

# ***The Outward Mindset***

The Arbinger Institute (2019)



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## **PREFACE**

- The biggest lever for change is not a change merely in self-belief but a fundamental change in the way people see and regard their connections and obligations to others. (p. ix)
- Human beings are inescapably together—mutually affecting and being affected by others. (p. ix)

## **PART I**

### **WHY MINDSET MATTERS**

#### **CHAPTER 1. A DIFFERENT APPROACH**

- Leaders who succeed are those who are humble enough to see beyond themselves and perceive the true capacities and capabilities of their people. They don't pretend to have all the answers. (p. 9)
- Although leaders should provide a mission or context and point toward what is possible, what humble, good leaders also do is to help people see.
  - When people see, they are able to exercise all their human agency and initiative. When they do that, they own their work.
  - When people are free to execute what they see, rather than simply to enact the instructions of the leader, they can change course in the moment to respond to ever-changing, situation-specific needs. (p. 10-11) That kind of nimbleness and responsiveness is something you can't manage, force, or orchestrate. (p. 11)
- Mindset drives and shapes all that we do—how we engage with others and how we behave in every moment and situation. (p. 12)

#### **CHAPTER 2. WHAT DRIVES PERFORMANCE**

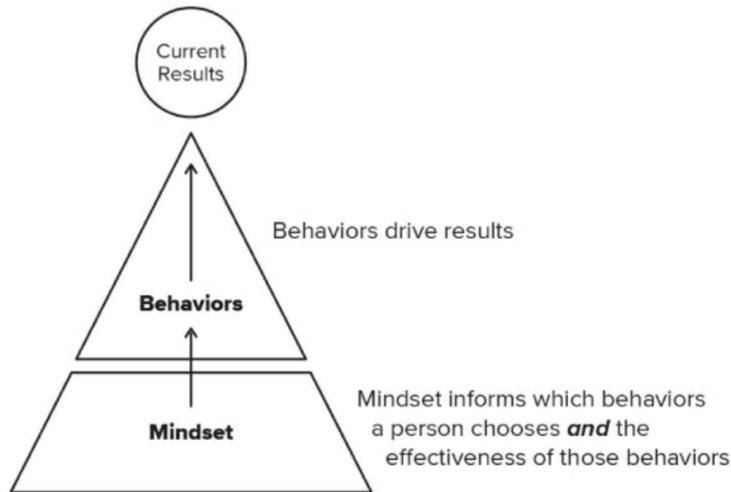
- The obvious contributing factor to success is a person's actions or behaviors—the things one chooses to do. (p. 13)
- The way we use the term, mindset, is more than a belief about oneself.
  - Mindset refers to the way people see and regard the world—how they see circumstances, challenges, opportunities, other people, and themselves.
  - Their behaviors are always a function of how they see their situations, relationships, and possibilities. (p. 14)
- While it's true that behavior drives results, it's also true that mindset drives behavior. (p. 14)
- A second McKinsey study finds that organizations that "identify and address pervasive mindsets at the outset are four times more likely to succeed in organizational-change efforts than are companies that overlook this stage." (p. 16)

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- The Mindset Model image (p.17)



- When you sufficiently improve the mindset, either of an individual or of an organization, you no longer have to specify everything each team member is supposed to do (the way those who operate from a behavioral model often assume).
- As the mindset changes, so does the behavior, without having to prescribe the change. (p.19)

## CHAPTER 3. ISOLATED OR TOGETHER?

- People are at once independent and dependent, both alone and fundamentally together, at the same time influencing others and being influenced by them. (p.21)
- Our connections with others are integral to who we are. (p.21)
- If there is one truism about life, surely it is that we are inextricably and inescapably together. (p.23)
- Given that no one is born into this world without others, that one's ability to think requires language learned from others, and that one's cognitive and emotional experiences are shaped by thoughts and feelings about others, thinkers began to argue that individualistic approaches miss the mark. (p.23)
- Who we are is who we are with others. (p.23)
- Martin Buber, who studied the reality of humankind's connectedness, observed that there are basically two ways of being with others:
  - We can be in the world seeing others as they are, as people, or we can be in the world seeing others as they are not as objects.
  - He called the first way of being the I - You way and the second the I - It way. (p.24)

