

Inspired by the book *Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us*



# Tribes Q&A

## Foreword

How do you learn?

Do you need a step by step playbook, or do you do better with stories?

Perhaps you prefer a detailed analysis to a sketchy do-it-yourself overview...

Multiple learning styles are a given. What's not is the way authors respond to this biological diversity. Usually, we write one book, our way, and leave it at that. If you don't learn that way, tough.

I had this in mind when I asked the thousands of members of the Triibe to write their own book, this book, based on my book, Tribes. It's not the same as my book... in fact, it's very different. It's a book I could never have written, though perhaps (maybe) it's a book you'd like to read.

My suggestion is that you take a look at [the printed book](#) first. Or just dive in. This PDF is free. Free to read, free to print, free to share. You just can't re-sell it. If you like what you're hearing, feel free to contact any of the authors within. They'll probably be thrilled to hear from you.

To anyone reading this: enjoy. And to the tireless team that wrote it: you're amazing. Thank you.

Seth Godin

[Seth's blog](#)

## Table of Questions

Why do people join tribes?..... ANSWER

What is needed to create the initiative that leads to tribe formation? ..... ANSWER

What are the top mistakes leaders make that kill their tribes? ..... ANSWER

Is it possible to earn a living leading a tribe? How?  
Should you be driven by profit? ..... ANSWER

How do tribe members deal with a leader who has abandoned tribal protocol?..... ANSWER

Are good tribe leaders extroverted, introverted, or does it matter? ..... ANSWER

How does a tribe awaken its “sheepwalkers” or do they have a viable  
function in the tribe? ..... ANSWER

What is the value of transparency to a tribe? How much is too much?  
How much is not enough? ..... ANSWER

How does one get over fear and give oneself permission to become a leader? ..... ANSWER

Do tribes find leaders or do leaders find tribes? ..... ANSWER

Can a leader successfully lead two or more tribes simultaneously? ..... ANSWER





How does the leader of the tribe walk the fine line between being inclusive and allowing the tribe to become a democracy? Between setting direction and becoming an autocratic factory?..... ANSWER

Can a tribe function successfully with more than one leader? If so, how? ..... ANSWER

There are plenty of leaders who seem to get it right in the beginning but who turn awfully wrong in the end. Are leaders too concerned with being right? What separates a great leader from a despotic one? ..... ANSWER

Is it possible to influence a tribe without being the leader?..... ANSWER

What are the top 10 things leaders can do to encourage/tighten their tribe?..... ANSWER

How does a tribe communicate effectively with all of its members? ..... ANSWER

What is the impact of "social media" on modern tribal behavior, today and in the future? ..... ANSWER

How can technology "tighten" tribes? ..... ANSWER

Can I turn my blog into a tribe? ..... ANSWER

How can a tribe allow members to contribute and participate?..... ANSWER

How can you build a tribe so everyone stays active and has a role to play?..... ANSWER



What are the analytics for a tribe with regards to expected participation? 80/20? ..... ANSWER

How much or little interaction between tribe members is necessary in a tribe? ..... ANSWER

Why and how does the tribal pulse get taken?..... ANSWER

Do you have to be present to participate in a tribe?..... ANSWER

Does a tribe need a strategy? If so, why?..... ANSWER

How does strategy work in a tribe?..... ANSWER

How is a tribe different from a fan base, a special interest group, or a community? ..... ANSWER

What are the differences between predominantly online and offline tribes? ..... ANSWER

Are there sub-tribes within a larger tribe? ..... ANSWER

What are the advantages and disadvantages of restricted membership? ..... ANSWER

What are tribes good at doing and accomplishing and what are they not so good at doing and accomplishing?..... ANSWER

Do tribes need a goal or reason for existing, or can they exist based on nothing more than a common passion for something? ..... ANSWER

Can a tribe be too big? Too small? Can two people make a tribe?..... ANSWER



Is dissent healthy or harmful for a tribe? ..... ANSWER

Should a tribe ever decide to remove “problem” members? ..... ANSWER

What happens when a tribe becomes corrupt? ..... ANSWER

What is the best way to market the tribes concept to businesses that obviously need to learn about tribes? ..... ANSWER

How can we talk about “tribes” without evoking visions of grass huts and tiki masks? ..... ANSWER

How can a tribe best groom the next generation? ..... ANSWER

How can you build a tribe when faced with stiff competition from a competing tribe? ..... ANSWER

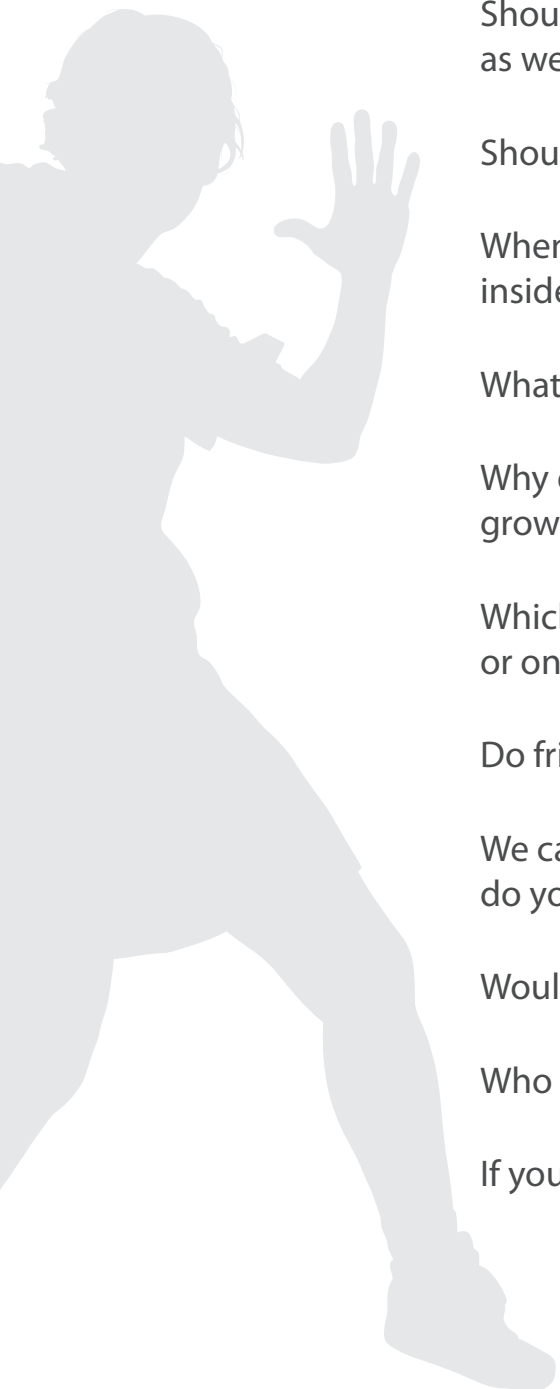
Can a business competitor steal or destroy my tribe? ..... ANSWER

How can a tribe make it past “The Dip”? ..... ANSWER

Can “tribe” mentality redefine corporate thinking? ..... ANSWER

Does marketing to a tribe inherently go against the concept of a tribe? ..... ANSWER

Do tribes have an expiration date, and if so, how can one recognize when it is time for a tribe to die? ..... ANSWER



Should a tribe consider that it will end one day and plan for its extinction, as well as archive its potential contribution or legacy? ..... ANSWER

Should I sell what I have to offer to an existing tribe or start one of my own?..... ANSWER

When it comes to building a tribe or leveraging the power of an existing tribe inside an organization, what is the consultant’s role? What is their best approach? ..... ANSWER

What is the recipe for consciously creating a tribe?..... ANSWER

Why do some tribes grow fast and others more slowly? Is there a preferred growth rate of a tribe? ..... ANSWER

Which tribe will likely be stronger: one “for something” or one “against something”? ..... ANSWER

Do friends and co-workers necessarily make good tribe members?..... ANSWER

We can all learn from the success of others. Which established tribes do you take inspiration from and why? ..... ANSWER

Would nations be better off if their governments operated as tribes?..... ANSWER

Who are some of the most successful tribal leaders of all time, and why? ..... ANSWER

If you build it, will they come?..... ANSWER



Can a group become a tribe in a quantum leap? ..... ANSWER

Do you need to create a “language” for your tribe? ..... ANSWER

How does TribalSpeak evolve—does TribalMind come first or is it a contagious outgrowth of TribalSpeak? ..... ANSWER

What do tribes need to stay together, enduring and sustaining throughout life-cycle changes? ..... ANSWER

On page 138 of *Tribes*, Seth writes, “What leaders do: they give people stories they can tell themselves. Stories about the future and about change.” How does the use of stories help tribes to grow bigger and stronger? ..... ANSWER

How do you create, inspire, or find the stories and songs of a tribe? ..... ANSWER

Can a tribe change the world? ..... ANSWER



## Q: Why do people join tribes?

**A:** We all have a basic need to connect with other human beings. Making friends, connecting with others, sharing experiences, keeping up with popular culture, and keeping up with current trends and developments in your community all are ways and reasons for connecting with other people.

