you.

Because by virtue of the fact that you're still reading, you are marked out as someone willing to entertain the notion that the group might, and often is, completely wrong-headed.



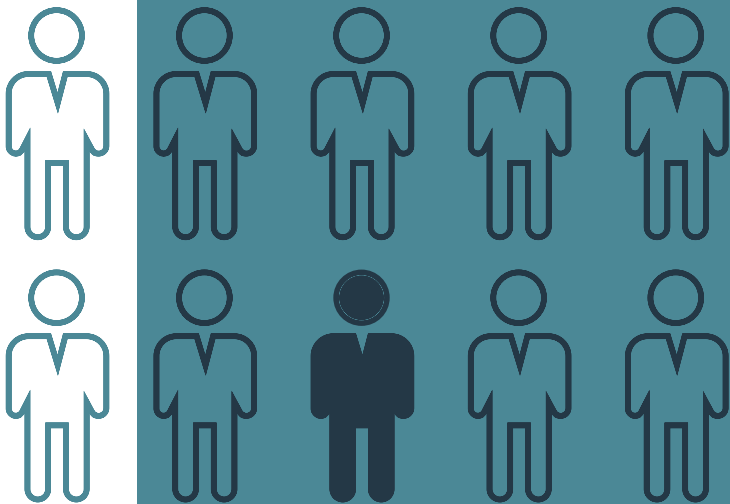
# 02

## WHY I WROTE THIS E-BOOK

Why does the world need a book about  
being an awkward bastard?

Why I thought I should write it.

Why I think you should read it.





# WHY I WROTE THIS E-BOOK

When you hear the sound of hooves...

Think horses, not zebras.

It's easy, when faced with problems, to think that the best solutions are the most complicated.

Simple means basic, low-tech and, therefore, most likely to fail, right?

There is also the added advantage that complicated solutions require specialist knowledge, thus taking the problem away from you, the leader or manager on the ground.

This leaves you more time to deal with all the other problems barking for your attention.

Take a (not so) hypothetical situation.

Your business has several ongoing, low-level issues. Slow-burn problems that may or may not become worse - even disastrous:

- Employee engagement is poor.
- Your Managers and Supervisors constantly firefighting.
- Customer/Quality issues are constant: you resolve them, they show up somewhere else.

There are many reasons such an environment might exist. Having tried what they believe are the most obvious solutions, many businesses turn to consultants for answers.

And, as far as I can tell, consultants love complicated. But there is a solution that many businesses overlook:

Training your own team to solve the problems at root cause. Or if the team consists of just you, learning to be the source of your own answers.

Of all possible solutions, this is the simplest. And, therefore, according to Occam's razor, the best.

Occam's Razor, or the Law of Parsimony says:

'When faced with several competing hypotheses, or solutions, the simplest is the correct one.'

*Or, when you hear the sound of hooves, think horses, not zebras.*

When faced with a problem, why think consultant, when your own people are standing right there?

If they don't have the problem-solving skills, train them.

This little e-book is just one chapter in an upcoming book designed to help businesses build resilience via a problem-solving culture.

In writing about the subject on various forums, specifically social media, I've received a great deal of interest about the 10th man concept.

Hence this special, pre-launch copy of the first draft of the chapter on the 10th man principle.





# WHY I WROTE THIS E-BOOK

**Being 10th man is not simply about being the awkwardest bastard in the room.**

There are times when, in workshops and training situations, I encourage the team to nominate a 10th man who can act as what many would call the Devil's Advocate.

The problem with this type of approach is that the idea of acting as Devil's Advocate simply means, to many of us, being an asshole.

And being the 10th man is much, much more than that.

Which is the point of this e-book.

However, if my sole reason for writing this were to outline all that the 10th man is, and isn't, I might not bother.

Those that are interested in the concept will invariably ask anyway. So why write something that is only needed for those that care to ask?

The real purpose of this essay is to persuade you of it's use in your life, regardless of it's applications (which are many) in the workplace.

Because being the 10th man, in any situation, is almost always going to make you the smartest person in the room.

And that's neither conceited nor disrespectful toward anyone you might engage with in your quest to live your perfect life.

Even the most intelligent person can become less than smart under the right circumstances, and those circumstances present themselves in the places and at the times we are least able to prepare for.

'What do we do now?' is a question that usually precedes the strangest of responses from the mostly academically accomplished amongst us.

Because solving problems is not simply about 'knowing what to do'.

Those that say they know what to do in a given situation, rarely do.

They 'jump to solutions' based on nothing more than past experience, educated guesses, vague hypotheses and often, a general sense that being the boss, or the wealthiest, or the best educated must make them the most intelligent.

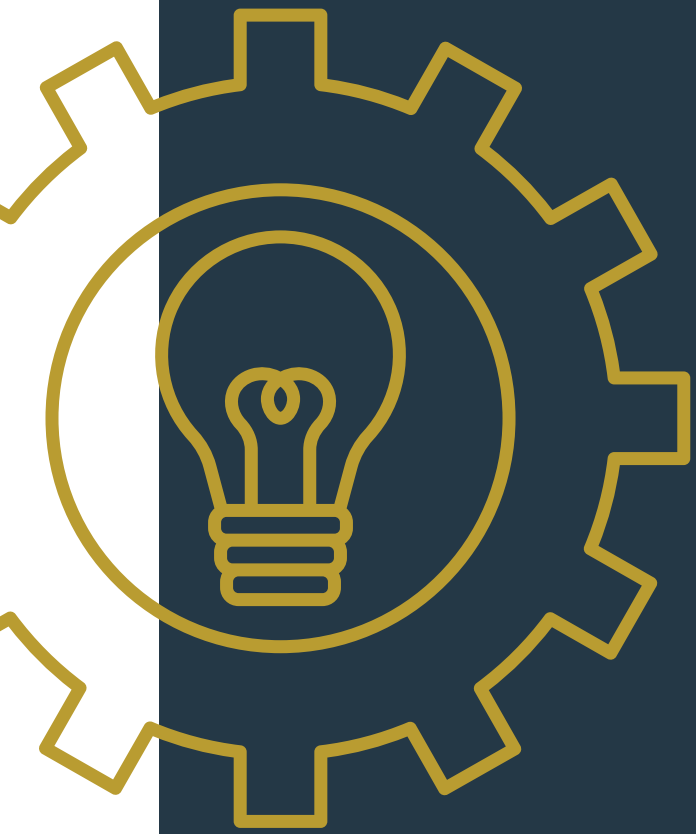
The smartest person in the room is the one that asks the right questions.

The questions that give a clear definition of the problem and, therefore, a clearer vision of the solution and any obstacles to accomplishing it.

I want you to be that person.

Once you've grasped this concept, you will be a force for change in whatever role you take on.

Nor is there anything altruistic about the writing of this modest book. The world needs the 10th man, and I hope that you will add to our ranks.



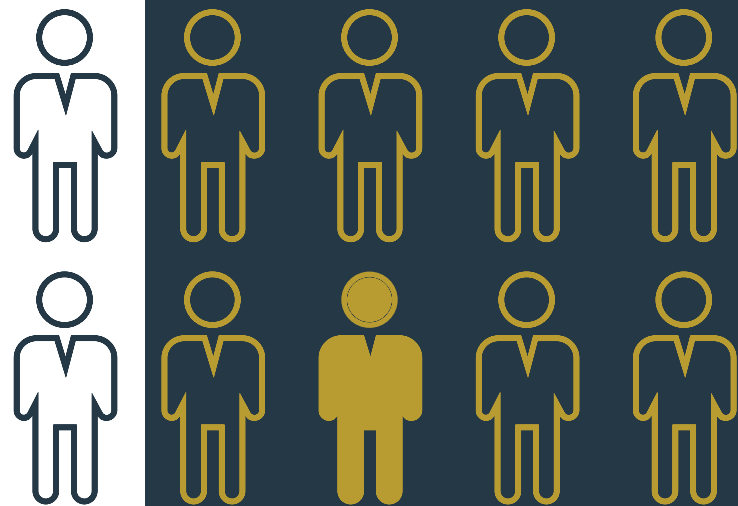
# 03

## INTRODUCTION

The dangers of Groupthink.

What it is, and how it comes about.

How to spot it, and what to do about it.





# INTRODUCTION

When British statistician Francis Galton attended a country fair in 1906, he didn't expect to come away having formulated a theory on collective intelligence.

However, after chancing upon a competition to guess the weight of an ox, he became curious.

Borrowing the cards on which the guesses were written, he calculated the average and, to his surprise, the average of the 787 entries turned out to be just 1 lb. less than the actual weight of the beast.

Thus, was born the idea of 'The wisdom of crowds', as described by the James Surowiecki book of the same name. But there's a problem.

In teaching problem-solving in manufacturing environments, we discover very early in the discussion that groups do, indeed, come up with far more accurate solutions to problems than an individual could ever hope to do alone.

With one major caveat:

The crowd only delivers an accurate solution when there is a diversity of opinion.

As soon as people reach unanimity on a matter, accuracy goes flying out the window.

Just ask all those who lose their shirt in a stock market collapse - when 'groupthink' is in the room, the individuals involved begin to act like one multi-faceted organism.

History tells us there's nothing more dangerous than a group of people all agreeing on a stupid course of action.

Think of any business that goes bust.

It would be fair to say that, in the weeks and months leading to the failure, there will have been lots of people running around doing all the wrong things.

It takes a strong will to withstand the collective will of a determined crowd.

Especially if they're afraid, as they so often are.

As Bertrand Russell said:

*"Collective fear stimulates herd instinct, and tends to produce ferocity toward those who are not regarded as members of the herd".*

But why would fear exist in a meeting of well-rounded adults? In a business, for instance.

Why wouldn't it? Ego's need to be protected.

Thinly disguised agendas concealed from view.

In my problem-solving training, one of the top priorities we discuss is the need to stand up for what we know to be correct.

Regardless of the pressure to do otherwise.

This is the wheelhouse of the 10th man.



# INTRODUCTION

There is a technique, or strategy, common in business, known as a pre-mortem.

As it's name suggests, it is the opposite of a post-mortem that would ordinarily take place after the failure of a project or business venture.

In the pre-mortem, the management team imagine that the project they are about embark upon has failed and carry out a 'post-mortem', to determine what, hypothetically, went wrong.

The purpose is obvious: establish the potential for failure and the reasons for it in order to avoid it actually happening.

There is, though, a problem – the previously mentioned Groupthink.

When a group of people are determined to move ahead with a project it is all too easy to gloss over possible pitfalls and move ahead without taking the proper precautions.

This is what happened prior to the Yom Kippur War.

Enamoured by a philosophy known as '*The Concept of Arab Intentions*', which says that, following the overwhelming Israeli victory in the six-day war, Arab nations would not risk another attack, the intelligence community missed some very obvious warning signs.

The subsequent post-war inquiry decided that a new department, the Devil's Advocate, would mitigate against any future short-sightedness.

Simply put, the devil's advocate takes the other side of an argument. That is, it's one of the roles.

Because, more than merely being assigned the role of questioning any and all viewpoints, the department was to actively investigate and research contradictory views.

The approach has more than it's fair share of detractors. There is a view that it's widespread use condemns it to being diluted or ignored.

Such is the way with any approach to problems faced by business and government - methods need to be applied correctly, or not at all.

Applied meticulously without fear or favour, the 10th man possesses a vital edge in all situations.