## CHAPTER 4. TWO MINDSETS

- The task was not to help their colleagues to cut their budgets but rather to identify what they each could do to help the colleagues save—that is, preserve—their budgets. (p.29)
- With this mindset, they could consider only those options that would advance their own agendas. We illustrate this by pointing the behavior triangle at the person. We call this way of operating an inward mindset. (p.31)

- As they focused together on the collective result, their mindsets turned outward. We illustrate this by pointing the behavior triangle at the collective result. (p.32)
  - Inward mindset: people behave in ways that are calculated to benefit themselves.
  - Outward mindset: people can consider and behave in ways that further the collective results that they are committed to achieve. (p.32)
- In our work, we both assess and invite clients to self-assess where they are on this continuum. We do this to get a baseline against which to measure progress. (p.32)
- If an entirely inward mindset is 0 on the scale and an entirely outward mindset is 10, a relatively small percentage of groups assess their own organizations at higher than 5 on this continuum, with most rating them somewhere between 2 and 4. (p.32-33)
- It probably won't surprise you that people almost universally rate themselves much higher (i.e., as more outward) on this continuum than they rate their colleagues and organizations. (p.33)

## CHAPTER 5. SEEING TRUTHFULLY

- As their mindsets turned outward, they began to see and consider not only their own needs but also the needs and objectives of others (p.35)
- A person whose mindset is outward sees others as people. (p.35)
- Mindsets in a work context:
  - A person with an outward mindset will hold himself accountable to accomplish his own objectives and to do so in a way that makes it easier, not harder, for his colleagues to succeed in their responsibilities as well. (p.35-36)
  - By contrast, a person whose mindset is inward sees others more like objects — like vehicles to use, for example, obstacles to blame, or irrelevances to ignore. (p.36)
- One way to summarize the difference between outward and inward mindsets is in terms of accountability:
  - At best, someone with an inward mindset holds himself accountable for his own actions and performance.
  - At worst, he blames his poor performance on others. (p.36)
- It just means that his focus has gotten narrow in a way that blinds him to some of what is going on around him. (p.36)
- In contrast, someone with an outward mindset holds himself accountable both for his own actions and performance and for his impact on others' actions and performance. (p.36)
- He can see. (p.36)

## PART II TURNING MINDSET OUTWARD

### CHAPTER 6. GETTING OUT OF OUR OWN WAY

- When my mindset is outward, I am alive to and interested in other people and their objectives and needs.
- I see others as people whom I am open to helping.
- When my mindset is inward, on the other hand, I essentially turn my back on others; I don't really care about their needs or objectives. (p.52)
- With an inward mindset, I find justification by focusing on others' faults, real and imagined. I take up self-justifying and other-blaming narratives. (p.53)

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- If I have an outward mindset, knowing that the organization's success depends on my colleague's success as well as my own, I will feel an obligation to help my colleague succeed. (p.53)

## **CHAPTER 7. THE LURE OF INWARDNESS**

- Within organizations, every person who is burning time and energy seeking justification is doing so at the expense of the contribution he or she could be making to the overall results of the company. (p.57)
- With an inward mindset, a person focuses on what he needs from others to achieve his objective - what he needs from his customers, direct reports, peers and leaders or from his children, partner or neighbor. (p.58)
- He is primarily concerned with others' impact on him rather than his impact on them. (p.58)
- Whose needs and objectives — our customer's or our own — will be our primary focus and concern? (p.60)
- We had not been sufficiently learning about the needs, objectives, and challenges of the organizations that employed them. Because we hadn't been making enough of an effort to understand what these client organizations wanted their internal experts to help them with, we had no way to know if we were really helping. (p.61)
- This raises the following question: If they aren't alive to and interested in the needs, objectives, and challenges of those they are doing things for, for whom are they really doing them? (p.62)

