



In-Spire

Leadership Golden Notebook One

Vision driven leadership
Build inspiring relationships

JONATHAN (JONNY) SCHAUDER

Jack thought to himself that people may or may not be complicated, but the ways people try to explain the human condition are complicated. He committed himself to finding a simpler way to understand what we all experience.

Jack's journey continued.

A particular psychologist called Fitzgerald was recommended to Jack on a few occasions. Fitzgerald's reputation for helping people seemed quite legendary.

Jack sought out Fitzgerald and booked a meeting.

Jack began. "I've spoken to a lot of people and done a lot of personal learning, yet I've been told that I need to inspire and connect with people more effectively.

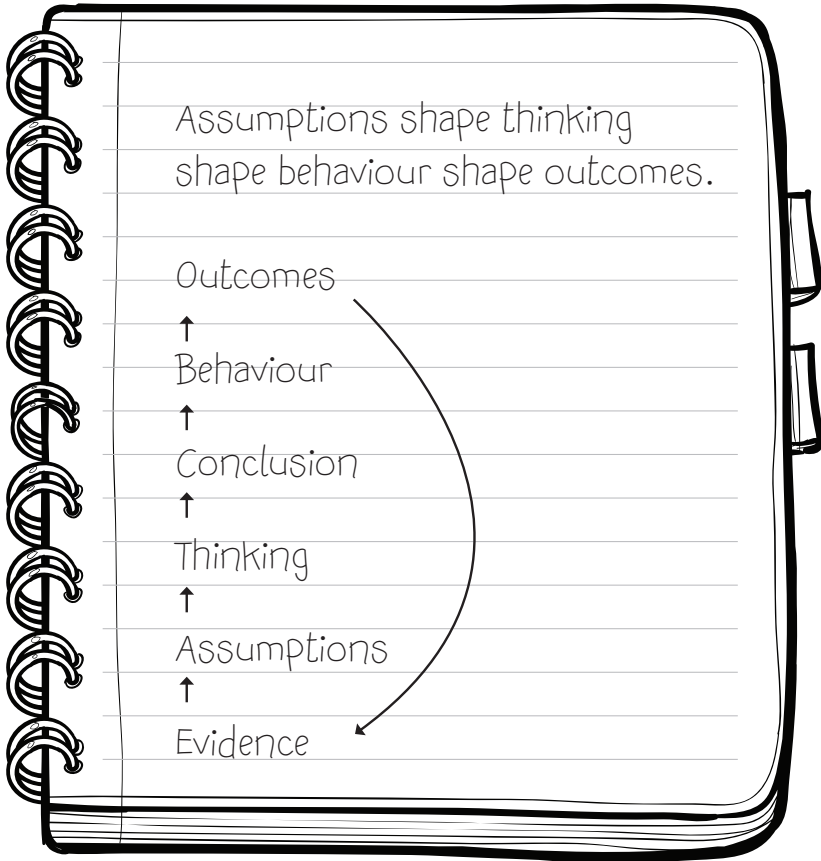
"So I've come to you to ask if you can summarise what you believe are the critical ideas that underpin the human condition and the idea of inspiration? Something that explains how all of us work and can help me improve."

To Jack's surprise, the elderly psychologist didn't flinch or even pause.

He didn't tell him that it was impossible.

Fitzgerald didn't even speak.

He just gestured to Jack's golden notebook, picked up a pen and drew the following diagram:



The psychologist paused, allowing Jack time to just reflect on the diagram.

Minutes passed in silence.

Fitzgerald then breathed deeply and began.

"Jack", he said, "I think you and I are similar. I was also very frustrated by the confusion around ideas about the people experience. Experts saying that as human beings we are too diverse and unpredictable.

"The diagram I've just drawn for you is the basis of my whole psychological philosophy. Simple, but powerful."

He continued, "It says that we are all driven by the assumptions we choose to make – about ourselves, about others, and about situations.

"The assumptions you choose determine everything that happens next."

"Assumptions?" questioned Jack. "What do you mean? Like beliefs?"

"Yes and no", answered the psychologist. "Here is where we can get too lost in language, Jack.

"The simple point is that all human beings are seeking to know the truth about their situation and world. But we don't ever know the whole truth.

"You will never know what it is to be me. And I will never know what it is to be you.

"We will never know everything that occurs in a situation. And certainly you can never really know what's happened on another person's journey.

"Some people don't even know themselves. They accept 'facts' about themselves and others that may or may not have any reality.

"Assumptions, Jack, assumptions are the key.

"Given that most of us only have five senses with which to take in evidence from the world, assumptions are our best guess at what's true about our situation and what we are experiencing with others.

"Whether tested or not, assumptions drive our thinking.

"Everyone must stop and review the assumptions that they make about themselves, about others, and about the situation they are facing.

"Engineers have an old saying Jack that the word *assume* means making an *ass-of-you-and-me*. This is a helpful warning when dealing with physical objects and materials. For example when a carpenter cuts wood, he can measure where to cut. No assumptions in that context are acceptable.

"In the interactive human world however we are making assumptions all the time. We have to. There is nothing to measure and everything changes too quickly. We are always catching up with and absorbing the evidence around us. There is too much going on. We all have to use filters and interpretations. This is the role of assumptions.

"Assumptions are fundamental to understanding the condition of the *self*: being in control of your own assumptions means being in control of your awareness."

It had been a long explanation and Jack looked curious.

"*So we all make assumptions but we have to choose our assumptions?*" reflected Jack.

"Yes", answered Fitzgerald. "You have only just met me and you are already making assumptions about me as we speak. You have to choose what to assume right now. It will underpin what you do in your interaction with me. "Am I a good person? Am I an expert? Can I help you? Will I hurt you? Am I a fraud?"

"You're right", reflected Jack. "I feel like that is going on right now."

"Yes, this is how we all work, Jack. Let's think about some of the assumptions you make about yourself.

"For example, you seem to assume you are not a *people-person* or even that you are *introverted*... This is just an assumption based on the data you've chosen to look at over the years. Jack, please understand you could assume differently tomorrow.

"What if I were to give you a new assumption? That with the right tools you will be a great people-person? It's your choice, Jack", continued Fitzgerald.

"And how do you become aware of the assumptions you are making?" he asked rhetorically.

"Let me introduce you to the next key step in our journey: ***the internal voice.***

"The internal voice constantly shares assumptions with you. You have to engage with your internal voice all day, every day."

The psychologist picked up Jack's notebook again and wrote as follows: