

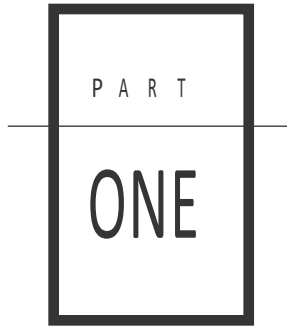
Situational Mindsets

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Targeting What Matters
When it Matters

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Foreword by David Covey



PART
ONE

Kate Hollander
and
Transition

Chapter 1

A New Start

Kirkuk, Iraq. Under fire—distant artillery flashes and shell bursts punctuated by the *pop-pop-pop-pop* of AK-47s. The wounded would be trucked in any minute.

Six years she had been here—Sergeant First Class Kathryn A. Hollander, Sixty-Eight Whiskey (68W) combat medic. The noise, detonations, dangers—terrifying to untrained civilians—were just another day at the office for her. Kate set to work—steady, selective, skilled. From one to the next, she moved with dedication, performing exactly as she had been trained.

Being the right person at the right place with the right equipment when things got hot in combat instilled skills and a confidence Kate had never known. Napoleon had been able to take in a battlefield at a glance, evaluating all its opportunities and dangers, identifying what was immediately important to attack or defend and what could wait: *coup d’oeil*. But as a medic, Kate had learned a different *coup d’oeil*: triaging the wounded and rapidly deciding the order of treatment most likely to save lives. Head wound but alert—*Priority*. Lower leg missing, bleeding out—*Emergency*. No pulse here. Wailing over there. She scanned the wounded, prioritized critical needs, and gave instructions to worried mates to hold IVs. In short order, all the injured were prepped for transport to the hospital. Everyone was going to make it. *Emergency. Priority. Non-urgent in the queue.* Amidst the

tumult, she assessed then aided the wounded one after the other in the order of their urgency.

A sound blared in her ear ... incoming? She turned around to see what was happening.



Kate opened her eyes. As usual, she woke up before the alarm. The dream, while stunningly real, was reassuring. *You have done this. You can do this.* The dream had extended rather than disrupted her sleep. She had gone to bed keyed up about applying for a job as vice president of sales at Davis Printing Company. It had taken her a while to doze off, but she would still take her morning run before heading to the interview.

She pulled her red hair up into a ponytail, put on her sweats and ski vest, and completed her circuit in the nearby hills as the sun rose. Later, showered, dressed, and coifed, she walked to the full-length mirror standing in the corner—conservative make-up, hair smooth, lavender silk blouse and dark-gray suit pants pressed, and one-inch heels under her five-foot-nine frame. No camos today.

After breakfast, she donned her suit jacket and coat, then drove from her Airbnb rental in Golden, Colorado. She loved that this little town lying at the foot of the Rockies was founded during the Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1859.

The plant was twenty minutes away in central Denver. Enough time to enjoy the snow-covered foothills that offered both soothing and invigorating vistas, from expanses of rolling ground to angular, jutting rock formations. The environment was certainly a contrast to the flat desert terrain of her three tours in Iraq. She looked forward to a

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permanent residence after years in the army. This may be the place and opportunity.

As Kate drove, she reflected on her previous jobs and training. While she had been an exceptional athlete in high school—excelling at volleyball and track—she had been an indifferent student who enrolled in a community college after graduation. Her father, an internist, hoped she would pursue a bachelor’s degree and maybe enroll in medical school. But after two years and a general associate’s degree, Kate went to work as a sales rep for MedSurgicals, a fast-growing medical device manufacturer outside of Phoenix. She thought her father would be happy she was connected to the field of medicine.

Kate proved to be a natural at selling and advanced to sales manager. Despite a heavy workload, she continued her education. She majored in business, studying at night and on weekends until she earned her bachelor’s degree. At the same time, she moved up to Director of Sales, reporting directly to the COO.

Then came the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Overcome with outrage, grief, and patriotism, Kate decided she would not be a passive victim, nor would she let her country be a victim. She would take charge of her future—and America’s—by joining the United States Army. She knew exactly what she wanted to be and enlisted as a combat medic, following her dad who had served in a field hospital during the Vietnam War. He paled at the news but managed to tell her how proud he was. Probably thought this would start *her* medical career.

