

REAGAN CANNON

# THE CURE FOR CAREER QUICKSAND



ADVANCING YOUR CAREER  
ONE SLICE AT A TIME

**PUTTING IT TO WORK WORKBOOK**

# WELCOME TO THE GROUP GUIDE!

This workbook is designed to give your group the framework to discuss the book in a meaningful way. Each day has instructions about what questions to answer. However, the magic is not in these pages. It is in the preparation before each group session, and in the transparency in which you

answer the questions. If done correctly, you should find value from your group by sharing your ideas and stealing from their ideas.

Here is what you can expect.

The Cure for Career Quicksand is built around the A.P.P.L.E. model.

This apple has 5 slices that you can explore to better understand what might be slowing down your career. A visual of it is to the left.

Each week you will explore one slice as a group. In order to be prepared for a good discussion, you should review the assigned reading

and answer all the questions. You will huddle as a team and discuss a few questions from each section. If at any time you have an insight that is not in the questions, just share it! There are no rules, just suggested guidelines.

Make sure that each week before you break, you set the date for the next meeting. This will help you plan your time and be ready for the following session.

I hope you have fun and learn a lot along the way!



**A** A+  
Attitude

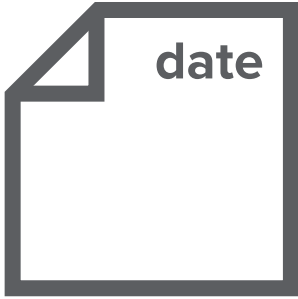
**P** People  
Person

**P** Proactive  
Stance

**L** Long Term  
View

**E** Every  
Mistake  
Matters

*Reagan*



# A+ ATTITUDE

What to prepare in advance of this group session:  
Read pages 1–16

## LET'S GET STARTED!

Go around the room and introduce yourself.

Communicate what it is that you would like to accomplish in this group.

**SET SOME GROUND RULES:** (Everyone having the same expectations creates a great group dynamic!)

Attendance Requirements: How many people need to attend to have the meeting?

Timeliness: Can someone arrive late to the meeting? How late?

Discuss and Commit to Confidentiality: Vocalize the commitment and expectation of confidentiality

Closed or Open to New Members?

## DEAR FELLOW JOURNEYMAN | ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF | WORK THIS BOOK

Share with the group any insights or thoughts about the opening sections of the book.

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## CHAPTER 1 | THE BIG A

Describe a difficult situation that you were able to deal with because you consciously decided to cultivate a good attitude. How did your improved attitude help you cope? OR How can an improved attitude help with a current difficult situation?

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Think of a time that was #serious in the moment but now you look back and laugh at yourself. How can you take steps to laugh in the moment and change your attitude real time?

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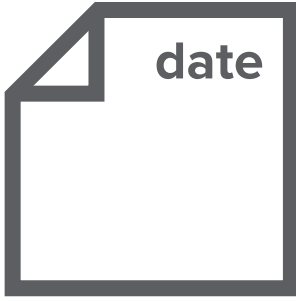
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# PEOPLE PERSON

What to prepare in advance of this group session:  
Read pages 21–47

## YOUR BOSS

### CHAPTER 2 | DON'T JUDGE A BOSS BY HER HANDBAG

Think of the best boss you have ever had. What specifically made them such a great boss?

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## YOUR PEERS

### CHAPTER 3 | ADULTS ARE NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM KIDS

What are three behaviors you can look for, in order to build trust with someone?

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### CHAPTER 4 | THE BOSS SAID SO

Think of a time when you were brought into the vision of why something needed to be done. How did it feel to work on that project and contribute to the end goal? Contrast that to times you were told “because the boss said so.”

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## YOUR PEOPLE

### CHAPTER 5 | CLEAN UP ON AISLE 5

Describe a situation (no names) when someone’s personal feelings or situation negatively impacted the team. What could the supervisor have done differently to help the employee and the team?

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### CHAPTER 6 | THE ROPE

Identify a task in your current job that doesn’t feel “strategic” or “challenging” but is really important to someone else. How can doing this work well, lead you into more exciting opportunities?

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### CHAPTER 7 | SUPER SHIELD

Have you ever received brutally honest feedback that hurt at first but you later realized was totally true? How did you feel about the person who gave you the information at first and then later?

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# PROACTIVE STANCE

What to prepare in advance of this group session:  
Read pages 49–72

## CHAPTER 8 | WHAT TRAINING?

What important skill did you learn by just doing, even if it meant you had a few stumbles as first?

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## CHAPTER 9 | CONTRIBUTE ANY WAY YOU CAN

Think back to your first days on the job. What did you do well to onboard that you will repeat in future roles? What did you do that slowed your ramping progress that you can do differently next time?

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## CHAPTER 10 | FIND THE SMARTEST PERSON IN A ROOM

Think of someone who is highly successful in your work place. What do you observe he or she does that makes them so successful? What can you do to implement some of those practices?

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## CHAPTER 11 | MAKING IT TO THE BIG LEAGUES

Has there ever been an opportunity that you wanted but you let an “excuse” discourage you from going after it? How can you prevent that in the future?

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## CHAPTER 12 | YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO TAKE A RISK...NO RSVP REQUIRED

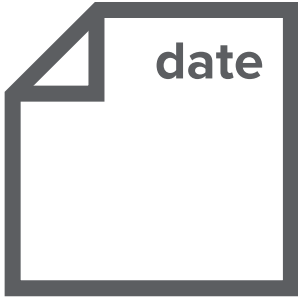
Describe a problem in your work place and how you think it could be solved. What steps can you take, even if there is some element of risk, to actually implement your solution?

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# LONG TERM VIEW

What to prepare in advance of this group session:  
Read pages 75–96

## CHAPTER 13 | WHERE IS THE GRASS GREENER?

Do you consider yourself a Specialist, Generalist or Inflexible? Why? How does knowing which category you are influence your future career plans?

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## CHAPTER 14 | FISH OUT OF WATER

Look around your workplace. Who is feeling out of place? How can you help this person adjust to the environment? What can you gain from their fresh perspective?

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## CHAPTER 15 | THE SQUIRREL LADY

Describe a time when you have been in a meeting and the person talking seems totally disconnected from the reality of the day-to-day business? How successful was this person’s message?

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## CHAPTER 16 | TO MBA OR NOT TO MBA: THAT IS THE QUESTION

List the pros and cons of continuing your education. (Even if you have a bachelor’s degree, think about additional certifications or additional field expertise.) To help you, think of others who have continued their education and how it impacted them?

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## CHAPTER 17 | HEY INFLUENCER, LOOK OVER HERE!

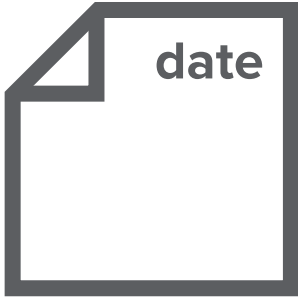
Think of the influencers at your workplace and what is important to them. Is there anything you should be doing now, before you meet with them, to improve your performance or image?

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# EVERY MISTAKE MATTERS

What to prepare in advance of this group session:  
Read pages 99–121

## CHAPTER 18 | PLACING YOUR BETS

Describe a time someone believed in you and it made a difference in your life. What actions did you take to earn that belief?

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## CHAPTER 19 | ONE NOTE NELLY

Is there a place where you have become a One Note Nelly and are not being successful? (i.e. always respond the same way)  
How could you benefit from responding differently to the situation or person?

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## CHAPTER 20 | LOOSE LIPS SINK CAREERS

Think of a time when you blabbed something and then regretted it. Share what you have learned from situations like this so you do not repeat the same mistake?

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## CHAPTER 21 | HEY, WHEN ABOUT ME?

Remember a time when you were passed over for a job you desperately wanted. What feedback were you given and how did you handle the disappointment? If you could go back, how would you respond differently?

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week  
**6**



# THE CURE FOR CAREER QUICKSAND



**A**

**A+ Attitude**

**P**

**People Person**

**P**

**Proactive Stance**

**L**

**Long Term View**

**E**

**Every Mistake Matters**

After reading the entire book, what slice of the A.P.P.L.E. do you want to focus in on most and why?

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Which chapter challenged you the most? What will you implement from this chapter in your career?

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Now that everyone has shared and answered all the questions, pull out your calendar. Select a date approximately 30 days out and then 60 days out. Arrange for the group to get back together for a coffee, lunch, or happy hour. If it is impossible to bring everyone physically together, still find dates and set a reminder on the calendar.

When your reunion date arrives, review the summary from today's session and ask your groupmates if they followed through on the ideas they were going to implement. Nothing helps you cement learning like follow up! It is the last thing you can do as a group to help each other avoid quicksand.





## Reagan's RULES

*The right attitude is the key to your success.*

*Don't be quick to write off a boss based on your first impressions. Adjust your style to meet theirs, so you can work with and learn from any kind of supervisor.*

*The office is not your personal fan club. Observe actions over time and build trust with the right people who are in your corner.*

*Don't name drop to get things done. Build relationships so your colleagues will want to get things done for you.*

*Managing humans is messy. But if done with heart, it can be the most rewarding part of your career.*

*If you give people too much rope, too quickly, they may hang themselves with it! Release responsibility as they earn it.*

*Protecting your people does not always protect them. Hold people accountable for their performance.*

*Stop waiting to be trained. Go find creative ways to train yourself.*

*Don't wait to contribute in a new job. If you see a way to help, jump in and do it.*

*Find the most successful person in your office. Ask this leader to mentor you, and then implement the advice.*

*Don't let a perceived barrier stop you from going after an opportunity you really want.*

*Don't wait on an invitation to innovate. Advancement requires proactive risk taking.*

*Know what matters most to you. If your priority is opportunity, be open to changing roles and locations.*

*Different is good, it just isn't easy.*

*Never get too far from your customer.*

*Continue your education for the right reason – yourself!*

*Not everyone, just the right influencers need to notice you. Manage your performance and brand so you are ready to be noticed.*

*You will bet on people and be disappointed, but don't stop believing in people all together. Just be smarter about who you bet on next time.*

*Don't be a one-dimensional leader in a multi-dimensional world.*

*Get the rep as someone who can always be trusted with critical info.*

*You will face disappointment. How you handle it will determine your career.*