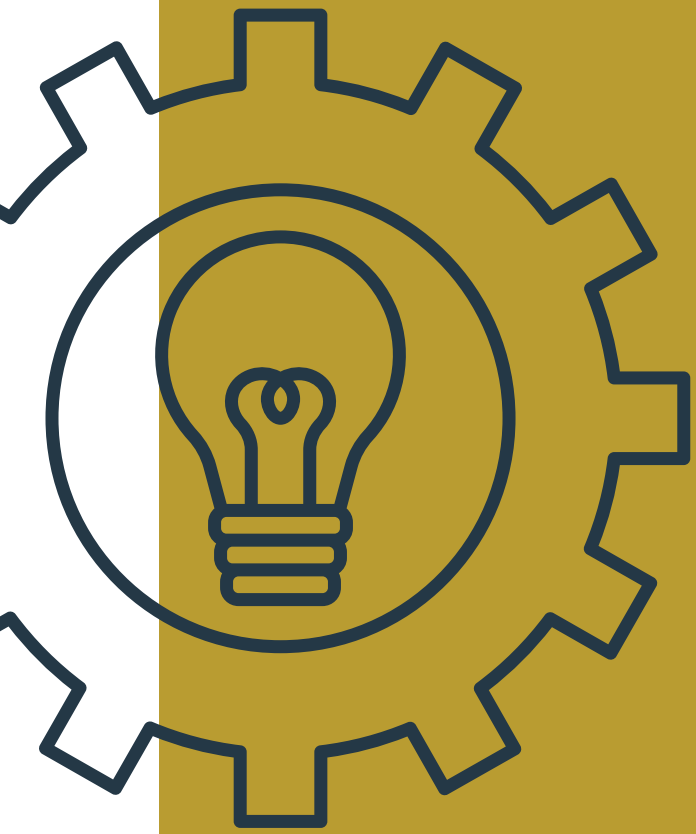
In business environments especially, where vested interests, silos and petty vendettas are common, it distinguishes the facts from fiction, and hard data from mere smoke and mirrors.

Because, let's face it - rarely is it the case, when asked to help, that the problem is the problem.

More likely, someone has dropped the ball.

Or there has been a negligent lack of clarity. Or there are other factors at play which, whilst not yet apparent will, when revealed, give cause for immediate, decisive action to avoid disaster.

If you're not prepared for such a situation, the decision you make will amount to little more than pot luck. Which is not a good place to be.



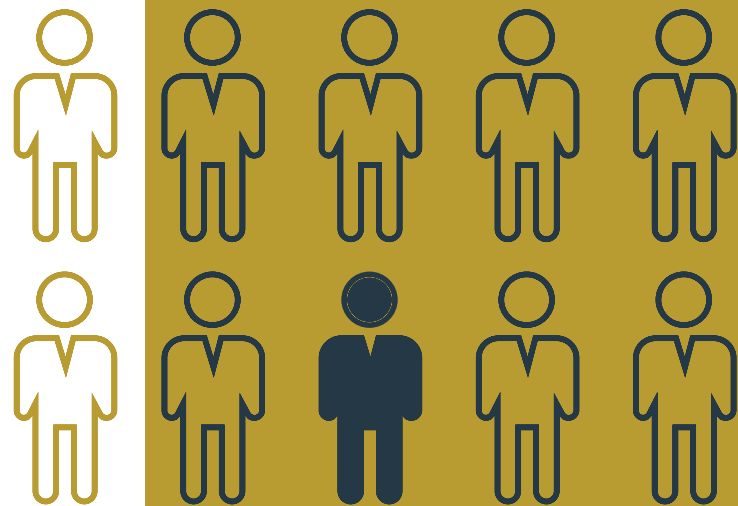
# 04

## THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY

Why the world is not the place you think.

Why a problem for me is not one for you.

Why that's a good thing.





# THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY

In his book, *Science and Sanity*, published in 1933, philosopher and mathematician, Alfred Korzybski said:

**“A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness.”**

Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, p. 58

By which it appears he meant that any representation of an object can be useful in understanding the object itself – such as the relationship between a map and the territory it corresponds to.

This pithy phrase was taken up by practitioners of NLP to indicate that the world rarely corresponds to our perception of it.

That is to say, when we perceive the world through our senses, we interpret those external stimuli into representations that fit our own beliefs and worldview.

The ‘map’ that one person draws of the world will almost certainly not match the ‘map’ of another person. Thankfully, they are usually similar enough for us to communicate.

When I remark on what a lovely day it is, you may observe the sunshine and safely assume that my idea of a lovely day is similar to yours.

Our ongoing communication is based on that similarity of interpretations.

There are problems with this concept though.

Because the map is **not** the territory, and only similar to it, we can get ourselves in a muddle.

Many arguments taking place today between various segments of society reflect the different ‘maps’ they follow.

Religious, cultural and societal beliefs are all manifestations of this difference in perspective.

So, it stands to reason that what's a problem for me might very well be less of a problem for you.

You can see how this might make the whole job of solving problems far more complicated than we might at first suppose.

Imagine, for instance, that a Managing Director reports to you that last quarter, the business only increased profits by 4%. Is that a problem?

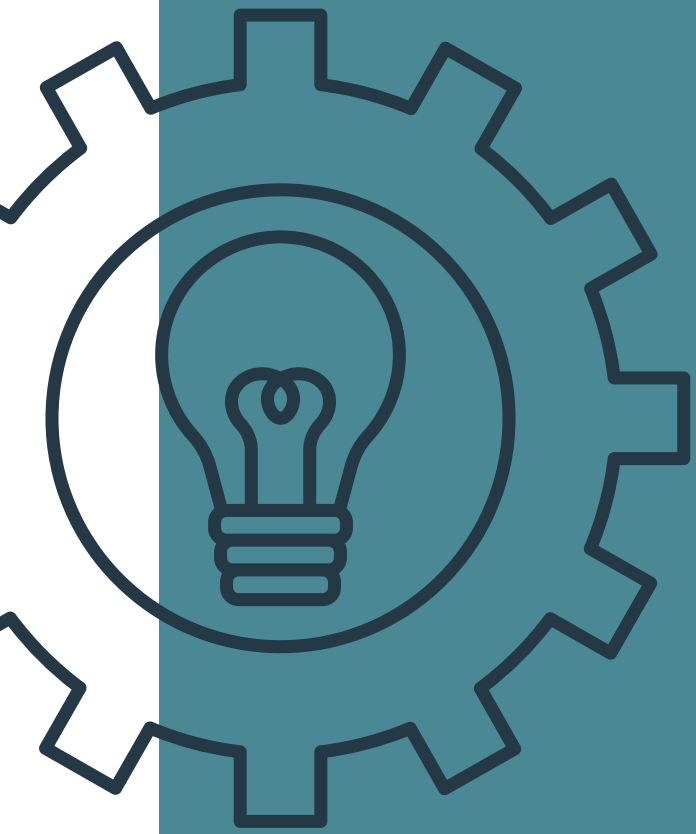
Who knows? What did they expect to achieve?

Was that expectation realistic? How do they know? What map are they navigating by? And how is that map aligned with objective reality?

If you take nothing more from this document, I would ask that you remember, when presented with arguments about what needs to be done, that the assumptions being made are just that.

Assumptions. And we all know what they do.

So, question all facts, interrogate all data and, when presented with seemingly unassailable reasons for doing a thing, ask: Who benefits?



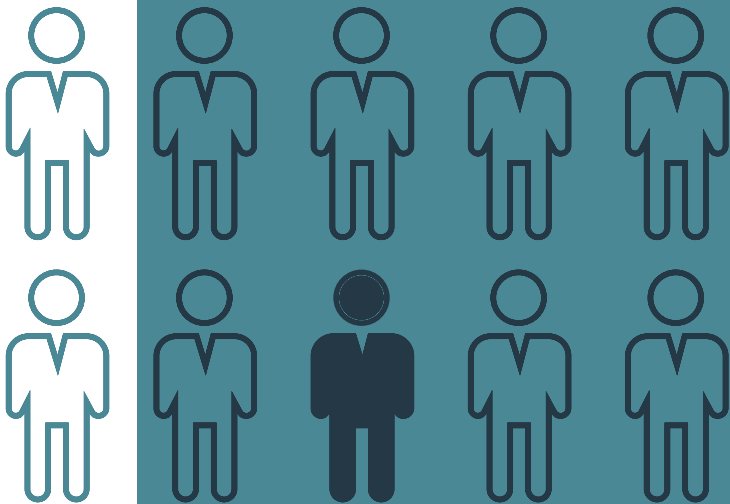
# 05

## WHO ARE YOU?

Why you need to know what you stand for.

How you can start to find out.

And why it matters.





# WHO ARE YOU?

Whilst it might seem an unusual question to ask in an essay on problem-solving, it's important to remember that the 10th man principle is an umbrella term that covers, amongst other things, the mindset one must adopt when approaching problems (or potential problems).

Thus, *who you are* figures large in the equation.

Think about it. Your boss, or, if you're the boss, your team, all disagree with your appraisal of a situation. Subsequently, there is enormous pressure to bend to the will of others as, if this all goes pear-shaped, the fault, and thereby the blame, lies with you.

'Oh, but we don't have a blame culture here', you might say. Really? Well, if you say so.

We will discuss in the next chapter the idea of orienting ourselves in the landscape.

However, one key aspect of 10th man thinking is that, rather than running ahead and trying to 'fix' things, we take the opposite tack and endeavour to make sure we are working from First Principles – the idea that any assumption cannot be reduced further or deduced from other propositions.

For example, in trying to resolve an issue, one might assume that we can carry out step x, followed by y and z.

This assumes we are capable of implementing such steps. Are we? Do we have the required skill-set? Are there unseen obstacles to doing it?

All these questions require us to know, above all else, who we are and what we are capable of.

No boxer would step into the ring without completely understanding his strengths, weaknesses, and the resources available to him under various sets of circumstances.

So, who are you? Do you fold under pressure?

Are you easily intimidated? Distracted? Duped?

It's important to know the answer to these questions as, when the sh\*t starts hitting the fan and people are screaming for answers, the rules will go out of the window.

In one of my training modules for managers, there is a section where I discuss the need for 'Psychological Ownership'.

Here is a quote from that training:

**"Psychological Ownership of a job or organization by an employee is a feeling of having a stake in it as a result of commitment and contribution"** - Psychological Ownership, Effects and Applications. Pickford et al. 2016.

As the 10th man, whatever your role within the organisation or group you're working with, you must, for obvious reasons, engage as if you were an outsider.

This demands a very different set of behaviours and attitudes than we would expect from a member of the team itself.





# WHO ARE YOU?

However, there are similarities and, even where there are differences, knowing what they are will help you embrace the correct mindset to carry out your role.

Let me first list the qualities necessary for managers to feel as if they have a stake in the business, and then we'll look at how these qualities shift to make the 10th man more able to fulfil his/her role:

1. [Sense of Investment](#)
2. [Sense of Identity](#)
3. [Sense of Accountability](#)
4. [Sense of Self-efficacy](#)
5. [Sense of Belonging](#)

Of these 5 qualities, you will notice the first and last are highlighted. These are the two qualities you cannot allow to take hold whilst acting as 10th man. The first is a Sense of Investment.

Yes, of course you may be a part of the wider organisation and, consequently, you are taking on this role of maverick for the greater benefit of the business. But you cannot become invested in the plans, strategies and desires of the group.

The situation is similar with having a Sense of Belonging. Whilst you may harbour real feelings of belonging to this team, their interests are only served if you can detach yourself from them for the purposes of this activity.

The 10th man must, by definition, be the one person not caught up in the hype of a situation.

Let's look now at the remaining 3 aspects of psychological ownership.

## Our Sense of Identity:

Not to be confused with a later aspect: **Self-Efficacy**, which deals with what we DO. This is about who we ARE, and how we see ourselves.

If I asked: Who are you? You might say:

'I'm Alex, Marketing Manager for XYZ Ltd.'

You might add that you're an MBA, a parent, a keen runner. All of which refer to what you do.

A better way of thinking about who you are could be to imagine a situation and ask yourself,

'In such a situation, how would I respond?'

For instance, several colleagues are discussing the boss whilst he is out of the room. You don't like gossip, but don't want to appear as if you're putting yourself above the rest of the team.

This is where you ask: Am I the sort of person that engages in this type of conversation?

The answer depends on how you see yourself.

If you're the sort of person that needs to fit in and would be uncomfortable being seen as an outsider, maybe you're not the 10th man.



# WHO ARE YOU?

## Sense of Accountability

Various dictionary definitions describe accountability as 'the obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions'.

Being willing to accept responsibility for one's actions is especially relevant in situations where you are deliberately arguing against the wishes of the crowd.

Yes, everyone in the room knows you're acting in a role that is of vital importance to the business.

Does that mean you'll be cut some slack when tempers are getting frayed? Not on your life.

So, to whom are you accountable?

Your team, of course, to a certain extent. But whereas everyone else is accountable to each other *and* the business, your accountability lies solely with the business.

A small point, but an important one.

Being aware of your accountability to the business as a whole will help you to withstand the pressure, subtle or otherwise, that will come from a team looking for ways to move ahead.

## Sense of Self-efficacy

First proposed by psychologist Albert Bandura, Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their capacity to act in ways necessary to reach specific goals.

If self-identity speaks to our relationship with ourselves, and accountability addresses our relationship with others, then self-efficacy deals with our relationship with the world at large.

It is the driving force behind everything we accomplish and, as such, is crucial to being the 10th man. How else will we get to the truth?

Articulating opposing arguments to any plan is only part of the story.

Think about it this way:

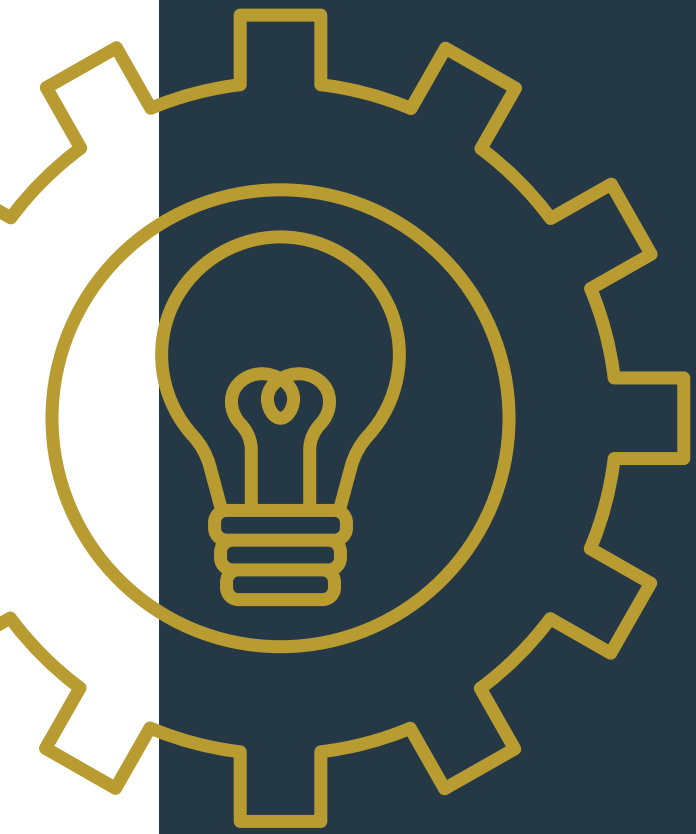
There is a sense of camaraderie and esprit de corps in a team of policy-makers. As such, there is a danger that the vested interests of one member may influence the decision-making of the whole.

The 10th man must be unconcerned by the potential disapproval of the group and find, not only flaws in the proposals, but the motivation behind the various points of view.

Why are you going this way?  
What purpose does it serve?  
Who stands to gain from this?

Not only must the 10th man find out those things, he/she must also resist the urge to reveal them. It is simply data, used without prejudice, to find the true nature of the situation.

You do not judge. You simply seek to help the group find the best way forward. And to do that, you must be oriented correctly in the landscape.



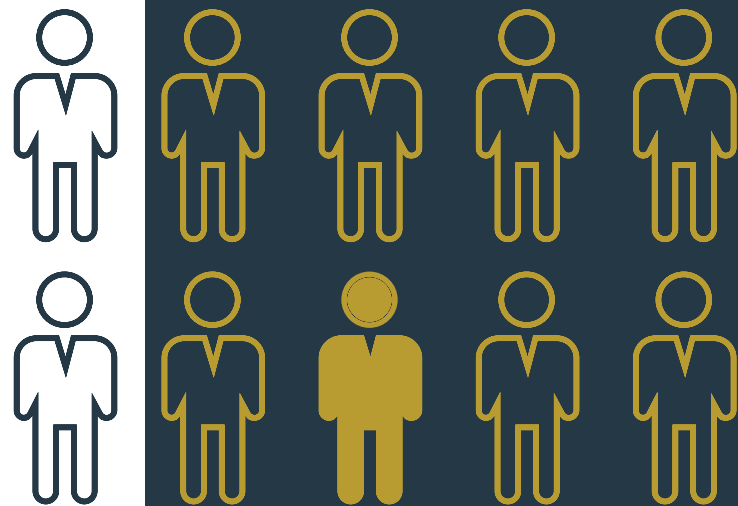
# 06

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ORIENTATION

How to find your point of reference.

What to do when you've found it.

How to calibrate your compass.





# ORIENTATION

Imagine you're dropped into the middle of nowhere and are told to get to a particular point.

What information do you need?

*The destination* is an obvious answer. You can't reach your goal until you know where it is, right?

However, whilst it's a consideration, that's not the most important. Certainly not for the 10th man.

If we took a viewpoint from above, as if watching the situation unfold via satellite, we'd see you and your team standing in the middle of a field.

