

Get More of What You Really Want

Use this system to attain the future of your dreams.

By Terrence Fernsler

Seeing Red Cars: Driving Yourself, Your Team, and Your Organization to a Positive Future

By Laura Goodrich. Softcover. 187 pages. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, bkconnection.com.


The title of this book is a metaphor for focusing on what you want. If you want a red car, you begin to notice all the red cars on the road. Focused thinking is necessary to get what you want, because it drives you to take the actions needed.

Too often, when thinking about our aspirations, we focus on what we don't want: We don't want politicians to act like morons; we don't want foundations to reject our proposals; we don't want people to be homeless. We're more likely to find positive solutions if we reframe our thinking: We want politicians to instate an equitable income tax; we want to collaborate with foundations to create exceptional programs; we want people to have comfortable, affordable shelter.

Laura Goodrich takes us on a journey away from negative thoughts and fears. She guides us through a process of determining our interests, passions, values, and assets; matching them with goals; and developing useful plans to reach those goals.

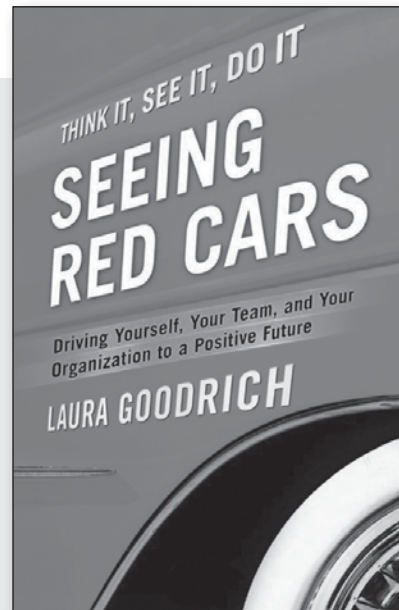
Attaining goals may take longer than planned. Setbacks do happen, but keeping a positive focus on our intentions will make it easier to redirect our efforts and find alternative paths.

The steps in the book may take much practice before a turnaround happens, but it's well worth the practice. Focusing on what organizations can do, rather than simply reacting to what's wrong, makes them more accountable.

Those who clearly communicate their values and focus on the positive aspects of their organizations will attract the best people. They'll build an asset base that will create meaningful change. Goodrich, through this book, guides us toward creating such organizations. 

Terrence Fernsler has been a nonprofit professional for over 30 years and is currently a candidate for a Master's in Nonprofit Leadership degree at Seattle University.

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Moving toward a Positive Future

Here are steps to building an organizational culture in which people focus on what's truly important, unleash their creativity, and achieve breakthrough results.

Focus on ambassadors. When people receive new information, they react in one of three ways: 20% (Laura Goodrich calls these people the ambassadors) are excited about it; 50% (the fence-sitters) are cautious; and 30% (the detractors) are openly opposed. Goodrich advises putting your energy into the 20% who are excited and the 50% who are cautious. Don't concentrate your energies on the detractors.

Consciously break the pattern of thinking about what you don't want and, instead, shift to picturing what you want to happen. Create an "I want" statement that is specific and measurable, with a realistic timeline.

Seek information over a broad, varied horizon. Look in unusual places.

Follow your intuition. Note hunches that fly into your mind without notice.

Communicate your vision in a way that aligns people's individual "wants" with what you want for your organization.

Take it slow. Don't try to force change too quickly. Break it into small chunks, and move one step at a time. To create and sustain change, you need to take intentional, repetitive actions that will eventually achieve the outcomes you desire.