When you connect with others in a fashion that allows you to develop a relationship that is especially useful, these long-term connections can be very helpful in guiding you through your life, as well as aid you in feeling happy.

The following are some of the types of more specific motivations for joining tribes:

- Purely Social: To feel less alone and to connect with people (near or far) to pursue shared interests.
- Values + Social: To connect with others who share the same values in a social setting.
- Cultural + Social: To share experiences with natives of the same country, to speak the shared language and observe cultural traditions together.
- Business + Social: To develop relationships with others in the same industry or expand network into other industries/markets.

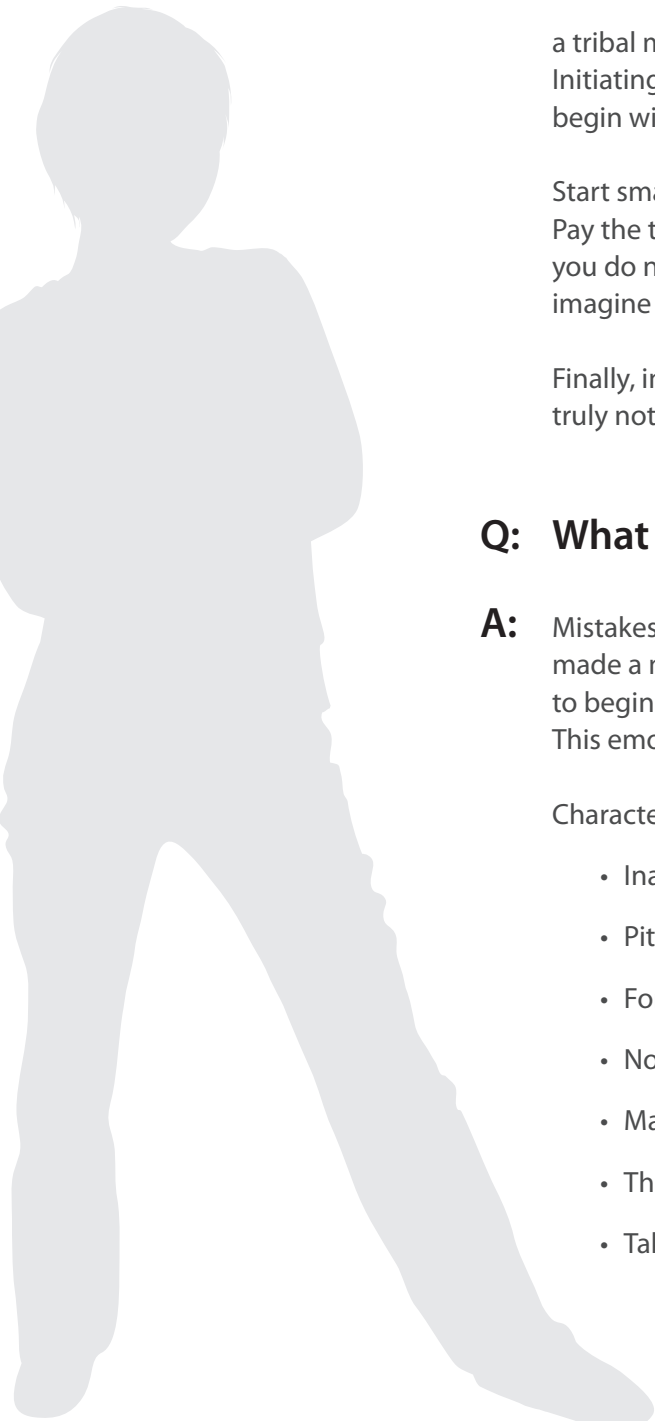
## Q: What is needed to create the initiative that leads to tribe formation?

**A:** Reacting is based on instinct and intuition. Responding requires thoughtfulness. Initiating comes from imagination. An atmosphere where people initiate can only come from a place where dreaming is encouraged.

Leaders imagine a world that they would like to be a part of, a world worth fighting for. With this vision and all the emotion that gets stirred up in the heart, the leader begins to initiate. They see the issue or challenge that not everyone else sees and lead people to do something about it that was not done before.

Passion sparks initiative, a tremendous focus, belief, desire, and drive. When John Walsh lost his child, he initiated





a tribal movement that has made a huge difference. Parents who lose children are passionate about their causes. Initiating is the kicking off or the sparking of possibility. It is beginning, birth, life, potential. It does not always begin with a bang. Initiate small things and the courage to initiate large things will follow.

Start small. Get up every morning and initiate something. Hand your neighbor his paper and say good morning. Pay the toll for the driver behind you. Post a comment to the wall of someone you do not know. Invite someone you do not know to lunch, then to an event. That is initiating. That habit will grow in you until you cannot imagine not initiating. It will become your mantra, your passion, your message.


Finally, initiating requires a willingness to look foolish, stupid, or uninformed. To initiate great things, you must truly not give a damn about what people think about you.

## **Q: What are the top mistakes leaders make that kill their tribes?**

**A:** Mistakes are not terrible and mistakes will not necessarily kill your tribe. The key is to recognize that you have made a mistake, learn from it, and not repeat it. When a leader focuses so much energy on not making a mistake to begin with, it creates stress for the leader and the tribe, which leads to hard feelings and lack of enthusiasm. This emotional turbulence can kill a tribe sooner than any mistake could.

Characteristics and actions in a leader that can lead to the death of the tribe include:

- Inability to learn from a mistake
- Pitting members against one another
- Forgetting that a tribe has a life of its own rather than existing as an extension of the leader
- Not delegating (“I am the start and finish of all decisions.”)
- Making decisions based on personal agenda rather than on tribal agenda
- Thinking they cannot learn from their members and worse, thinking they know everything
- Taking a command-and-control approach by:

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- Limiting or moderating communication within the tribe
  - Exercising hierarchical authority
  - Conversely, being too passive and standing by as factions form and turf wars take place
  - Allowing drama to exist by:
    - Listening to and responding to gossip
    - Allowing rumors to circulate and grow
    - Devoting time, energy, and resources to deal with personal issues or conflicts
    - Passively allowing these activities to exist even if they don't take part

**Q: Is it possible to earn a living leading a tribe? How? Should you be driven by profit?**

**A:** To paraphrase something Seth Godin wrote:

The people making millions of dollars a month DID NOT sign up to make money. The people making pennies a month DID. The best, widest-spreading ideas are done for the sake of the idea, not for the dollar.

So is it wrong to start a tribe for the money? Is it possible to do something you love AND get paid for it? Should you avoid all opportunities to support yourself leading your tribe?

No. But you should take a good look at your real, honest reasons for building a tribe.

A leader finds others who share his/her same passion and provides the tools for the tribe to connect and communicate.

When you interact with a large number of people genuinely, when you find something the tribe needs that you

can provide, or when you find something the world needs that your tribe can help you spread the word for—as long as it is genuine and real and aligned with the values of your tribe, NOT merely a mechanism to make you money—the theory is that it will all just WORK.

Selling goods (such as concert tickets, albums, or T-shirts) is NOT what makes you a living. Connecting people and giving them a place in the world IS. There is a huge difference between focusing on one and focusing on the other. Making a living—making money—is only a pleasant side effect of doing this right. But it is a side effect that happens all the time.

If you are lucky (or if you are a person that directs your message and drives your own luck), you can merge the commercial and the personal in one of these revelatory ways.

However:

- a. You must have a valid economic engine to drive the business and enough of a potential market to work with.
- b. You must have a passion to build something remarkable from the ground up and a desire to create something you can be the best in the world at.

The major stumbling block for most people who want to set out on their own and create/lead a passion-based business is the fact that tribes rarely assemble overnight. You cannot quit your “real” job on Wednesday and “launch” your profitable tribe on Thursday. Perhaps you will have someone who will support you as you start from square #1 and build your following. Perhaps you will keep your “real” job while your passions take over in the evening and you start to build your tribe. Either way, it will take time...but it will happen. If you want it enough, it is there for the taking.

It's a series of small steps, in much the same way you build a roaring fire not with logs, but with small pieces of kindling. Small things over time add up to large things happening.

Following Seth's point—that *the best, widest-spreading ideas are done for the sake of the idea, not for the dollar*—is a matter of reframing your mindset from “I'm doing this for me” to “I'm doing this for others, who will then support me to do this for an even wider audience.” It changes from “I'm going to go out there and take what's mine” to “I'm going to give first.” Then, any profits made are generated honestly—and your tribe will know it.

## Q: How do tribe members deal with a leader who has abandoned tribal protocol?

**A:** The model for the question is Ralph Nader, who for years was a leader in questioning corporate values and culture, and a leading advocate of consumer protections and reform. Many people have criticized him for seeming to abandon those causes in favor of personal ambition, for example, his races for the Presidency. Many churches have dealt with a similar question when their pastors engage in affairs, fraud, or sexual abuse of children.

In this situation, the leader effectively abandons the tribe. The worst move for the tribe is to follow the leader if he is going in a direction that does not serve the tribe.

A true tribe forms around an ideology, so when the leader abandons it, it does not disintegrate. It may move on with new leadership. It may try to reclaim its leader with tribal sub-leaders mounting a campaign to save him, which is not always successful (as in the case of Nader). In the church example, the tribe will most likely either disperse and join a different church, or stay together under new leadership. Either way, the tribe will not allow the original leader to reclaim his position.

## Q: Are good tribe leaders extroverted, introverted, or does it matter?

**A:** Good tribe leaders can be extroverts or they can be introverts. An excerpt from one of Seth's posts ("A Choice, Not a Gift") points out that "there are leaders with speech impediments and a fear of public speaking. Leaders down the corporate ladder and leaders with no money or obvious trappings of power..."

An extrovert who steps into a leadership role has a personality that meshes well with the job. Drawing his energy and motivation from others, he naturally seeks out and attracts tribal members who look to him for leadership. An example is Dr. Andreas Gruentzig, who is credited with bringing coronary angioplasty to the U.S. Dr. Gruentzig was an extrovert, a bit of a maverick, and had an incredible amount of charisma—more than usual for one person. He had a devoted staff of tribe members who were awed by his goodness and his work. He conducted numerous teaching seminars for cardiologists to teach them how to perform angioplasties. They in turn became tribal leaders at their clinics and hospitals.




An introvert in a tribal leader position manages a duality of personality—the personal person versus the public person. While there may be a tendency for an introvert to remain introverted, if faced with a life-changing experience that pushes her out of her comfort zone to lead a tribe and make a difference, she can operate on the extrovert end of the spectrum when working within that cause. Over the course of history, there have been effective leaders who “spoke softly, but carried a big stick.” Abraham Lincoln is a good example of a personality that by all indications was introverted and he was an effective tribal leader during a critical point in U.S. history.

Great tribe leaders stand by the courage of their convictions. They speak out even though “going public” is not their personal preference and step forward on behalf of what they believe. They cannot be silenced, no matter what their innate personality tendencies.

**Q: How does a tribe awaken its “sheepwalkers” or do they have a viable function in the tribe?**

**A:** Start with yourself (the leader):


- Ask yourself what you can do to inspire and engage the tribe. Do you have a manifesto? Is it inspiring? Are you inspiring? Do you have visible passion for your cause?
- Ask yourself if your desire to see tribe members engaging rather than sheepwalking stems more from your need as a leader to have followers than your desire to support the tribe. Recognize that every tribe needs leaders, followers, lurkers, learners—people with varying degrees of involvement.
- Recognize that the person may be leading or participating in a different way than you do.
- Did you have a small hurdle to get into your tribe, so that you are sure the sheepwalker is there intentionally and not randomly?
- Follow Harrison Owen’s Open Space Technology philosophy, “Whoever comes are the right people.”
- Provide a safe environment. Let them know you appreciate them. For all you know, simply logging in to your site or signing up for your meeting may have been a huge step for them. People engage at the level of commitment that they are ready to act on.

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- Provide encouragement to sheepwalkers.
  - Encourage them when the opportunity makes itself available; follow Ken Blanchard's philosophy, "Catch someone doing something right."
  - Honor the baby steps (think of a small child learning to walk—it would never happen if we simply yelled at them to start running).
  - Recognize that pushing is not encouragement. Being encouraged feels good; pushing feels bad. Whether you are encouraging or pushing is decided not by you but by the sheepwalker.
  - Provide opportunity for sheepwalkers.
  - Do they need to be tapped? Do they have something special to contribute that they do not realize is special? Do you know what talents exist within your tribe? (If not, how you will discover/uncover them?)
  - Have you provided easy vehicles for engagement and contribution?
  - Have you set "stretch" goals that inspire commitment?
  - Can they sense your support? Do you believe in them?

**Q: What is the value of transparency to a tribe? How much is too much? How much is not enough?**

**A:** Transparency is critical to the healthy functioning of a tribe. It builds trust, stronger connections, and a sense of shared responsibility within the tribe. Most people are good at "sniffing out" hidden agendas or people who are not really what they claim to be. If allowed to continue, this type of behavior can destroy a tribe.

The concept of transparency taken too literally can be destructive as well. While there can never be too much transparency in a tribe, there is value in the leader's conscious management of the timing, content, and delivery of communication with the tribe. For example, a leader may learn information that could serve as a threat to the tribe's existence. Sharing it immediately may cause the members to panic, start rumors, and otherwise be unproductive. The leader may wait until the net effect to the tribe is better understood before sharing the information.



Transparency can also be communicated through actions, in addition to sharing opinions through words. For example, it may be important for a tribe to foster an environment of learning and shared responsibility. Let's say a less experienced member takes the initiative to try something that the leader, through experience, is pretty certain will not work. The leader has two options. She tells the member that the idea probably will not work, being completely transparent about their opinion, or she may withhold judgment so as not to squelch the enthusiasm of the member.

Here the leader's actions may be more transparent than their words. To foster a learning environment, the leader may nudge the idea toward a direction with a higher likelihood of success, allowing the member to "discover" that the idea needed to be changed.

In this case, the leader's choice to withhold transparency of the initial opinion about the idea enabled the actions to set a transparent example of the importance of fostering a learning environment. The leader could have been perceived as a dictator who favored top-down rule by squelching the idea from the beginning.

Ultimately a strong tribe needs transparency to foster trust and a tightly connected group. Leaders must realize that their actions as well as their words are communicating the true values of the tribe, ensuring consistency between what they say, how and when they say it, and what they do.

**Q: How does one get over fear and give oneself permission to become a leader?**

**A:** You do not really need to "overcome" fear to lead. Leaders do not have the absence of fear. They have decided that the tribe is more important than their fear. They just decide to do it and then they do it.

**Here is a recipe for leading.** When your faith in your idea ignites your passion and you are overwhelmed with the need to share it with another human being:

1. Find another human being and share your passion/idea.
2. If she feels the same way, then encourage her to spread the idea.



3. Find another human being, share your passion/idea again, and put him in contact with the person you found in the previous step.
4. Repeat from #2.

You may not set out to lead or make time for “leading.” The necessities just force themselves on you. If you resist, the idea may make you miserable until you work out what to do next and then act. If what you are doing is rooted in your passion, you will carry on regardless of any fear or doubt. Then, if what you are doing is making a difference and others share your values, they will come around to see what you are up to. And if it is something that really speaks to them, then they will want to be a part of it and tell friends about it, and you will find yourself leading a tribe.

Sometimes the issues of fear and permission are moot because leadership can happen when you are not looking. As Triibes member [Brendan Mitchell](#) says, “I was concentrating on doing what I do, head down, nose to the grindstone, just plowing away. I didn’t plan to lead or influence others around me, but it happened anyway.”

## Q: Do tribes find leaders or do leaders find tribes?

**A:** Some leaders create their tribes, some tribes find their leaders. Things start to happen when a passion about something attracts a crowd, like a new idea or a new way of doing business.

Did the Beatles find teenagers or did teenagers find the Beatles? Most likely, the Beatles did not consciously create music to attract a certain portion of the population. They were simply following their passion by creating their music and drew a crowd, which then turned into a tribe. Once the band found their core tribe, they worked to find and attract more members.

In a crowd or group coalescing around a particular idea, until someone steps on stage and grabs the microphone, there is not a tribe. Until someone sends an invitation to buy a book, join a group, read a newsletter, or organize the crowd around the idea, there is not a tribe.

That does not mean the crowd that turns into a tribe did not exist before the leader came on the scene. However, until the leader makes her move to turn the crowd into a tribe, the group cannot act in a tribal manner.



The Beatles did create a tribe of Beatles lovers which was a subset of the teenage population and which led to certain behaviors, language, and rituals. Teenagers and their proclivity for rebellion fit neatly with the Beatles and their music. So while the Beatles did not create the tribe out of the clear blue sky, they molded it through their leadership from a crowd to a tribe.

## Q: Can a leader successfully lead two or more tribes simultaneously?

**A:** It depends on the leader, how much control she desires, and the purposes of the different tribes as well. For example:

- Someone who leads a company tribe might possibly also lead a social tribe.
- Someone who must initiate or lead often cannot stop at initiating or leading just one thing.

Some caveats:

- Leading more than one tribe is possible, but beware of the law of diminishing returns. Concentrated effort always brings better results. Better to lead one tribe of 50 devoted people who are so inspired that they enthusiastically take on difficult challenges than two tribes of 25 who run at the first paper cut.
- If the leader is trying to be involved in everything (decision, transaction, process, struggle, resistance, or through a top-to-bottom, tyranny-style of control), she will not have the time or energy to effectively lead another tribe.
- The leader should focus on each tribe's purpose because a tribe concerned with being everything stands for nothing. A tribe can be part of another tribe, but the leader has to keep their purposes separate.
- Passion is important. Follow your passion because trying to do everything weakens the tribe and can eventually set it up for extinction.



