

## The GENIUS Plan™

Here are six steps to help you shift from listening to your Inner Critics to listening to your Inner Genius significantly more of the time. I call it the GENIUS plan. G.E.N.I.U.S. is an acronym for Gratitude, Exploring, Nourishing, Imagining, Uniqueness and Serving.



**GRATITUDE:** A 2013 Gallup State of the Global Workplace study said only 13% of employees globally are engaged at work. This indicates that only one in eight commits to their job and makes positive contributions. Consider how that attitude of disengagement, negativity, and apathy affects people not only at work, but in their home and social lives as well. Most are listening to their Inner Critics.

Here are three simple exercises to help increase thankfulness and gratitude in your life.

1. **Thank you notes.** Write a letter to someone who positively influenced your life – a teacher, a mentor, family, anyone who has helped you along the way. Be specific about what they did and how it affected you. Then hand-deliver it.
2. **Gratitude Lookout.** Pick a day and actively watch for ways to thank others for their kindness, helpfulness, or consideration. Be generous with your thanks!
3. **Put Things in Perspective.** Our brains are wired to answer questions. When faced with adversity, ask yourself: What's good about this? How can I benefit or what can I learn from this? What can I feel grateful for here? What's the opportunity?

Practice gratitude and see how it changes your life and the lives of those around you.

**EQ – Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional Intelligence is so important to our proficiency in building relationships that will help us and those around us succeed. EQ is the ability to understand your own and others emotions so that you can respond appropriately. This means you know when you are angry or irritated and you can choose to not take it out on everyone on your team. Or you know when someone is hurting and are withdrawn, and you can choose to respond with a touch on the shoulder, a hug, or just your presence.

Here is a list of the 15 emotional intelligence competencies. Rate yourself a 1 – this is a strength to be leveraged, a 2 – this is a strength I have, or a 3 – this is an opportunity for development.

- Self-Regard** (respecting yourself, confidence)
- Self-Actualization** (pursuit of meaning, self-improvement)
- Emotional Self-Awareness** (understanding your own emotions)
- Emotional Expression** (constructive expression of emotions)
- Assertiveness** (communicating feelings, beliefs; non-offensive)
- Independence** (self-directed; free from emotional dependency)
- Interpersonal Relationships** (mutually satisfying relationships)
- Empathy** (understanding and appreciating how others feel)
- Social Responsibility** (social consciousness; helpful)
- Problem Solving** (finds solutions when emotions are involved)
- Reality Testing** (objective; sees things as they really are)
- Impulse Control** (resist or delay impulse to act)
- Flexibility** (adapting emotions, thoughts and behaviors)
- Stress Tolerance** (coping with stressful situations)
- Optimism** (positive attitude and outlook on life)

This then gives you the opportunity to see what you should do more of, what you do well, and where you can develop. Emotional Intelligence is about balance. So, looking at the list, which three are the most important to your work? How did you rate yourself in those three areas? If

there is one that needs to be developed, focus on that one this year.

**NOTICING:** We live in such a microwave, multi-tasking, ADD world that we are losing our ability to notice – notice what’s going on in our own minds and what’s going on with others. Since we focus on others with EQ and Serving, let’s focus here on what’s going on in our brain.

Positive Psychology says that our emotions are broadcast out into our bodies – whether we want them to or not. For example, people can see when we are joyful or angry. Our emotions become contagious and when we are feeling negative emotions we tend to see more and more things that are wrong. However, the opposite is true as well. When we are feeling positive emotions, we tend to see more and more things that are good. When we’re stressed it can show up over time as furrowed brows, more frequent colds, or even ulcers or other diseases. When we are happy it can show up over time as laugh lines, higher immune system, longer life.

By noticing where our emotions show up in our bodies, we are able to begin recognizing when we are being triggered – positively or negatively. That noticing, that split second between an emotion and a reaction is when we get a choice. We can choose to recognize the trigger and respond or react. We can choose to be thoughtful or emotional. We can choose to see the positive or the negative.

Take a week and write down what emotions you’re having and where you are feeling them in your body. Then when you notice your jaw tightening, or your eyes widening, or your stomach hurting, or your fingers tingling ... you know you have a choice.

**IMAGINING:** Our brains are so powerful that our imagination can manifest itself into reality. For years athletes have used visioning to see themselves making the free throw, or the touchdown, or hitting the ball into the centerfield stands.

To strengthen your Inner Genius, imagine the future you want. The clearer your vision is for your future the easier it is for your Inner Genius to more easily overcome the Inner Critic voices.