During her third deployment to Iraq, she was posted in Kirkuk with a forward-area medical company supporting an infantry-combat team. When the shooting started, and the wounded were brought in, she went into full combat-medic role. Captain Richard Price headed one

of the combat team. His tour of duty ended before hers, but they stayed in touch.

When Kate separated from the service, she knew she couldn't get her medical-supply job back. And she didn't want to. She wanted a new challenge. After she emailed Richard that she planned to return stateside, he responded with an interesting proposal. He had joined a small printing firm in his hometown of Denver. He started as a production supervisor, but the owner, Tom Davis, recognized his ability to think on his feet and deliver results. Skills that the army had polished. Richard became vice president of operations, which was great because he was now married and planning a family. He asked her to consider joining the firm in Sales.

In a follow-up call, he said, "Kate, I'll give it to you straight. I moved up fast not just because Tom Davis liked me but because this place needed leaders. Still does, particularly in the Sales Department. Those folks are nice, but they need someone to put a fire in their bellies. They're drifting, even with falling sales."

"Sounds like something's not right there."

"Exactly. What with digital technology and the Net, the industry's changing. Suddenly, we're up against a load of online printers and more-efficient presses. Now, Tom built this company and still wins business through sheer charisma, but he refuses to keep up with the times, let alone get us ahead of the curve."

Kate wanted a challenge, but she did not want to run into a stone wall either.

"I get as far as I can, but then Tom shuts me down. Besides, I don't have sales credibility. I need an ally, Kate, and Sales desperately

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needs an overhaul. I know leadership, and you nailed it in Iraq. You can make a difference here with your sales experience and leadership. I want to set up an interview for you with Tom for the VP of Sales position.”

Kate was flattered, but she had been away from sales for *six years!* She hesitated, but Richard *knew* about her sales hiatus. And he had seen what she was capable of in Kirkuk. That was more demanding and complicated than any sales job. Maybe she should take the interview for the VP slot.

Her corporate training kicked in along with her confidence and the action-oriented Catalyzing Mindset she relied on when she was in sales management. When confronted with the choice of “lead, follow, or get out of the way,” she wanted to lead. While she didn’t have any printing knowledge, she could read customers and quickly learn the industry. She could transfer what she knew about selling medical devices into selling printing. After reinventing herself as a combat medic, making the leap from selling in one industry to another would be a sure bet. However, she balanced her thinking with a careful analysis using the Challenging Mindset to gauge future risks as well as opportunities. Fueled by careful review and her desire to plan her future, she decided the potential rewards significantly outweighed potential problems.

Forward was the only reasonable direction. Besides, she had aced interviews before. “Richard, that would be great! Give me a day to dust off my résumé.”

And dust it she had, highlighting the success of her sales team at MedSurgicals. Having prepared in every way possible, she was now heading to the interview. The more she thought about the prospect of helping Davis Printing succeed the more excited she became.



Arriving for her interview, Kate pulled into the parking lot. According to Richard, Davis Printing occupied a former lighting factory, a single early-twentieth-century red-brick building that contained both the offices and plant. The neighborhood was in the first throes of gentrification. Across the street was the SoHo restaurant, a local restaurant on the verge of becoming trendy with a fusion menu, full bar, and oriental art. Nobody would call Davis Printing trendy. Anyway, Kate wasn't looking for Silicon Valley chic. She wanted challenge and opportunity.

Kate turned the tarnished brass door handle and entered Davis Printing. Richard was waiting for her in the dull gray lobby. His sandy-brown hair could still pass military inspection—it was as short as the nap of the lobby's seafoam-green carpet—but he had grown a closely trimmed beard. She couldn't be sure, but home cooking seemed to have grown on him too. A bit of desert tan remained on his face and neck above the collar of his blue dress shirt.

Richard stepped past the receptionist's desk, hand extended. "Kate, so good to see you again." His brown eyes creased above his genuine smile.

The corners of Kate's mouth lifted as she firmly shook his hand. "You too. Thank you for arranging this."

The receptionist stopped inserting papers into envelopes and gave her a quick ruby-lipped smile, as well as a once over, then reached for the phone on her desk, which had started ringing. "Good morning, Davis Printing, this is Angela, how-may-I-help-you?" She pushed her glasses up with one manicured finger, then picked up her pen and started jotting on a note.

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“Let me take you to Tom.” Richard pointed toward the hallway on her left. As he escorted her down the hall, noise bounced off the concrete floor, along with a distinctive smell of ink solvents. He stopped at the door of a small office where a brown-haired middle-aged woman sat rigidly at an immaculate desk.

