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SEA

CAPTAIN

WAY

FOR FINANCIAL ADVISORS

CHARTING YOUR COURSE TO VISIONARY GROWTH

PHIL BENDER  
WITH GREG PATTON

# CHAPTER 8

## Shifting Behavior Patterns: The One-Degree Shift



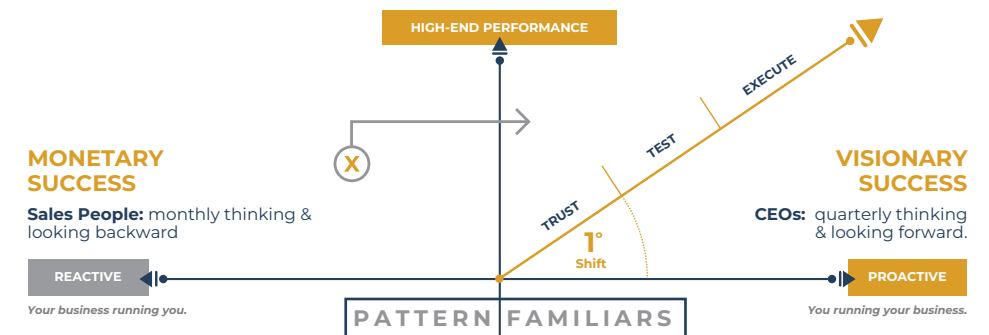
On a sailing vessel, a one-degree shift can take a boat dangerously off its course over a vast ocean. But in a financial planning practice this shift, this break in pattern, allows you to experience real growth — Visionary Growth.

What is the one-degree shift for your practice that — relentlessly pursued quarter-to-quarter over a period of three-to-five years — will take you to this new place? What risks would you take to achieve dynamic growth?

Establishing new behavioral patterns for you and your team are critical to achieve your new vision. The success you achieved at base camp may not work in the next stage of growth.

### Navigating Uncharted Water

I understand that growing is like walking into a dark room to turn on a light. When you open the door to the room, you are not sure what is on the other side. You experience fear, potential obstacles, doubt, and unsettled emotions. For these reasons, many Advisors choose to stay in the same patterns of behavior.



In addition, it is not always easy to uncover patterns in your business or in your personal life. Sailing into the uncharted water of your new vision includes summoning the willingness to face and overcome apprehension and challenges. It requires:

- Courage
- Discipline
- Self-Evaluation
- Understanding

When you pursue this discovery, you transition from a familiar past to a healthier, more productive future. You will also begin to recognize new ways of seeing practice development, market opportunity, branding initiatives and other possibilities.

### Discover Patterns

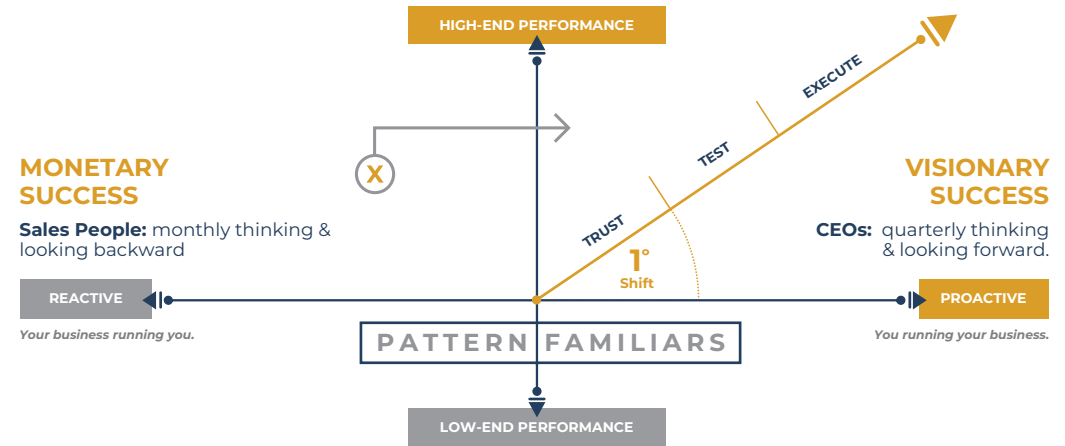
- What are the ineffective recurring processes in your business?
- Why were these processes put in place? Do you have an emotional reason for still following them?
- Have you ever previously tried to modify the processes?
- Why did you not challenge the status quo?

### Pattern Familiars are like Growth Gravity



One of my favorite books is *Fifth Wave Leadership – The Internal Frontier* by Morris R. Shechtman. The concepts in this book were instrumental in my career development. A critical component is the discussion around familiars, and how clinging to them can stop you in your tracks. Familiars are those things that we return to over and over, like a security blanket. Subconsciously these are the patterns we fall back into that were solidified when we were younger.

Familiars are feelings, not behaviors — it is how you feel when you are in certain situations. Your familiars can resurface when you come face to face with situations that draw those same feelings to the surface. The actions that result from your familiars can slow your effectiveness and might even cause self-destructive behavior. They hold you back from achieving professional growth.



### Determine Your Familiars

It is not always easy to uncover the familiars in your life. Shechtman lays out a process in his book that can help you transition from a past familiar to a healthier and more productive new familiar. Here are some points to consider when determining your familiars.

- Identify repetitive feelings. Familiars are feelings, not behaviors. Continue to ask yourself what feelings you were experiencing at specific defining points in your life. Keep asking yourself “why” until you get to the core — the actual feeling.
- Create a reverse timeline. This helps you to follow a feeling back to its source. The key is first to discover the feelings from your past that continue to resurface.
- Express your feelings without blame or forgiveness. Articulate you past feeling and what you feel today. Shechtman tells us, “Acknowledgement and acceptance of your feelings are what’s important; blaming will only get you stuck in the past. Some people take the opposite approach and magnanimously forgive everyone for everything. This forgiveness is just another way of not dealing with these issues.”

Pinpointing your feelings is an important first step before considering how to change the destructive behavior. Use the following list to maintain focus and stay on track.

- Core values
- Vision
- Mission
- One-degree shifts
- Growth steps
- Powerful gravitational pull of pattern familiars
- Sales

### Good Old-Fashioned Schooling by Grandma

My grandmother Anna was an immensely influential figure in my development growing up. She was a tomboy raised on a farm in South St. Louis, a fierce competitor, and an accomplished bowler, among numerous other talents. She had many bowling trophies and was very proud of them. When I was young, she took me bowling often and never dialed her game back during our friendly family competitions. I eventually became very frustrated about not winning during our games together.

After making a scene in front of the other bowlers following a close competition, I confronted her. “Why won’t you ever let me win?” She replied, “Philip, when you win, you will know it!” That day I learned that I had to perform at a certain level to beat her, and until that day, I would be second.

I’d love to tell you that because of this life lesson, I always finished first in everything. Not so, in fact as you will soon find, there are some elements in business that are out of one’s control, where influence, timing, and circumstance rule the day. But when it came to analyzing my own performance, and the performance of others, I learned a very valuable lesson from my grandmother that day.

### “WHEN YOU WIN, YOU WILL KNOW!”

In other words, there is a standard of performance that needs to be met. When you get there you will know it, feel it, and eventually master it.

When my coaching clients are winning. I share my praise openly and at times I can even be caught cheerleading. However, I am clear that my feedback is constructive and not a judgement. I will never “give it up to them” until I see it.

Even shooting baskets outside with my kids when they were young, I would never miss a shot on purpose, I would instead move three paces back to make the competition more fair.

This approach in coaching allows my clients to feel a real sense of “self-recognition” when winning occurs. Not just competitive winning but winning the battle of growth.

### Achieving Peak Performance

#### Why is this so hard? And why do high-end performers do it so well and for so long?

I have been asked these questions by a large number of Advisors I have encountered and coached.

Three things come to front of mind:

1. I am disciplined,
2. I am responsible,
3. I am accountable in all my pursuits.

I can best describe the differences by confronting my long-term sport nemesis, “wind sprints.”

If I am disciplined, I run my wind sprints without the coaches present.

If I am responsible, I run my wind sprints if the coach makes me the team Captain.

If I am accountable, I run my wind sprints for fear of the team and the coach’s ire.

So, with this in mind, using these last three statements as a filter, we can create a plan for you to execute your vision and performance goals, which will contribute to the one-degree shift that will take you to the next level.

## Discipline, Responsibility and Accountability

### LET'S START WITH DISCIPLINE.

I brush my teeth twice a day. I never miss a workout. I eat a certain way. I make 50 calls each day without fail. I ask for referrals at each meeting.

For me, my discipline superpower is that I am never late. And ... that's about it.

The roots of this life ground rule began with a constant reinforcement from my Dad, who as a coach, drilled into me the principles of preparation for baseball practice. This life experience created a pre-game anxiety that has stayed with me ever since.

For all those who have achieved multiple disciplines, I congratulate you. I coach many high-end performers who have these characteristics, sometimes having disciplines in two or three areas, and it continues to inspire me.

### RESPONSIBLE

Responsible means you own a problem, and you are hardwired to never let others down. This is where your rock-solid friend the Sea Captain lives.

This is a driver for many managers, field leaders, and executives I coach. People who have a role in which they are counted on and must deliver, or others get hurt.