## **CHAPTER 8. THE OUTWARD-MINDSET SOLUTION**

- When those who quit took the first steps toward the bell: the moment they stopped thinking about the mission and their teammates and started thinking primarily about themselves.
- So long as they stay focused on the mission and those around them, they can get through anything.
- The moment they start focusing inward and fixating on how cold, wet, and tired they are, it is not a matter of if they will ring out but when. (p.65)
- The Outward Mindset At Work (p.66)

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- Inward-mindset: People and organizations do things.
- Outward-mindset: People and organizations help others to be able to do things. (p.69)
- "Popovich understands," the author of the article writes, "that without relationship excellence, task excellence and superior results are built on feet of clay. (p.70)

## CHAPTER 9. THE OUTWARD-MINDSET PATTERN

- People who consistently work with an outward mindset excel in three ways that those who work with an inward mindset do not. They:
  - See the needs, objectives, and challenges of others
  - Adjust their efforts to be more helpful to others
  - Measure and hold themselves accountable for the impact of their work on others (p.74)
  - You can remember the pattern with the simple acronym **SAM**
    - — See others, Adjust efforts, Measure impact. (p.74)

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- The Outward Mindset Pattern (p.73)



## CHAPTER 10. APPLYING THE OUTWARD - MINDSET PATTERN

- **See Others (p.83)**
  - The teams wrote their part of the process in the center. In a circle around that, they listed the names of the people and groups that they affected in the budgeting process. They then drew triangles facing outward in each direction and wrote next to each group what they understood of their needs, objectives, and challenges. (p.83)
  - Our research shows that one of the most accurate indicators of mindset in organizations is lateral awareness — that is, the extent to which people are aware of the needs, objectives, and challenges of individuals and teams lateral to them in the company. (p.86)
  - Today when Rob calls on customers, his only thought is, how can I help?
  - He isn't there to impress the customers, and he certainly doesn't perform. He just wants to figure out what he can do to help them, and that starts with seeing — trying to understand the needs, objectives, and challenges of others. (p.88)
  - I would rather walk into a flower shop stupid than smart. I say to them that I want to learn how we could be more helpful to them. And then I just listen. (p.89)
- **Adjust Efforts (p.89)**
  - know: real helpfulness can't be made into a formula.
  - To be outward doesn't mean that people should adopt this or that prescribed behavior. Rather, it means that when people see the needs, challenges, desires, and humanity of others, the most effective ways to adjust their efforts occur to them in the moment.
  - When they see others as people, they respond in human and helpful ways. They naturally adjust what they do in response to the needs they see around them.
  - With an outward mindset, adjusting one's efforts naturally follows from seeing others in a new way. (p.92)

- **Measure Impact (p.92)**
  - All of this happened because Charles made a disciplined effort to track and hold himself accountable for his impact on his clients.
  - He called his regular check-ins with his client's self-accountability checks.
  - This approach to measuring one's impact requires nothing but a willingness to stay in regular conversations with others about whether they feel one's efforts are helping them or not. (p.94)
  - Another way to measure impact is to find metrics that show a person or organization what others can accomplish or achieve because of their efforts. (p.94)

## CHAPTER 11. DON'T WAIT ON OTHERS

- As far as I am concerned, the problem is me. (p.97)
- In fact, that they had, in essence, decided that they would rather the company fail than admit and address their contributions to its problems. (p.98)
- While the goal in shifting mindsets is to get everyone turned toward each other, accomplishing this goal is possible only if people are prepared to turn their mindsets toward others with no expectation that others will change their mindsets in return. (p.98)
- This capability — to change the way I see and work with others regardless of whether they change — overcomes the biggest impediment to mindset change: the natural, inward-mindset inclination to wait for others to change before doing anything different oneself. This is the natural trap in organizations. (p.98)
- This preferred state can be reached only if some are willing to change even when others do not — and to sustain the change whether or not others reciprocate. (p.100)
- This newly conceived objective, which now required the credit department to find ways to be helpful to the sales department, called forth a new level of initiative and creativity from the credit team. (p.103)
- The change to an outward mindset doesn't happen overnight. (p.105)
- Being able to operate with an outward mindset when others do not is a critically important ability.
  - It is the most important move. (p.105)
- The outward mindset doesn't make them soft; it makes them smart. (p.105)
- Remember, the principle to apply is, as far as I am concerned:
  - The problem is me.
  - I am the place to start.
  - Others' responses will depend mostly on what they see in me. (p.108)
- The most important move is for me to make the most important move. (p.108)

## PART III TURNING TEAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS OUTWARD

### CHAPTER 12. START WITH MINDSET

- We call mindset work slow in this context because too often people who think only of direct behavioral solutions to problems don't understand the need for attention to mindset. (p.115)
  - (1) consider the needs, objectives, and challenges of those in the other group
  - (2) think about what they could adjust to be more helpful to the other group, and
  - (3) consider how they might measure their impact. (p.116)
- If you start with changing mindsets, behavioral transformations can happen quickly. (p.118)

- We invite you to do a mindset check before you begin rolling out behavioral solutions.  
Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Have I (or we) thought this through an outward mindset?
  - Do I understand the needs, objectives, and challenges of those involved?
  - Have I adjusted my efforts in light of those issues?
  - Have I been holding myself accountable for my impact on these people?
  - Have I considered what mindset-level changes might be necessary in addition to behavioral changes? (p.118)

## CHAPTER 13. MOBILIZE AROUND A COLLECTIVE GOAL

- What is that constant?
  - In each case, the leaders involved their organizations in pursuing a collective result.
  - That is, a result that at once involved all the people in something much bigger than themselves and requires that everyone join with others for their efforts to succeed. (p.119)
- Everybody works individually, but they work toward a collective solution. (p.121)
- It's about taking differences and focusing together on results. (p.121)
- They don't understand how their own roles are essential to the overall collective result of the organization. (p.121-122)
  - Sometimes this is because the organization isn't explicitly organized around such a result.
  - Other times, this is because leaders haven't been clear enough or accountable enough to help their people see their impact on that result and take responsibility for making helpful adjustments. (p.122)
- Clarifying the collective result enables individuals and teams to improve their contributions within the organization without waiting for directives from those who have a broader view of the organization's interconnected parts. (p.122)
- Here are some questions you can ask yourself as you utilize the outward - mindset - at - work framework for redefining your role in this way: (p.123)
  - Toward your manager:
    - Do I have a clear understanding of my manager's objectives?
    - What can I do to learn about them?
    - What do I need to do to make sure that I am holding myself accountable for my contribution to my manager's results?
    - Whom do I need to work with to ensure that I help my manager achieve those results? (p.123)
  - Toward your customers:
    - Who are my customers, and what objectives do they have that I could help them with?
    - How will I measure whether they are, in fact, helped by my efforts? (p.124)
  - Toward your peers:
    - Which of my peers are affected by my work?
    - Do I know whether I am helping or hindering them in their ability to accomplish their objectives? (p.124)
  - Toward your direct reports:
    - Are my direct reports growing in their abilities?

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- Have I worked with them to set a collective result for the entire team, and do they understand how they contribute to that result?
- Do they understand how their work impacts the ability of others to make their contributions to the collective result?
- Are they holding themselves accountable for that impact in each of the directions of their work?
- What can I do to help them to do this? (p.124)

## CHAPTER 14. ALLOW PEOPLE TO BE FULLY RESPONSIBLE

- Organizations that perpetuate this leader/led distinction tend to be riddled with justification and blame. (p.125)
- Those who are tasked with doing things can always blame poor performance on uninformed or unrealistic plans, while those who do the planning can always blame failures on poor execution. (p.125)
- A distinguishing characteristic of organizations that operate with an *outward mindset* is the extent to which people in those organizations are allowed and encouraged to engage their whole brains in the planning as well as the doing of their work. (p.127)
- By whole brains, we mean all their faculties, including their wills and their hearts. (p.127)
- People operating with an outward mindset exercise, as it were, their whole selves. (p.127)
- At the end of the day, my leadership effectiveness is measured not by what I am able to accomplish but by what those whom I lead are able to accomplish. (p.130)
- People should be involved in determining the results they need to deliver in the context of a collective result. (p.131)
- Because the outward-mindset approach is identical whether working at the individual, team, or enterprise level, an organization's leaders can rethink the organization's work at the enterprise level in exactly the same way that all the employees in the organization will be rethinking and aligning their work in their individual roles. (p.134)
- A way to make this scaled alignment explicit is to help each person, each team, each department or division, and the enterprise as a whole construct their own outward - mindset - at - work diagrams. (p.134)

## CHAPTER 15. SHRINK DISTINCTIONS

- A good rule of thumb is that an organization is ready to deploy mindset-change efforts to the next level in an organization when those in the next level are seeing real change in the level above. (p.137)
- You could begin by allowing yourself to be guided by questions that prompt careful consideration of the experience of others throughout the organization:
  - What is it like to be an employee here? (p.137)
  - Do employees feel valued? (p.137)
  - Do they feel understood? (p.137)
  - Do they feel that the leadership appreciates them? (p.137-138)
  - What distinctions in the workplace might be troubling to them? (p.138)
  - What distinctions might make them feel less important? (p.138)

## **CHAPTER 16. TURN SYSTEMS OUTWARD**

- Hiring and onboarding approaches, sales and marketing processes, budgeting practices, incentive structures, performance evaluation and management systems, and every other organizational system, structure, and process can be conceived and deployed in inward-mindset or outward-mindset ways. (p.152)
- Organizations that are serious about operating with an outward mindset turn these systems and processes outward to invite and reinforce outward-mindset working. (p.152)

## **CHAPTER 17. IMPLEMENT A GAME PLAN**

- Individuals and organizations turn from an inward mindset to an outward mindset by committing to take small but consistent actions over time. (p.156)

## **CHAPTER 18. THE ROAD AHEAD**

“Because I’m not doing it for me, I’m doing it for him.” (p.161)

- Although an inward mindset in one person does not cause others to respond with an inward mindset, it does invite others to respond in kind. (p.162)
- The challenge is how to respond with an outward mindset when those we work or live with invite the opposite. (p.162)
- Start with mindset.
  - Apply the outward-mindset pattern
  - SAM: See others, Adjust efforts, and Measure impact (Chapters 9, 10, and 12). (p.166)
- Don’t wait for others to change. (p.166)
- The most important move is to turn your mindset, regardless of whether others change theirs (chapter 11). (p.166)
- Mobilize yourself and your team or organization to achieve a collective goal (Chapter 13). (p.166)
- Allow people (beginning with yourself) to be fully responsible. (p.166)
- Own your work — your plans, your actions, and your impact — and position others to own theirs (Chapter 14). (p.166)
- Eliminate the unnecessary distinctions that create distance between yourself and others (Chapter 15). (p.166)
- To the extent you have the authority to do so, rethink systems and processes to turn them outward; create an organizational ecosystem that energizes people rather than manages objects (Chapter 16). (p.166)
- Implement an outward - mindset game plan.
  - Commit to a regular cadence of outward-mindset activities, even if it’s only a few minutes at a time (Chapter 17). (p.166)

## **ABOUT THE ARBINGER INSTITUTE**

- Arbinger’s Mission and Process (p.168)
  - In our work with clients, we follow a three-step process:
    - (1) mindset change
    - (2) leader development

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(3) systems improvement (p.168)

- Before engaging, we assess organizational performance to get a baseline from which to determine best courses of action and against which to measure client progress. (p.168)
- We then educate employees by equipping them through training with the following sets of outward - mindset implementation tools:
  - self-awareness tools
  - mindset - change tools
  - accountability tools
  - collaboration tools
  - leadership tools (for managers) (p.168)
- These tools set up an implementation plan that we then help leaders and team members enact. (p.168)
- We track progress and adjust the implementation plan by conducting reassessments at regular intervals. (p.168)
- We sustain progress by building up internal expertise and helping organizational leaders turn systems and processes outward so that they incentivize and reward working with an outward mindset rather than working with an inward mindset. (p.168)
- While short-term growth sometimes can be purchased that way, ongoing sustained growth cannot be outsourced. (p.168)
- An organization will rise only as far as its own people are equipped to take it. (p.168)
- For these reasons, Arbinger's aim is to position and equip our clients with enough understanding and expertise in Arbinger's outward-mindset tools and processes to be able to "consult themselves" over time. (p.168)