Without entering, he said, “Kate, this is Debbie Conrad, our office manager.”

“Kate Hollander,” Debbie said. “Yes, glad to see you. Tom’s waiting for you.”

Richard led Kate into the next room. “Here she is, the most dynamic soldier I’ve ever served with.”

Tom Davis rose from his seat behind a varnished mahogany behemoth that instantly reminded her of Resolute, the desk in the Oval Office. He walked around the desk, closing two open drawers as he came. “Welcome to Davis Printing.” Tom was just a few inches taller than she, enough to meet her eye-to-eye. “A pleasure to meet you, Kate.” He extended his hand, and a broad smile spread across his face.

It seemed to be the practiced smile of someone who had great presence and enjoyed nothing more than being in his own office and in command. With his thick mane of silver-white hair, he could pass as a president of the United States, except that his desk was heaped haphazardly with papers and folders. Every picture she had ever seen of the Oval Office showed a clean desk, no matter who was president.

Kate noticed that a huge faded black-and-white photo of the building covered the wall behind his desk. The picture displayed a line of men cutting the ribbon for a farm-implement store, which was adorned with bunting. The building’s inauguration was clearly decades earlier

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from the look of the cars parked nearby. The outside of the building looked the same, with only a different name over the door. The building had stood the test of time.

Tom followed her gaze, then pointed to the picture. "She may not win an architectural award, but she has good bones." He obviously adored the place, in spite of its age. According to Richard, the company was Tom's baby, and he loved it, except for falling sales.

"Richard thinks the world of you, Kate"—Tom motioned for them to sit in the chairs before his desk—"and I value his recommendation. But I have to add that I've been in the printing industry for over thirty years and value experience—*industry* experience—and frankly, remain concerned about your lack of printing experience. However, I would be happy to be proved wrong by an immediate boost in sales and customer satisfaction." Finally, he sat in his own chair.

Such a challenge could have torpedoed the whole interview. But instead of forming a defensive posture, Kate held his eyes. She was confident in her abilities and willing to meet high expectations. She could deliver on the bottom line *and* dispel his doubts. "I understand your concerns, Tom, and I respect that it will take industry knowledge to succeed. However, I'm a quick study. If I wasn't sure of that, I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't want to waste your time, or mine. I can get up to speed shortly to lead a successful sales team. If you hire me, I can deliver fresh perspectives, new opportunities, and significant growth."

Tom nodded and smiled. "That's good to hear."

The interview settled into predictable details. In the end, Kate knew she had not magically dismissed all of his reservations, but he

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repeated a few times how much confidence he placed in Richard's recommendation. And since they would need to work together, their strong relationship was a plus. Despite his preference for someone with printing-industry experience, he could not afford to wait to fill this key position. Sales needed leadership *now*. He called the next day and offered her the position.

She knew that Tom would support sales initiatives. Given Richard's intel, she also knew that the challenges she would face. She accepted the job. Crazy? No crazier than what Hernán Cortés did in the sixteenth century when he reached Mexico—and promptly scuttled his ships so the conquistadors would have no choice but to conquer the Aztecs. She was all in.



Friends congratulated Kate on leaping from army NCO to corporate vice president, but some expressed concern at how swiftly she bought a house *before* her first day on the job with a company that was hardly a standout. Kate listened. She understood. However, she had done a careful analysis. Her sales-management training had stressed the importance of collecting and evaluating information from six points of view. She used that framework when deciding to purchase the house. It was basically a business decision, so she considered:

- *Inventing*: recognizing what she needed to update in the home, including technology and security
- *Catalyzing*: understanding the housing market and acting quickly when opportunities surfaced
- *Developing*: analyzing structure, local traffic patterns, availability, and regulations

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- *Performing*: calculating short- and long-term costs and negotiating the sale effectively
- *Protecting*: meeting her neighbors and walking the neighborhood
- *Challenging*: testing her basic assumptions and planning for her future

Employing these Mindsets, she examined things from all perspectives to make a wise choice. Just as she had while evaluating the VP position.



As Kate entered the lobby on her first workday, she was pleased when Angela told her that Tom had asked to be notified when she arrived. Even though she was early, he promptly arrived in the lobby and warmly greeted her with his sleeves rolled up. “Let me walk you to your office,” he said.

She followed his brisk pace down the hall toward his office as he repeated his monologue about the importance of quickly turning sales around.

“I am confident that you can ignite sales. We *must book* new business,” he said as they arrived at an office down the hall from his.

She nodded, having expected his marching orders. “I intend to deliver.” She was anxious to get started, and nothing would dampen her resolve. Tom was her number-one customer, and that meant the entire sales team needed to adopt an action-oriented customer focus, the hallmark of the Catalyzing Mindset.

He gestured to the folder on her desk. “I’ll leave you to review the past sales data and be back in”—he checked his watch—“thirty

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minutes to introduce you to Debbie Conrad and the others.” Placing Debbie at the top of the roster for introductions reflected her status as office manager. She knew Debbie had been with Tom since the beginning, and with an office right outside his, she must know the business inside and out.



Debbie appeared to be a hard-working, no-nonsense woman determined to make the trains run on time. Tom had introduced her as his indispensable right hand. While a small smile had emerged on Debbie’s face, Kate was sure she had not been swayed by the compliment. Not a yes-person, that one. Probably kept things on an even keel and accepted change only after Tom championed it.

“Here’s a package with all of our policies and benefits. You’ll need to look over that when you have time, to decide about insurance. Right now, I’ll need you to fill out the W-4 and I-9, sign the employment contract, and if you wish, complete this direct deposit form.” Debbie offered assistance if there were any questions.

Though Kate didn’t really need the help, it gave her an opportunity to speak with Tom’s gatekeeper. She learned that Debbie’s portfolio extended well beyond that of the standard office manager. Debbie handled customer service and finance too—both bearing directly on Sales. She was not officially on the sales team, but she was a key stakeholder. Kate needed her as an ally. Otherwise, she could become an obstacle sitting next door to Tom’s office.

“This should do it.” Kate handed over the package.

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Debbie checked it over. “Looks fine.” She reached across her desk to shake Kate’s hand and said, “Welcome to the company. Now please join Tom in his office.”



“Well, glad it is official,” Tom said as he stood up. “If you’ll follow me, I’d like to introduce you to the staff.”

They went to the production floor where employees had gathered. “I’m pleased to introduce you to Kate Hollander, our new vice president of sales. We all thank Kate and Richard for their exemplary service to our country.” He continued, making little more than a glancing reference to her prior accomplishments in sales. “Richard served with Kate in Iraq, and he thinks the world of her. I feel certain that his confidence is justified. Let’s make her feel welcome.”

A short round of applause followed his introduction, and some employees took the time to shake her hand. “Welcome.” “Glad to have you.” And even a “Good luck.” The greetings were friendly enough, and Kate accepted each one with gratitude.

But something about the introduction made Kate squirm—unnoticeably, she hoped. Tom’s expression of confidence had sounded like more of a wish than a conviction. When the handshakes were over, Richard invited her to lunch at the SoHo restaurant across the street, where he provided more background on the firm’s history and current challenges.

“Kate, this is a great opportunity for you—and Davis Printing is lucky to have you. We have good, talented people. I wouldn’t have asked you to consider the position if that weren’t true. But you need a little background about the sales team you’re inheriting.”

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“Okay, shoot.”

“You’re replacing Larry McCutcheon. He was a nice guy, and I think at one time he was a go-getter. But he started coasting, and he was far from proactive about getting new business.” Richard took a sip of his iced tea. “Between you me, he was nearing retirement, and he pretty much gave up on trying to manage or build the team. Basically, he used his personality and charisma to close his sales. Everybody always said that Larry could charm his way into or out of anything.”

“What was the final straw?”

“His numbers were eroding. Steadily. That’s one thing. But then he lost a major client.”

“Ouch.”

“No. It gets worse. He hid the bad news from Tom. Well, you just don’t do that. Tom won’t stand for being kept in the dark. He fired Larry, and it was definitely the right call. The problem is that, as experienced as Tom is, I don’t think anyone had ever flat-out lie to him before. It changed him. He’s determined never be out of the loop again. Now don’t get me wrong, he was always involved in day-to-day activities, but now he’s taken it to the extreme, micromanaging every single thing.”

“That’s not a smart move.”

“Agreed. But we can help him change, with you in Sales. For now, your mission will be to produce results and keep Tom up-to-date. But that may not be as simple as it sounds since the sales team needs a reboot.”