**Q: How does the leader of the tribe walk the fine line between being inclusive and allowing the tribe to become a democracy? Between setting direction and becoming an autocratic factory?**

**A:** The leader sets the agenda. If people do not resonate with that purpose, they are not a member of that tribe. The clearer the purpose, the clearer people know if they belong.

Setting expectations is key. People should know what they are joining when they come to the tribe. In the end, though, leading a tribe is about being the final voice. Let's say the leader proposes a mission, others join the group, and someone suggests a direction. The leader had better be the voice that gives the final okay on direction or the leader is not leading.

The leader incorporates others' input, as long as it does not interrupt the flow the leader knows will work. If tribe members want to go a different way, the leader asks the tribe members if they are willing to experience the way the leader originally proposed. If they are not, it is typically an issue of control or trust. At this point, the leader inquires and engages in dialogue. Just in the asking and honoring of another's opinion, we (ideally) build trust—and trust is essential.

To strike the right balance, tend a tribe the way you would tend a garden. (And note the "tender" feel of the word.) You cannot make plants grow. You can do everything else: plant, water, weed, shade, prune, clean—everything. But plants grow or they do not, and you cannot do it for them.

It is important to recognize that different plants have different growing requirements. It is important to treat everyone fairly. In doing that, you may not treat them exactly the same.

As for weeds, they are only plants growing where you do not want them. Usually, you can transplant them to a more appropriate garden. Some, unfortunately, are invasive and pernicious and must be yanked. If a weed is hurting the tribe, it must be removed; do not hesitate. And then, as the leader, let the tribe know what you did and why. This too will build trust and strengthen the tribe.





**Q: Can a tribe function successfully with more than one leader? If so, how?**

**A:** A tribe can absolutely function successfully with more than one leader. However, some tribes, based on their culture or their leader's culture, may not support this thinking.

Multiple leaders manifest in one of two ways. The first is more traditional, typically found in corporations or large organizations that are big enough to support sub-tribes (each with its own leader). But the HEAD leader generally has the final say and the most to gain or lose in good or bad situations.

The other situation where tribes are successful (and even thrive) with multiple leaders involves the idea of collaborative leadership style. Members have a vested interest in the performance of the tribe. With this type of "Leadership Ensemble," leadership is most effective when all levels of an organization have input. An example of this is the [Orpheus chamber orchestra of NY](#).

This is not to say that there is utter chaos. At all times there is a leader. So even though the overall leadership is shared, leadership is "tribally assigned."

**Q: There are plenty of leaders who seem to get it right in the beginning but who turn awfully wrong in the end. Are leaders too concerned with being right? What separates a great leader from a despotic one?**

**A:** Can the concepts of "right" or "wrong" be accurately defined in this context? If, at some point, the vision of the leader begins to diverge from the vision of the tribe, the tribe itself will set the now-heretic leader apart. This is not right or wrong; it is just that leader and tribe no longer share the same vision.

If you are the leader, you should be engaged with the ebb and flow of your tribe. If you really hear and connect with what your tribe is saying, you can adjust your vision to match your tribe, influence your tribe to adjust their vision to yours, or meet somewhere in the middle. As a leader, you should be cognizant of how your leadership is viewed.

A despot is arguably not a leader—rather, he or she uses fear and coercion to control a crowd of people, rather than create a real tribe. If you are a great leader with humility, grace, and gratitude, and your faith in your new vision exceeds your appreciation of your current tribe, then you will probably leave it peacefully and start a new one.

## Q: Is it possible to influence a tribe without being the leader?

**A:** The short answer is ABSOLUTELY.

Obviously, some tribes are more leader-driven or leader-dependent than others. For a tribe to thrive, tribe members must not only feel connected with one another, but also feel they can contribute and influence the tribe.

The glue that holds a tribe together is its mission, not its leader. And within that system, both formal and informal leaders exist. These leaders act as coordinators; however, tribe members are free to influence the direction of their tribe both inside and outside its core system.

Another important point to note on intra-tribe influence is this: if the leader is the only one who can wield influence, then it is not a tribe. It is a cult.

## Q: What are the top 10 things leaders can do to encourage/tighten their tribe?

**A:** Leaders can:

- Publish some kind of manifesto (written or otherwise).
- Enable communication within the tribe.
- Challenge the tribe. Give projects to the tribe members to work on together. (People long to be a vital part of something bigger than themselves.)

- Encourage tribes to form within the larger tribe.
- Lead the conversations where you want them to go, make it easy for everyone to participate, and then reward those who do the most.
- Do not promote your own stuff. Let the members recommend your stuff in their conversations.
- Do not worry about large numbers: focus on serving your true fans and then let your fans bring others into the tribe.
- Teach your tribe how to point people in the right direction (and it is OK if it is not toward you).
- Be authentic.
- Care. Your tribe knows if you care about them—if you care about what happens to them, what inspires them, what affects them, what improves their lives, and what brings them joy. Likewise, your tribe knows if you do not care—they can smell a fake a mile away and if it is not apparent now, it will be soon. It makes all the difference in the world between a tribe stuck together with paper and string and a tribe whose members are strongly, organically connected to their leader and to one another.

## Q: How does a tribe communicate effectively with all of its members?

**A:** Communications have become faster, more globalized, and “round the clock.” “Reach out and touch” is not what it was yesterday.

A tribe effectively communicates with all of its members if messages within the tribe effectively reach the intended audience and the messages and meanings are well received and understood. Some people will not use forums or any of the new social media sites. Others only use email, while still other only use the telephone. Young people do not use email anymore—they text. Most people in the world have never even heard of Twitter, but there is a very active population using that tool almost exclusively.

Effective communication, as shown by these examples, really depends on the nature of the tribe and what works best for the members:



- A local quilters' guild that depends on a newsletter, signage posted at the annual quilters show, and good old word of mouth.
- A cycling club that uses a website and basic e-news notification of the when, where, and how of the next event.
- A tribe of young professionals that uses a website, email, and, primarily, Facebook.
- Social networking tribes like Ning depend solely on the web, incorporating forums, blogs, and groups.
- A supper club that depends on group email and word of mouth.
- A senior citizens lunch group that relies primarily on the telephone and announcements at group events.

For a tribe to communicate effectively with all of its members it needs to be approachable and offer easily visible windows of entry as well as some sophistication. The tribe should remain fluid in its internal forwarding of information and adhere to the roles of its members and leaders to avoid overloading people with too much information.

## **Q: What is the impact of “social media” on modern tribal behavior, today and in the future?**

**A:** Social media is one more tool that leaders can use to build their tribes. It is not the only tool nor is it always the best tool, but it is a powerful tool. Consider the following benefits of social media to tribes:

- Democratization of leadership: Social media makes it possible for anyone to find others who share their interests and then lead a tribe that shares their interests. Platforms exist that enable groups to be created without prior knowledge of the infrastructure used to build them. The tools exist for anyone with an idea to start and lead a tribe.
- Minimization of physical and temporal boundaries: Social media makes it possible for people all over the world to communicate with one another. People can share ideas, other information, and connections without regard to their physical proximity or time zone.



- Organization and distribution of leadership: Social media tools eliminate the need for top-down leadership and help to spread tribal organization laterally. Within a tribe, multiple leaders emerge who help the leader to spread the passion they all share for the tribe's mission. Social media tools enable them to be connected, extend their outreach, and ensure that all members can have a voice within the tribe.

## Q: How can technology “tighten” tribes?

**A:** Tribes are defined by connections between people, leaders, and ideas that are centered around a common goal or interest. Strong tribes need strong connections that do not constrain the way they organize themselves.

Consider the Open Space Experiment that occurred in 1985. In brief, a group of people who shared a common interest came together for a three-day workshop. The workshop had no prior agenda, leaders, or specific topics to predetermine its outcome. Within the first few hours, the group had determined the topics to discuss, agenda, and different working teams to fill the three days. The group was bound by their mission and tightened by their ability to come together and co-create their destiny.

Advances in technology have enabled the emergence of many new tools to facilitate connection between people. All of these tools, however, are not created equal. Some common tools such as the telephone can facilitate fluid communication, but make it difficult to organize large groups simultaneously. Other common tools like email can facilitate communication with larger groups, but often get in the way of synchronous interactions between members. And neither type ideally accommodates those who communicate visually more easily than verbally.

The latest technologies are attempting to fill this need, with the rise of social networking platforms being the most common. They are getting closer, but still have a ways to go. When considering a technology platform to facilitate the interaction within your tribe, consider the goals of the platform. Will your tribe still be meeting face-to-face, so that the platform serves as a bulletin board? Or will it need to take the place of face-to-face meetings? In either case, select a platform based on its ability to facilitate the necessary interaction rather than interfere or dictate it. If you find that your group is spending more time interacting with the technology than each other, it is time for a new platform.



## Q: Can I turn my blog into a tribe?

**A:** A blog is an excellent tool for connecting and communicating with a tribe, but connecting and communicating are not enough to turn a blog's readership into a tribe.

Blog readers may already be a tribe, albeit one that is very loosely connected with top-down communication. It is the responsibility of the blog's author to develop content and encourage dialogue. But while the tribe may post comments, it is not an ideal platform for facilitating discussion among tribe members. As such, it may not be the best tool for tightening the tribe or strengthening connections between them.

Also consider that blogs are only one of many possible platforms that leaders can use to communicate with a tribe. The blog may attract many passive readers, but the author sometimes needs to start a network that enables tribe members to interact with each other. This network allows multiple tribe members to emerge as leaders as they step up to start topics and discussions the original author may not have considered. This makes the blog an entry point to the network, where only the most passionate will contribute regularly.

The barriers to follow the leader of the tribe (the blog author) are low and the reach is vast, enabling the tribe to be exposed to many potential members. It is a great platform for a leader who wants to share different points of view, stories, or external points of interest with their tribe. So while you might start a tribe because of a blog—no doubt an important and useful tool—it may not be the primary platform.

## Q: How can a tribe allow members to contribute and participate?

**A:** One strong way to generate a tightly-knit tribe is to allow tribe members to contribute and participate in a project. If people feel that they are a part of the project rather than merely a fan of the project, they will feel more attached to its outcome and be a more integral part of the tribe. Although this seems like it would be a tall order, encouraging members to contribute and participate can be pretty straightforward.

- Give people more than they are expecting (or more than they are paying for).
- Give them a say in how the project turns out.


- Let them invest in it emotionally, intellectually, and even financially, so that it is THEIR project too.
- Include elements that make them feel special, like publishing the final product on a widely read website or giving the final product to the participants, but making it hard to get a hold of later.
- Make something they can brag about.
- Make something they can be proud of!
- Do more to make people feel good and belong.

The most important way to foster a culture of collaboration in a tribe is to be grateful when members participate and show your members that you appreciate their contributions.

## **Q: How can you build a tribe so everyone stays active and has a role to play?**

**A:** There are many factors involved in building an active tribe, including the following:

- Connection and communication
  - Build as many connections between the tribe members as possible
  - Work to keep the communication channels open
  - Keep Pareto's Law in mind (not everybody will be equally involved)
  - Understand that there will always be leaders and lurkers
  - Create ways for lurker-learners to evolve into leaders
  - Reach out to those who are less involved
  - Work to build a tighter tribe
  - Improve the connections between tribe members
  - Encourage more active tribe members to befriend less active members

- 
- Appreciation
    - Create a culture of welcoming, encouraging, and caring
    - Make sure that even the less active know they'd be missed if they weren't part of the tribe
    - Initiate dialogue with less active members
  - Motivation
    - Offer more carrots by showing less active tribe members the benefits of being more active
    - Offer more "roles" by asking less active members to take on projects or make specific contributions
  - Leadership
    - Understand that tribal participation ultimately falls on the shoulders of leadership
    - Find ways to maximize tribal participation
    - Remove barriers to participation
    - Simplify processes and facilitate ease of participation

**Q: What are the analytics for a tribe with regards to expected participation? 80/20?**

**A:** This is dependent on the dynamics of the tribe itself, its members, and its leaders. Sadly, many tribes operate—and to some extent, encourage—minimal (1–2%) participation.

Historically, Pareto's 80/20 rule has stood the test of time. Today's more-connected world where people are engaged and communicating 24/7 provides a huge opportunity to encourage greater participation.

In the past, participation has been easier to measure because it was more tangible: showing up at and participating in a meeting or creating something for the tribe to use. Now members can participate virtually.

Creating metrics for measuring things like engagement and participation is still in its infancy.

The best way to be able to predict participation involves two steps. First, you need to define participation and how you will measure it. Once you have those metrics, find and compare your tribe dynamics to a similar tribe that has been around for awhile and that has been measuring participation.

**Q: How much or little interaction between tribe members is necessary in a tribe?**

**A:** Communication is the connection for the tribe. It determines the effectiveness of the tribe. The more tribe-member-to-tribe-member communication, the tighter the tribe. Without that nexus of idea exchange, there is no reinforcement of tribe values or exploration of tribe boundaries. If half the attendees at a church are nodding off or looking repeatedly at their watches, they have moved from the position of participant to some inert state of stasis.

Members must put in their two cents' worth (some bring bags of coins to the party) at least now and then or they are merely entities on a list, not tribe members.

Members alert enough to perceive a lack of communication affecting tribal cohesion may make efforts to communicate more, but that may be lost on the rest of a tribe and fail to reduce a drifting apart.

So, although there may be no yardstick to measure the interaction, the tribe leader must take the tribal pulse often to make sure that a lack of interaction is not destroying the tribe.



## Q: Why and how does the tribal pulse get taken?

**A:** Taking the tribal pulse is important for two reasons:

1. The leader gets to hear what members are thinking.
2. Members see and appreciate leadership proactivity.

To take the tribal pulse, determine:

- what will be measured
- how measurements will be taken
- what the measurements will mean


For example, you could compare the current state of relationships between tribe members to historic data. You could measure how much any two individuals communicate (in virtual situations, by how much discussion is taking place online and by whom). Decreased interaction over time could indicate weakening relationships among members (or waning interest in a particular topic or activity).

Another example is to gauge the mobilizing strength of the core message, belief, or idea. This can be measured in many ways (for example, the number of people involved in similar movements or the number of responses to a particular communication). An increase over time could indicate that the core message is spreading.

A wide choice of methods exists to measure the tribal pulse, including:

- Formal and informal surveys with direct questions
- Feedback forms asking for a rating of different elements
- Focus groups
- Informal questions and answer sessions
- 360-degree feedback and assessment





Informal ad hoc pulse-taking can provide valuable insight for the leader. In a business setting, “management by walking around” gives the leader an up-close, personal view of how people are interacting and what issues are on their minds. Asking people what they are working on or contributing to and then listening closely to the words they choose, the descriptions they use, their body language, and their tone of voice will serve as “quick indicators” of the state of the tribe.

The same kind of activity in a virtual tribe can be accomplished by reading online discussions, scanning uploaded documents, and participating in conversations between one or more members from time to time. Again, paying attention to the wording and content of the responses can help gauge the tribe’s condition.

### **Q: Do you have to be present to participate in a tribe?**

**A:** For this question, “present” means physically, emotionally, or mentally available when everyone else is. “Participate” means to add value, listen, or contribute.

To add value and contribute, you do have to be physically or emotionally available (but not necessarily when everyone else is).

As a great example, the active members on Triibes.com are not always online at the same time, but each in some way participates. You have paid the price (bought the book) and you have been accepted (related at some point to the leader). You continue to add value as you show up and contribute however little or much you desire. This is similar for the active members of many online communities.

Tribes are built on relationships. A person who does not ever relate, participate, or communicate may be associated with, but is not really part of, the tribe.

## Q: Does a tribe need a strategy? If so, why?

**A:** “Strategy is what makes you a leader and not just a noisy person in the corner” – Seth Godin

Strategy is what enables a tribe to move from “being” to “doing.” The importance of strategy is dependent on the nature of the tribe. In a passive tribe, which primarily relishes “belonging,” the leader’s strategy is not as important, but is still necessary.

A dynamic tribe relishes the opportunity to be productive. Dynamic tribes realize they can harness their collective intelligence to achieve something together, in addition to simply belonging. Here, leadership matters more. It galvanizes the tribe around “change people can believe in.” In the context of achievement, the leader’s strategy is pivotal.


Lack of strategy in a leader creates a rudderless tribe and a rudderless tribe can easily descend into a crowd or a mob.

## Q: How does strategy work in a tribe?

**A:** Strategy works in a tribe by giving a tribe direction. Strategy takes the tribe from “being” to “doing.”

Depending on the nature of the tribe, the strategy may be more or less structured. For example, a loose band of knitters may have the strategy, “We will continue to admire and support the creation of knitted items.” A charitable organization may have a tighter strategy, “To provide support to first-generation college students, we will raise \$2 million by [date]. To do this, we will send XXX,XXX support letters by [date].”

Strategic value in a tribe comes from the vision, provenance, track record, heritage, experience, credibility, and empathy of the leader(s). These leaders start the tribe, are chosen by the tribe, or emanate naturally from the tribe through a process of organic selection (as opposed to being imposed from above or without). The courage to lead comes with the responsibility of being able to deal with the implications of the destination where the tribe is being led. This requires that the leader have a strategy.



Strategy in a tribe differs from strategy in a conventional organization because in a tribe strategy does not come from an apparatus or structure organized around process or bureaucracy. The fundamental reason for being in a tribe is emotional and expressive. Personality, meaning, and culture are prime characteristics of tribes, and strategy in a tribe works by taking this tribal expression into account. For example, the Harley Davidson tribe does not have high-profile leadership, but it does have very strong attributes around personality, meaning, and culture. Connecting to the tribe—connecting tribe members to Harley Davidson and to one another—is a key component of Harley Davidson’s strategy.

Strategy works in this context by purposefully creating opportunities for dialogue, engagement, and continuing participation. It is an iterative process, a process of husbandry that works by cultivating the natural resources of the tribe. In a strong tribe, participation generates tribal energy by what members are doing and saying. What they say counts. What they do matters.

**Q: How is a tribe different from a fan base, a special interest group, or a community?**

**A:** A fan base and a special interest group have a unified interest in something or someone. A fan base has one particular common factor that draws people to that group. It could be a person (or group of persons), an event, or a product. A special interest group is organized to take action around a shared interest or value, such as eco-builders, horse lovers, and programmers specializing in a particular programming language.

A community involves people with a shared interest or value and some form of group communication channel. Classic Corvette owners, knowledge management practitioners, and yacht club members can and often do form into communities. In a community, members may receive a regular newsletter or phone call to keep them up to date on community events and news, and periodic gatherings will bring members together.

These three kinds of human grouping may exhibit some elements of tribal behavior (such as a common vernacular, shared rituals, or a leader who points the way), but there is little or no sustained interactivity between those in the group and no “larger purpose” that allows members to transcend their own personal interests and issues.



A tribe forms when the special interest group, fan base, or community breaks through into a new mode of operation. It becomes a “movement” where people have the ability to interact up, down and sideways, where members step up into leadership roles, and where the impact of the whole is greater than the sum of the separate parts.

Tribes thrive on interconnectedness. A leader emerges who sets the direction and then facilitates ways for the tribe to connect and move forward together. She may lean in or back off, but she does it on purpose to support the tribe, to gain and sustain momentum. The members’ connectedness with each other is at least as strong as their connectedness to the leader.

### **Q: What are the differences between predominantly online and offline tribes?**

**A:** The biggest difference between online and offline tribes is the way in which they communicate. Offline tribes meet face-to-face more regularly than their online counterparts do. This is mostly a good thing, because nothing can replace personal interaction. But online groups can connect people that are physically isolated and can allow tribes to form that never would have connected before. Online tribes therefore have the potential for a greater range of ideas, because they come from people of various backgrounds, ethnicities, regions and so on. Further, online tribes can grow to be larger with fewer ill effects.

There are some common factors between online and offline tribes that may contribute to understanding the idea of tribes. Both kinds of tribes are formed for the same needs:

- a common goal
- a change in routine
- more knowledge
- a hobby
- a desire to contribute to something bigger than themselves
- perhaps a desire to become famous through membership in the tribe



Online and offline tribes also have similar types of leaders—people who want to change things around them. This is the only common denominator for leaders; they can come from anywhere and any background.

Tribes of all kinds are flourishing today because of new communication tools that result in more tribal activity overall. [Cluster Ballooners](#) is a good example of an offline tribe that uses online tools. They meet offline, in person, at various locations globally, but they spread information about their activities through their websites, online.

### Q: Are there sub-tribes within a larger tribe?

**A:** Yes. There are always sub-tribes (especially with a tribe of significant size). Sub-tribes exist within larger tribes as more localized, focused mini-tribes carrying on the philosophies and doctrines of the mother tribe, but at a local level. A strong tribe will offer a superordinate identity to all sub-tribes so that they unite around that larger identity.

Corporations or large organizations are big enough to support sub-tribes. Each sub-tribe has its own leader. But the HEAD leader generally has the final say and the most to gain or lose in good or bad situations.

Sub-tribes can run the risk of being divisive, but the duty of the larger tribe is to create unity and a common cause so that sub-tribe rivalry is minimized.


### Q: What are the advantages and disadvantages of restricted membership?

**A:** Leaders of a tribe must consider the risks of growing or constricting the growth of their tribes. In doing this, they must think through when and/or how it makes sense to restrict their membership. Here are some advantages and disadvantages to consider:

Advantages of restricted tribal membership include:

- Increasing value: Limiting tribal membership creates scarcity. Scarcity creates value and perceived value.





Many people seek to be members of a valuable tribe, even if that value is only a perception. Also, when restrictions represent a “price,” tribe members are often more loyal to the tribe in that they have paid a price to be a member. Sometimes things that are “free” are not necessarily appreciated, but when those things (such as membership) have a cost, they tend to be appreciated much more.

- Tightening the tribe: Restrictions can create a filter, in that only certain types of people are selected for membership. This can better fill the tribe with members that truly share the tribe’s vision, tightening the tribe and its connections and facilitating growth that is not destabilizing.
- Uniting the tribe: Creating a common experience for tribe members can strengthen their connections. Many strong tribes have some form of an accepted rite of passage. This also serves as a barrier to entry for those who do not want to join enough to invest the effort.

Disadvantages of restricted membership include:

- External perception: The general public might look down on the tribe. This is particularly true for those people who cannot overcome the restrictions and are denied membership.
- Decreased diversity: Restrictions might prevent some people from becoming tribe members who would have been quite beneficial to the tribe. The restriction may not allow the type of diversity that could be beneficial to the tribe.

It is important to grow a tribe carefully so that the mission does not become diluted and the membership overwhelmed and destabilized. However, based on the potential disadvantages of restriction, it may be best to consider ways to define the tribe’s mission such that people self-select or filter themselves based on the goals of the tribe. Otherwise, the tribe may lack the diversity necessary to adapt to change.

**Q: What are tribes good at doing and accomplishing and what are they not so good at doing and accomplishing?**

**A:** Tribes are not a good way to market something where everyone belongs (Tide—large market share, nothing special about the way it cleans clothes) or where no one would believe the product was created to serve the tribe (as opposed to taking advantage of it) or where no one would believe they were committed to the tribe, instead of the brand.



To start building an answer, we need to ask a secondary question: “...good at, compared to what?”

Compared to leaderless crowds or customers as followers, tribes are good at spreading ideas, motivating people to follow a defined path to agreed-upon goals, achieving dreams, supporting their members, negotiating and agreeing upon standards, and sharing passion and awards.

Compared to an individual or a small team, tribes are not good at creating vision, following up on schedules, enforcing standards (although there may be peer pressure at work, but that counts as individual action), and at designing products, services or processes (but tribes get better at it through collaborative peer technologies like wikis and social networking).

The list is not complete, but in summary: tribes excel at accomplishments that benefit from discussion, consensus, and strength in numbers. Tribes are not so good at accomplishing what depends on individual initiative and personal freedom.

**Q: Do tribes need a goal or reason for existing, or can they exist based on nothing more than a common passion for something?**

**A:** A tribe does need a reason to exist. Granted, the reason might be obscure—they all like one particular movie or they all grew up together. Conversely, the reason might be obvious—fundraising for a charity or mothers who freelance from home.

If people wish to come together around a shared goal, that wish can become the main reason for a tribe to come into existence. Passion is part of it, but common passions alone do not magnetize a tribe.

Here are three examples:

- The Mojouriding Cycling Team has a reason to exist. They love cycling, and they cycle together and raise money for charity.
- The West Alabama Quilters Guild has a reason for existing. They share a passion for quilting, but their reason for coming together as a tribe is to quilt in a community setting and to display their work at the annual show.

- The Crossfit Tribe (mentioned by Seth in *Tribes*) exists with a goal of challenging one another. Members have a shared passion for fitness, but they exist because of their declared goal.

The first ingredient is a passion actively shared and communicated, perhaps shown off, its energy flowing among its members. Sharing creates the magnetic magic that bonds people and also creates the reason that leads to the formation of a tribe.

### **Q: Can a tribe be too big? Too small? Can two people make a tribe?**

**A:** Two is not a tribe. Three is the smallest number a tribe can be.

There are tens of thousands of sports fans that travel extensively to watch their teams play football. What do they want? To show their support in large numbers. That is a big tribe—but by given the focus of the tribe, it works.

Effective size depends on the tribe's purpose. It also depends on each member's engagement and on what members want. Is it better to know fewer people deeply than many just a little?

### **Q: Is dissent healthy or harmful for a tribe?**

**A:** Niccolò Machiavelli said that it is better to be feared by people than respected, because if you lay down your power, no one will respect you.

But that was in the 1500s in Italy. Now power is different.

Machiavelli's model is a good example of the old (and in his case, very old) way of thinking, of a top-down organization that simply dictates how the organization proceeds, with no notion that the body of the organization might be able to offer corrections and advice that could advance the organization's position and success. Fear in an organization seems a true impediment to creative problem-solving.



Dissent is necessary for tribal growth, particularly in the sense of how Seth explains the development of a tribe, as one having a leader who pushes and accelerates an idea, often an uncomfortable one. A tribe has a number of core beliefs and credos that they hold to be true, but a successful tribe is a living thing, where boundaries are pushed and questions asked.

Dissent is a good way to probe tribe beliefs for their validity and a way for tribal leaders to think over the tribal principles, perhaps bending them to new information. Of course, if the dissent is more in the nature of some kind of self-absorbed complaint, then it is not constructive.

Only dissent that is constructive benefits the tribe. People should be free to question authority and a good leader is not threatened by it. It can be an opportunity for growth, if change needs to be made. No one should be afraid to question the tribe and its doings, as long as they do so respectfully and in the spirit of helping the tribe.

The key to constructive, useful dissent, especially in our electronic world, is “respectful” dissent. For tribes that meet in person, a lot of understanding between members is gained by familiarity with that person’s whole persona, including body language, tone of voice, and the like. “Virtual” tribes add a layer of complexity in differentiating respectful dissent from unhealthy defiance or sarcasm.

Dissent between tribe members and even between the tribe leader(s) and a member is yeast that brings the tribal dough to rise, but if that yeast is sour, not only does the bread not rise, it can spoil.

## **Q: Should a tribe ever decide to remove “problem” members?**

**A:** Yes, but only under circumstances of deep, repeated, and deliberate provocation or violation. There are rare instances where tribe members violate stated tribal principles or unstated “rules of engagement” in a flagrant way that is determined to be particularly glaring or hurtful, and thus they must be removed from the tribe. However, this is an extreme measure and must only be implemented in the most serious of situations.

A central clarification must be made regarding members who might, by consensus, be considered “problematic.” This problem member might be the signpost to underlying problems. This is the same in tribes, in business, in families, and in groups of friends. Kicking them out can be similar to shooting the messenger, with troubling



consequences for the tribe. Excommunicating the heretic can often be to the tribe's detriment.

As soon as you remove one person, perhaps because they question upper management, everyone else in the tribe understands explicitly that asking those types of questions gets you fired. You have just stopped a valuable (and sometimes critical) feedback loop. The same thing happens if you get rid of the gossipier or the practical joker—determining the criteria for which a tribe member gets “fired” takes delicate and considered judgment.

There might be more clarity in the decision making if the problems included:

- Gross and repeated vulgarities in a tribe whose definition includes modesty, piety, or protection of children
- Diatribes against a group explicitly welcomed by the tribe
- Ad hominem attacks on individual tribe members
- Showing up armed or undressed at events where the tribe disallows this
- Posting ads in an ad-free zone

However, “merely” troublesome members create the drama necessary to create emotional engagement and interest in the community as a whole. In fact, from a sociological view of community building, they are essential. Unless the person violates a TOS (terms of service) or a real law, it's possible that people should be free to voice their opinions and be as troublesome as they want.

Not all troublemakers or problem members are reachable, but there is the possibility of “reform” if work, time, patience, energy, and love are applied to the problem. Maybe the troublesome member just needs the diversion of their energy moved away from being annoying into creating something new. Critics and challengers are welcome in tribes—perhaps someone is being critical to achieve more innovation. Excommunication should never be a guise to suppress dissidents.

However, if someone continually exerts a negative force on the rest of the tribe that far exceeds the value being contributed, there may be no other choice than excommunication.

## Q: What happens when a tribe becomes corrupt?

**A:** It is natural (perhaps inevitable) for different members of a tribe to experience varying levels of influence and benefits. However, a tribe is usually considered “corrupt” when a subset—usually those with power—start acting only in their own interests, rather than in the best interest of the entire tribe.

This most easily happens when:

- formal authority carries great power, and
- information flow is weak and/or centralized

When corruption occurs, members can respond in various ways:

- *fatalism*: “that’s just the way things are”
- *desertion*: “take my marbles and go home”
- *jockeying*: “how do I get to be on the ‘inside?’”
- *reform*: “we need to change the rules”
- *revolution*: “forget the rules, throw the bums out”

Once corruption takes hold, though, it is very difficult to root out—most revolutions and reforms merely end up replacing one corrupt elite with another. While the tribe may not completely die out (especially if there are strong barriers to exit), it slowly loses the ability to innovate and attract new members.

To fully displace a corrupt system ultimately requires the birth of a new tribe, with new ideals and new vision.







**Q: What is the best way to market the tribes concept to businesses that obviously need to learn about tribes?**

**A:** It starts with education, by introducing the tribe concept to those who may not be familiar with it.

The fact is that everyone belongs to multiple tribes. And everyone serves multiple tribes. A tribe is a group of people gathered around a common cause or interest. This is a privilege that should not be taken for granted.


Ways of marketing the tribes concept to business can include: distributing Seth's book, hosting discussions, speaking about tribes at professional gatherings, producing educational videos, and sharing stories of tribes on blogs.

Most importantly, we should begin using the word "tribe" when we speak of communities and groups to introduce and reinforce it.

**Q: How can we talk about "tribes" without evoking visions of grass huts and tiki masks?**

**A:** One way to do this would be to start with the words community, passion, leader and idea and build on those—and then start using the word tribe once people understand what you are driving at. Once you have provided the right context for "tribe" in the sense of people passionately aligned around a leader and/or a message, it is a nice solid word for the whole concept.

In relation to discussing tribes in a business setting, in that corporate context most people do not have a schema for "tribes." But most corporations understand that they have leaders and followers or adopters of their product or service, as tribes have leaders and tribes have followers. A tribe is a village or community formed together by certain characteristics (and "followers" might substitute for "customers" here). The word *community*—a tight knit group bound together by a passion or purpose with a constant communication channel—will communicate the message of tribes and be taken seriously in the boardroom.



In our personal lives, we have lots of terms for our “crowd”: peeps, homies, posses, crews, buds—move from that understanding and then expand to the related tribal concept. “Posse” does not mean a bunch of deputized cowboys anymore and “tribes” goes beyond those first images it evokes, too.

Any important idea will be robust enough to survive a few variations in terminology and expression. If you think that the people you are dealing with will not take well to “tribes,” then pick words and explanations that will attract them and provoke the right ideas in their minds.

Use the salesman’s secret: *Everything is a segue*. Instead of fearing that a perception of grass skirts and natives banging drums would offend, turn off, or make people laugh, use the image to your advantage. Ask, “When I say tribe, what do you envision?” Then if the person does think of a Native American or African tribe or some variant, go with it. Segue into, “Do you think we still have tribes? We know that men and women in business suits do not exactly conjure up the same visuals, but we do not think the things that constituted a tribe THEN have changed much. What do you think? Do we still have tribes?”

And go from there—a tribe can fall under many names, but its essence of community and communication is the glue that joins all the terms.

## Q: How can a tribe best groom the next generation?

**A:** Unless you are leading a tribe of immortals, the only way to ensure survival is to attract and groom the next generation!

You can accomplish this through a myriad of activities including storytelling, songs, schools, public celebrations, tribe events, and formal and informal mentoring. And these activities can be captured and shared via numerous media: books, audio recordings, video, social networks, workshops, competitions, social clubs, websites, you name it.

Tribes like the Beat Generation survived because they effectively spread their stories for future generations to find and carry forward. Tribe founders like Allen Ginsberg successfully organized reading events and schools to pass on his tribe’s values and techniques to young talent.

Grooming successive generations for a tribe requires the creation of ideas that spread. Ideas that inspire. Ideas that propel. Ideas that can break free of the confines of original ownership and be carried forward in new ways with new life.

Grooming the next generation for a tribe is not only an opportunity. For those devoted to what their tribe stands for, it is an obligation.

## **Q: How can you build a tribe when faced with stiff competition from a competing tribe?**

**A:** In a competitive arena, tribal leaders try to copy competing tribes with perceived advantage (for example, members or income). This presupposes that there is a limit to the number of people interested in an idea, passion, or belief that the competing tribes rally around, and that all of the potential members are looking for the same things.

Let's say there are two different tribes with "competing" websites, one of which is yours. Here is a way to build your tribe effectively:

- Separate the focus on websites from the focus on tribal success. The site is a medium to connect the tribe, not the agent that drives your tribe's growth.
- Look at the definition of each tribe and how each presents itself on the web. Let the "competition" do what it does best, and focus on the conversation and experience that your tribe already owns.
- Differentiate rather than copy. In just about any area, there are enough people to float two or more successful tribes. To compete against the lead tribe, the key is to differentiate rather than copy. A tribe stands for the unique positions, interests, and passion that connect each of its members.
- Define your tribe and consistently communicate its vision. This is essential to the tribe's sustainability. When two tribes are so similar that they can cannibalize each other's membership, the members who contribute to each tribe send a powerful message. When two tribes compete, one tribe (or both) is not serving its community, or both tribes think they represent the same community.



- Find the underserved niche within the niche. Establish your tribe as the alternative. If both tribes offer the same thing and people perceive one as the leader, they will naturally align with the leader. However, if the two tribes offer different things and it is easy to see that the upstart competitor is pushing the boundaries and going off in new directions, people will take notice.
- Be in tune with your tribe. Opportunities arise when the larger tribe gets so big that its leaders get complacent. If the members look outside of the larger tribe and see a competitor that is differentiating with exciting new offerings and more responsiveness to its members, there is a good chance they will give the new tribe a shot.
- Be better, different, and remarkable. Stand out to succeed. The first tribe is not always the tribe that succeeds (look at MySpace vs. Facebook). Do something that has been done before. Offer something innovative and creative to tighten the tribe...they will thank you for it!