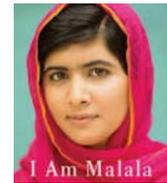
Here are four questions to help you begin the imagining process:

1. If your life were perfect and your dreams come true, what would your life and work be like in 10 years?
2. What kind of person would you love to be? (What are the values most important to you – such as, accomplishment, creativity, independence, influence, recognition?)
3. Who helped you the most in becoming who you are or get to where you are?
4. If you won \$50 million after tax in the lottery, how would your life or work change?

**UNIQUENESS:** We assume because something is easy for us, it must be easy for others. So, we think we're not unique. However, the experiences we have had, the people in our lives, the books we have read, the thoughts and feelings and actions we have had, we do have a unique way of looking at life. It is our obligation to share our uniqueness. Recognize your uniqueness, your individuality, your incomparability.

Look at the people who have understood and used their individuality to the benefit of the world:

- **Malala Yousafzai** – a teenaged girl from Pakistan who overcame an attack from the Taliban and used her passion for learning to become a global activist for education.
- **Seth Godin** – a marketing expert who changed the way we market with the concept of permission marketing versus traditional interruption advertising.
- **Steve Jobs** – a guru of iconoclastic thinking who let seemingly disparate things (a class in calligraphy, a stay at an ashram, and a friendship with a technical nerd, Steve Wozniak) come together in his mind to create Apple and change the face of technology.



Each recognized and developed their uniqueness and strengths. By noticing and developing their uniqueness, our world has evolved as well. You don't have to change the world, but developing your strengths, your uniqueness can change your world, and, in turn, those people around you. You impact people whether you want to or not. You get to choose – is your impact driven by your Inner Critics or your Inner Genius? What is unique about you?

**SERVING:** Helping others floods our brains with epinephrine (gives us a sense of peacefulness, well-being, and calm) and testosterone (gives us energy for creativity). Helping literally energizes our brain and makes us feel better.

When was the last time you really “noticed” someone? The next person you come in contact with, look closely enough to see and notice the color of their eyes. Watch for someone who looks as if they could use help – an encouraging word, a ride somewhere, being there with a listening heart. Today, do one act of service for another person.

Remember, our Inner Critics can be overcome by strengthening our Inner Genius – through gratitude, emotional intelligence, noticing, imagining, understanding your uniqueness, and serving others.

Now what? What are some ways your Inner Critic keeps you from achieving your goals? What are ways you can listen less to your Inner Critics and more to your Inner Genius this week?

If you would like to find out more about **Igniting Inspired Leadership**, go to <https://apexcatalystgroup.com/speaking/> or <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/igniting-inspired-leadership-3-week-webinar-1-hour-a-week-tickets-95130926161>. There you can sign up for a workshop.

I believe an obstacle to your Inner Genius and the life you have imagined can become one of two things. It can become a stopping place for your Inner Critics to rail against the unfairness of it all, or it can become a steppingstone into your greatness.

So, the next time you come up against an obstacle, ask yourself, your bold gladiator Inner Genius self, what greatness am I about to step into?

To our success with **The GENIUS Plan™!**

# Sandi Mitchell, PCC



**Professional EOS Implementer**

**Certified Executive Coach**

**Award Winning Trainer**

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**Best Selling Author**

**Sandi Mitchell** is CEO of APEX Catalyst Group, a firm focusing on building leaders and their companies. She founded the APEX brand in 2013 after more than 20 years in corporate America. Before APEX, Sandi created a technology corporate university at a Fortune 500 company, training over 4200 employees in more than 46 countries.

APEX offers Entrepreneurial Operating System® (EOS) implementation, working with the small and mid-size companies to:

- determine **vision** – understand where you’re going and how you’re getting there
- get **traction** – create the accountability and discipline throughout the organization to achieve the vision week by week, quarter by quarter, year by year
- be **healthy** – ensure your leadership team is aligned, communicates in an open, honest, and healthy culture because as goes the leadership team, so goes the organization!

Sandi and her APEX team work with leaders in companies of all sizes to help improve and/or accelerate in areas such as: communication, leadership, team alignment, strategic planning, emotional intelligence, and change management.

Sandi is a Professional EOS Implementer, certified executive coach, an award-winning trainer, an international speaker, and best-selling author. Sandi’s latest book is entitled *Coloring Outside the Lines: A Grown-Up’s Guide to Increasing Emotional Intelligence*. She has an MBA from Texas Wesleyan University and a BFA from the University of North Texas. While Sandi is the CEO of her business, her pups – Coco and Chanel – definitely rule the house!