For example, picking up a child from daycare. I am responsible in this role as a parent and therefore am dutiful in the role.

### ACCOUNTABLE

Accountable means you will not perform without support. To be accountable, you have given up on the ability to achieve with reporting to someone you respect or compensate. An example here would be working out. If you are disciplined, you can get yourself to the gym without needing anybody to check up on you. Accountability means you need a workout partner or personal trainer to hold you accountable for going to exercise.

### Back to Peak Performance

So how does all this apply to performance, leadership and a one-degree shift for growth?

I can think of five times when I performed at peak in my life/career. They all had, and continue to have, significant meaning to me in my life. During these periods of time, I had goal clarity, focus, motivation, and in all but one, had a mentor supporting me.

I'd like to share one of them with you, not to brag but to share some themes and understanding in hindsight as to why this happened.

The first time I can remember committing to peak performance was senior year in high school doing weightlifting. I had a football coach I admired who arrived in my junior year to turn around a mediocre program. He was in his twenties, big, intimidating and loved the weight room. He convinced the school to convert a classroom into a weight room. He taught me — and challenged me — to take up powerlifting along with a couple of other players.

My goal was to squat 500 pounds, bench 350, and deadlift 400. But the underlying goal, the deeper goal, was to get a scholarship for football that would be helpful to my folks financially. In this pursuit, there were some tough days, plateaus and huge breakthroughs, but I got there and accepted a football scholarship after the season ended.

This was a two-year stretch of road that culminated in a reward and became one of my peak performance moments.

I share this story with clients because in my journey, not of physical risk, but of great interpersonal risk, I am forever grateful for my guides.

During my first experience with peak performance, my high school coach led by example. He eventually maxed out once we hit the 480 squat. It was impressive for a 29-year-old former athlete, and he kept his ego in check to watch me go to the next level.

So, what were the themes?

1. A support system comprised of teammates engaged in consistent activity.
2. A mentor/coach who walked the path ahead and participated in the action with me. As I got into the heavier weights, he was the only one who could lift with me.
3. Charting progress and recognizing success with a vision/execution board to track progress.
4. A clearly structured calendar from which I did not deviate.

I was extremely focused and had no escape route planned. Because I adhered to a well-organized calendar and disciplined behavior, I achieved the one-degree shift necessary over 18 months to reach my visionary outcome of a football scholarship.

So why did my peak performance end during the period that followed?

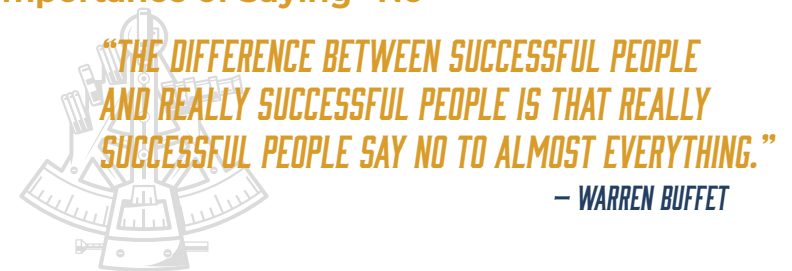
1. Mastery
2. Goal attainment
3. Distraction
4. Vision clarity

So how can adults — with complex lives, numerous commitments and multiple priorities — get the most out of themselves?

You must design your environment so you have to perform. In your practice, there are many obstacles to growth, and most of them are between your ears. To perform at peak, create the one-degree shift that over time will get you to the next level. You must pay attention to yourself first because leadership starts with you.

### ONE-DEGREE SHIFT APPLICATION

#### The Importance of Saying “No”



Warren Buffett learned a long time ago that the greatest commodity of all is time. He simply mastered the art and practice of setting boundaries for himself.

Your odds of success improve when you are forced to direct all your energy and attention to fewer tasks and ignore distractions. It is crucial to ruthlessly trim away good ideas to make room for great ones. *(Clear)*

For most ambitious people, we want to accomplish things. We are driven for results, doing more, learning things, getting promoted, and starting new ventures. But we also have our personal lives we can't ignore for optimum balance and happiness. Ambition in this sense can mean taking care of family priorities, expanding our social circles, and pursuing hobbies and other interests.

That's when Buffett's advice is a bull's-eye to our conscience. We have to know what to shoot for to simplify our lives. It means saying no over and over again to the unimportant things flying in our direction every day and remaining focused on saying yes to the few things that truly matter.

Steve Jobs agreed. It's about focus. Jobs said, "People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully. I'm actually as proud of the things we haven't done as the things I have done. Innovation is saying no to 1,000 things." (*Schwantes*)