Most of the group studies the map, occasionally glancing up to see if it coincides with the reality out there on the ground in front of them.

But you're scanning the horizon. Unlike the rest of your team, who are searching for signs of the destination, you are looking for something else.

You're looking for signs that tell you, not where the destination is, but something much more relevant at this juncture: *where you are now*.

You can't begin to plot a route until you know where it begins.

And even when you know that information, the destination still isn't the most important thing.

Your next crucial piece of information is:

*Which direction are you looking? How are you and your team oriented in the landscape?*

Why is that important?

Because, whenever you are handed a map, the first thing you must do is orient it.

That is, you must physically manipulate the map until north on the map is pointing to north on the ground, as indicated by a compass.

Otherwise, whatever landmark you see in front of you and whatever decisions you make based on that information may be totally incorrect.

Imagine you are told to move to a point 300 metres away.

Is that to your front? Behind? Which direction?

It's no different when acting as the 10th man.

How is your organisation oriented toward the greater world?

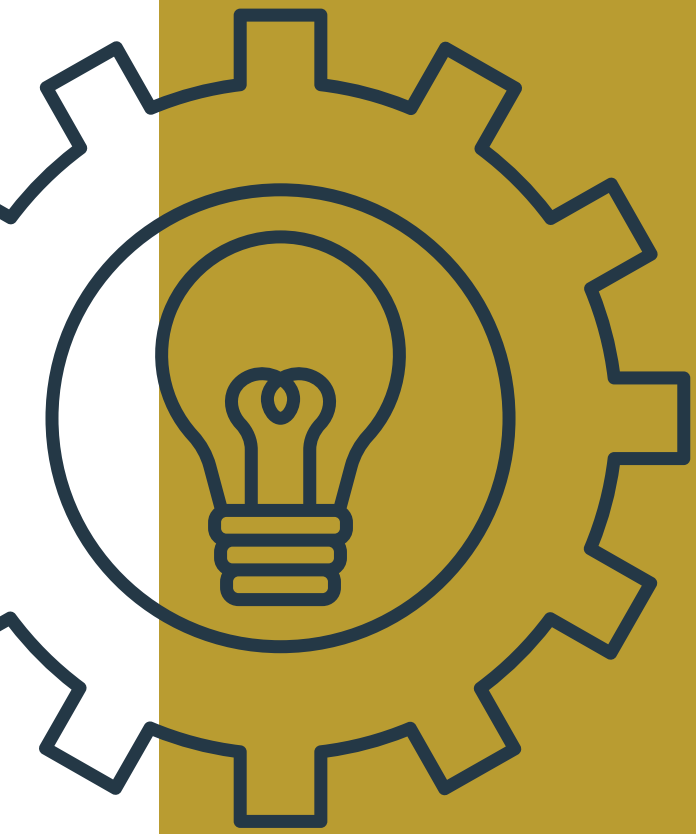
What is the stance on a given subject?

Do you agree with it?

Are you able to act as if you are?

As you listen to the arguments put forward regarding a certain course of action, you must, *by definition*, be the person who highlights flaws, alternatives and caveats to the proposal.

Almost as important is that you be the one who knows where true north is. **And can point it out when everyone else has lost their bearings.**



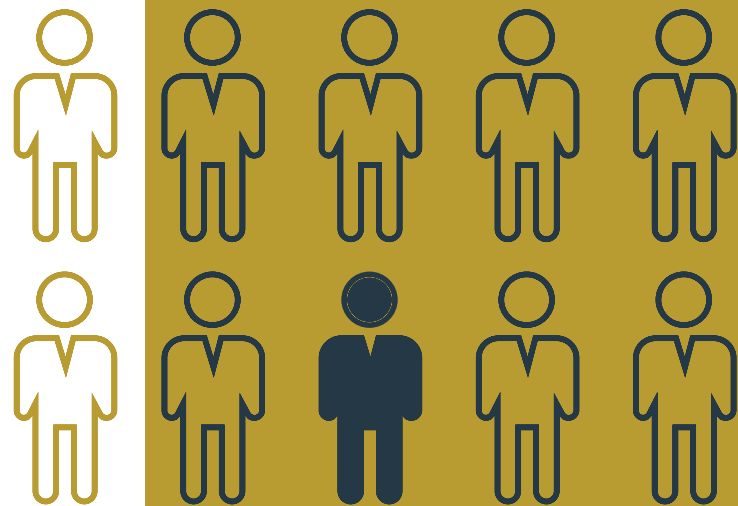
# 07

## BECOMING THE 10TH MAN

Why the 10th man is far more than just an awkward bastard.

Why most people get it wrong.

Why the world needs you to step up.





# BECOMING THE 10TH MAN

“Sacred cows make the best hamburgers.” – Mark Twain.

\*Note: This section is about overcoming dogma, not doing anything nasty to actual cows.

I didn't like school growing up.

It didn't like me much, either.

We got on as well as we could, until we didn't, and then I left.

They didn't try very hard to get me back.

The thing I found objectionable was their insistence on being right. About everything.

‘But how do you know? You can't prove any of it.’

There seemed to be no room for scepticism.

I can see how an attitude of such intensely anarchic irreverence would have worn thin.

Bertrand Russell had the measure of it:

*“I am afraid that education is conceived more in terms of indoctrination than enlightenment.*

*My own belief is that education must be subversive if it is to be meaningful.*

*By this I mean that it must challenge all the things we take for granted. Examine all assumptions.*

*Tamper with every sacred cow. And instil a desire to question and doubt.*

*Without this the mere instruction to memorise data is empty. The attempt to enforce conventional mediocrity on the young is criminal.”*

It goes without saying that I'm not averse to education.

I consider it my mission to help those who might normally be overlooked gain access to it.

It's what I'm all about.

I am simply wary of knowledge that has solidified and become static, inert.

‘This is how we do things round here.’ Ah... right.

I don't think it too pessimistic of me to suggest that the system we currently live in is designed to stifle excessive questioning of authority.

Easy to understand why this might be the case:

If we were all to take a contrary approach, anarchy wouldn't be too far behind.

And, as if further proof were needed, the rise in petulant displays of anger in all forms of public discourse today seem to bear this out.

Unsurprising then, that, as one side becomes increasingly angry, the other becomes more entrenched. It is the way of all disagreements.



# BECOMING THE 10TH MAN

Unless, that is, there is a 10th man present to point out the errors (and there are always errors) in the various points of view.

This keeps people honest. And avoids each side rallying behind their own sacred cow.

Hence my tendency to look for the mavericks within an organisation.

Not troublemakers, but thinkers and innovators.

Who, if given the chance, will have no problem putting your particular sacred cow to the sword.

How, though, does one create an environment in which the 10th man can operate?

This is a question I'm asked with monotonous regularity. Hence the book.

A few weeks ago I received a message on my LinkedIn profile from a former colleague who'd read a post I'd written about the 10th man and decided to try it out.

As the Managing Director, it was his prerogative, and everyone seemed happy to give it a go.

Until the actual meeting. No one said a word.

After some awkward comments the meeting slowly warmed up and it seemed to go well.

Until the 10th man tried to question some of the ideas and got more than they bargained for.

At which point the whole thing descended into a bunfight.

It happens sometimes.

I normally suggest a few facilitated meetings before attempting 'live' adoption of the 10th man role.

However, it can work.

The first thing to do is recognise the need for such a role.

That is, your organisation must sit down and discuss the concept of Groupthink and its associated dangers.

It should acknowledge the fact that, without a 10th man, all decisions are subject to bias, manipulation, Groupthink or sycophancy.

From this point onward, few would argue against the benefits of the role, and all that remains is to choose the best person for the job.

This is a decision that, ideally, wouldn't be made by the boss alone.

Everyone likely to be present during the meetings at which the 10th man is expected to participate should have some part in the discussion.

Having said that, most teams will have a fairly unanimous idea of who would be most likely to make the job their own. You should pick them.



# BECOMING THE 10TH MAN

Barring obvious considerations that rule them out, choose the one that already has support.

The team will have to suffer under the critique of this person at times, better it be someone they all chose.

The main condition for choosing a candidate should simply be that they are the right person:

They understand the role, it's importance, the difficulties associated with going against the crowd and, above all, are prepared to do it for the benefit of the organisation.

Once someone is chosen, the next step is to discuss the role with them.

Note: If your business has no desire to adopt the principle at this point, there's nothing to stop *you* from cultivating the art of the 10th man.

However, don't adopt the role if there is already someone in your organisation doing the job.

That way lies trouble.

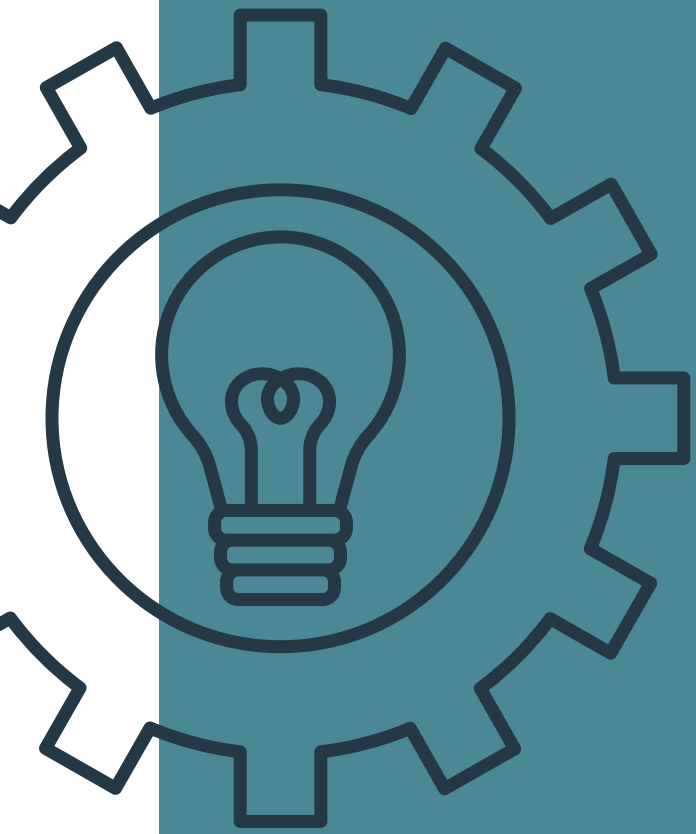
But if you are the 10th man, or want to cultivate the mindset, or will be discussing the role with a prospective candidate, the guidelines I want you to consider are over in the box on the right.

They are not hard and fast rules, but I do hope you will consider them worthy of some thought.

As with all character traits, some will fit better than others. Choose those that work for you.

- **Don't be a dick.** Of course, it helps if you don't mind being a bit of a dick should the need arise. It will help when the going gets tough. But exercise restraint. These people are your team, show them some respect.
- **Exercise restraint.** Don't criticise or attack. If you disagree with an idea, which is why you're there, don't feel the need to jump on it immediately. Think of your opinions as if they were salt on a meal - too much leaves a bad taste. Offer opinions sparingly.
- **Remember where your loyalties lie.** You are not there to score points. Nor is this your personal fiefdom. Your job is to highlight errant thinking and avoid disaster, not tear down every idea. If it makes no difference, let them choose the option they want.
- **Choose your language wisely.** It's difficult enough for Dave from Accounts to watch his idea dismantled in front of his very eyes without you taking revenge on him for your football team losing at the weekend. Maybe consider phrases like: 'That's an interesting point, Dave, thanks. But have you thought...'
- **Don't shine too brightly.** You may think you're the smartest person in the room, but if everyone in the room knows it, then clearly you're not. No one likes a smart-arse, and whilst putting yourself up as a target is part of the deal, making yourself so large that no one can miss is begging to be shot down.
- And lastly, don't take yourself too seriously.





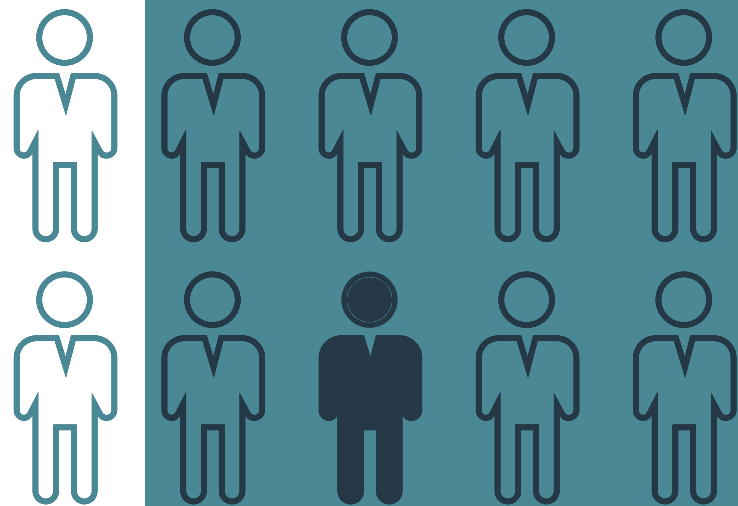
# 08

## CONCLUSION

Why the 10th man is not a thing in Israel.

Why it's the Chicken Tikka Masala of Problem-solving.

Why there's no actual advice in here.





# CONCLUSION

So, here we are. Thank you for taking an hour out of your schedule to read my little booklet.

It could quite reasonably have been called:

'The 10th man, the Chicken Tikka Masala of Problem-solving'.

Why? Well, to explain I need to backtrack a little.

In a recent conversation I was told, by someone who knows about such things:

"You know, the 10th man isn't that well known in Israel. Or rather, it is, just not by that name".

She continued to say that, whilst the 10th man has been used, in principle, by the Intelligence Directorate since the Yom Kippur War, it is more commonly known as the Devil's Advocate team or by another, unusual phrase: *Ipcha Mistabra*.

It means: 'On the contrary...' and speaks to the idea of taking a contrarian view of matters.

Not for the sake of awkwardness, but for getting at deeper levels of understanding, as discussed already throughout the book.

On this point, spokesman for the Israeli Defense Force, Eytan Buchman says:\*

*"Intelligence is all about piecing together information amassed from a variety of sources. Like any puzzle in it's early stages, some pieces can be misinterpreted, which could lead to a cascade of incorrectly interpreted information."*

*After the Yom Kippur War (1973), the IDF's Intelligence Directorate created a Red Team, a devil's advocate team that can challenge prevalent assumptions within intelligence bodies.*

*The unit is small and elite, consisting primarily of officers with academic backgrounds. One of the key elements is access.*

*The officers have unfettered access to information throughout the military and are capable of tendering reports to senior levels – even reaching above the major general who commands military intelligence.*

*The combination of access to information and the ability to challenge hypotheses by going above the command chain is critical in providing a control for intelligence reports.*

*The unit's tag line is based on the classic "He who dares, wins" used by the SAS, but changed to "He who thinks, wins".*

*The unit is also referred to occasionally as "Ipcha Mistabra", an Aramaic term popular in the Jewish Talmud that means "on the contrary, it appears that..."*

*\*To read the entire article: [Avoiding Groupthink - Ipcha Mistabra](https://tommccallum.com), go to: [tommccallum.com](https://tommccallum.com).*

It is upon this idea of 'Ipcha Mistabra' that the 10th man concept, as I have adopted it, is based. And why it's the Chicken Tikka Masala of Problem-solving. Let's go to Glasgow, it's 1973...



# CONCLUSION

Or was it Glasgow 1976? No one knows for sure.

For the purpose of this story it doesn't matter.

Suffice to say that, one night in 1970's Glasgow, or Birmingham, or wherever, a customer asked that their Chicken Tikka be made a little less dry.

Add a little cream, some tomato soup (really!), and the rest, as they say...

What had been an ancient northern Indian dish became a very British staple of curry-houses across the nation.

By tweaking and modifying, adapting and adjusting, the dish - neither wholly British nor Indian, metamorphosed into something with an identity of its own, representative of a modern, multicultural nation.

That is how I see the 10th man.

You will notice that at no point in the book have I discussed exactly how one should go about applying the principles of the concept.

It doesn't work that way. The 10th man is the antidote to Groupthink, the antithesis of Command and Control. It is the intellectual equivalent of the Desert Rats - mobile, flexible and completely uninterested in any pre-existing notions of how problem-solving should happen.

It is the scruffy guy out of uniform at the back of the briefing - quietly observing, saying nothing, and seeing everything.

*It is the person that, when the time comes for questions, asks the one question that makes everyone think: oh, shit, I hadn't thought of that.*

If I could leave one thought with you as we close this conversation, it is this: Question everything.

Examine every assumption. Ask why this is so. Against what are we measuring this objective?

Look for agendas and vested interests. I can assure you, they are there.

Remember: Ipcha Mistabra. 'On the contrary...'

The 10th man is an old idea, made new. Where once the Catholic Church asked its priests to take the other side of an argument and act as Devil's Advocate, and Red Teams assume the role of adversary, Ipcha Mistabra says:

Hold on. Not so fast. What's the plan? And why this way? Have you considered...

It is totally pro-organisation. It is on your side, and as such it acts in your best interests by questioning your motives, your intent and your ability to exploit available resources efficiently.

If you're likely to shoot yourself in the foot, the 10th man will have no qualms about telling you. Nor will it let you disregard the advice it offers.

It has been said that, in the weeks and months before a business goes bust, lots of people are running around making all the wrong decisions.

Now it doesn't need to be that way. Good luck.