## Q: Can a business competitor steal or destroy my tribe?

**A:** Yes—if you look at it from a leader’s perspective, a competitor can steal or destroy your tribe. People tend to belong to a tribe to achieve its mission, rather than simply because of its leader, although an effective leader can probably build loyalty over time. Therefore, it might be more useful to look at this primarily from the tribe’s perspective, because without members, there is no tribe.

To use an example, you may join a tribe led by the owner of The Greatest Tennis Shop in Southern California (TGTSISC) because it:

- promotes tennis playing in Southern California
- has developed a number of well-run leagues
- has a social networking site that shares tips on training, tactics, and stroke-development
- has a lively group of tribe members

If, after a couple of years of great business, TGTSISC’s tribal efforts have been neglected (for example, allowing the social networking site to be dominated by a couple of strong personalities, mismanaging the leagues, or

generally failing to care sufficiently for individual tribe members), you might not stay active. If another local shop develops a similar tribe, they may proactively seek to enroll (steal) you for their tribe. Another possibility is that a national tribe, with more resources, a broader reach, and a clearer mission may be more appealing to you than TGTSISC. Over time, other TGTSISC tribe members might also migrate until that tribe no longer has the impetus to continue—it is destroyed. It is worth remembering that the typical advantages of a tribe—nimbleness, voluntary association, and passion—are those very elements that can make tribes more vulnerable than more conventional organizations to competitive threats.

Whether tribe members have actively been poached, or whether the mere existence of other tribe opportunities erodes existing membership, the right kind of leadership is essential to maintain the tribe. If you feel a strong loyalty to the leader of TGTSISC, especially if he continues to be active, you may never leave his tribe. If you feel that the leader has given a great deal of himself to the tribe or you share his specific vision, you may even actively resent other tribes' efforts to grow. With your fellow members, that shared feeling may actually strengthen and tighten your tribe. Alternatively, if you are dissatisfied with the tribe and its leader's inertia but do not feel compelled to join another tribe, it could be a great opportunity to start leading your own tribe.

## Q: How can a tribe make it past “The Dip”?

**A:** “The Dip” is that fork in the road where you either should quit or power through to reach greater success. It is the existence of a dip that separates exceptional performers from wannabes in a given market or field. So how does a tribe make it through the dip?

Consider the wildly successful auction site eBay, which has reached a dip where their “tribe” of 13+ million buyers and sellers no longer feels the sense of excitement, ownership, and possibility they once did.

This dip, like many dips, can be viewed as having many causes: public perception, consumer confidence, financial resources, user experience, and so on.

However, the underlying problem with most tribes that face what appears to be an insurmountable dip is simply this: they have gotten stuck in a certain way of doing things.



To quote from Seth's book *The Dip*, the key is to "relentlessly change tactics but never quit the big idea." Seth goes on, "Don't fall in love with a tactic and defend it forever."

In Tribes, he describes it as the difference between "faith" and "religion." Religion is the way things have always been done, whereas faith is the underlying commitment to "the big idea."

In other words, the real reason the "tribe" as a whole is in a dip is because they have lost faith. Whatever religion they used to get them to this point no longer works. To move forward, they need something new.

Ultimately, to take a tribe through a dip requires a strong leader with a compelling vision who can rebuild the faith of his tribe.

When faith has been fully lost, this may well require a change in leadership. To continue with the eBay example, the selling public may feel that the current leadership got them into this mess, so any new initiatives from them would be dismissed as "empty promises."

Conversely, for a tribe built around a single institution (eBay), change still must come from the top. An individual seller, no matter how sincere and articulate, is not able to create even the appearance of systemic change.

The only way out for eBay (or any such community) is for the emergence of a new leader who:

1. isn't tainted with the failure of the "old guard"
2. has a compelling vision for the future
  - can credibly communicate that vision to the tribe
  - restores the lost faith of the tribe
  - has sufficient power and authority to deliver on that vision

Note that these steps usually need to happen in order; for example, it is only after a leader has built a following that they gain sufficient authority to implement their vision.



Conversely, all these steps need to happen for a leader to be successful. If the leader never manages to make his promised vision a reality, the tribe will only become disillusioned again, with devastating results (for both the tribe and the leader).

## Q: Can “tribe” mentality redefine corporate thinking?

**A:** Yes. For corporate thinking to adopt tribal practices, companies need to be more open and safe for individuals who want to express their points of view, to be open to frank communication across hierarchies, and to redefine themselves and their work around a mission rather than the authority of their superiors.

In specific companies, tribal thinking can develop in two ways:

- The first way is as an initiative from the very top. This occurs if the leadership decides that tribal ways are a sensible approach to work out company issues and drive forward the company direction. Entrepreneurs who start companies would be wise to build tribalism into their startup’s DNA. This will ensure that tribalism is the primary mode of operations. And if they do so and they are successful, other companies observing their success may adopt this approach. A big advantage of this approach is that it ensures that the entire company stays focused on the company’s mission, rather than around the points of view of particular individuals in power. It also provides a framework for bringing the valuable views of the company’s customer base into the tribe and gives customers a greater sense of ownership in the company’s future.
- A second way is a more project-based, smaller-scale attempt to promote a particular point of view or spread the word about a specific initiative. For example, in these times of environmental consciousness, a tribe could develop around focusing the company on being greener, which is both more socially responsible and can save it money. That tribe could start with a few dedicated employees who spot the “low-hanging fruit” and suggest immediate changes (providing recycling bins in areas where they are needed and holding departments accountable for energy use when employees are not around). Over time, as this tribe’s initiatives prove successful, more people will join, share their perspective, and spread the word further and wider. There is potential for such tribes, in cases where their primary mission affects the company’s bottom line in a major way, to transform the company’s culture.

Companies also need to be able to foster heretics—people who will challenge the status quo when it is not working. Intolerance for heresy may make managers feel more safe and secure. However, sending employees straight to the unemployment line for their outspokenness in arguing for a different path to better fulfill that company's mission (without passing go or collecting \$200) ill serves its long-term interests. In fact, ironically, ex-employees sometimes develop into tribes even if the company they connected through was not open to tribalism.

**Q: Does marketing to a tribe inherently go against the concept of a tribe?**

**A:** Marketing to a tribe requires a deeper level of understanding of the tribe than an opportunist can grasp. For marketing to work, it must be sincere and tribe-focused, not marketer-focused.

For example, Deadheads and KISS fans tend to embrace products that offer a sincere expression of their tribe, as do parents of Barney and Hannah Montana fans.

However, tribes that are focused around an idea or concept may be less likely to be interested in marketing. Creating a product that relates to the idea or concept is harder than creating T-shirts and video games.

So, while marketing does not inherently go against the concept of a tribe, it is not a given that marketing to a specific tribe will be successful.

**Q: Do tribes have an expiration date, and if so, how can one recognize when it is time for a tribe to die?**

**A:** Put simply, tribes expire when there is no longer a benefit to anyone. Groups, movements, and even nations wax and wane. Some stagger into history's dustbin (Ancient Roman Empire), some splinter into divided wedges (USSR), and some become essentially marginalized with an occasional feeble show of life (KKK).

It can be difficult to recognize when a tribe's decline is terminal and when it just needs medicine. It can also be difficult for some members to adjust as a tribe changes throughout its life stages.



A tribe that has 100 members might have 75 no longer participating in any meaningful way. They might have become indifferent to their original inspiration of the tribe, but if 25 members are still passionate, it is still a tribe. The reduction in numbers may recast the tribe's definition in some way. A tribe may alter, but still be able to carry on just through the sheer fire of its remaining members.

Leadership is essential to a tribe. A tribe has to have someone to lead or it is simply a crowd, so a tribe is likely to wither and die when there is no longer a leader.

Tribes that seem to be slumbering or ill, or that no longer have a sharply defined focus, might be experiencing a lag of some sort that only requires a renewed effort or an influx of new blood and ideas to be vibrant again.

For example, a tribe of bowling enthusiasts who meet every week for two years with fewer and fewer people showing up may become revitalized by a new approach to play that everyone gets behind, and a dying group is born again.

New impetus into a dying tribe may be met with resistance by those few lingering on and not wanting to change, but the fresh ideas will hopefully be grabbed with both hands by some, thus splintering and creating a new tribe. So there are times a tribe is worth saving, but then there are times it is worth letting it go and starting something fresh.

**Q: Should a tribe consider that it will end one day and plan for its extinction, as well as archive its potential contribution or legacy?**

**A:** Regardless of the desires and intentions of tribal members over time, eventually all tribes come to an end. Some may be gone forever, while others may be restructured or reincarnate as new tribes. For some tribal leaders, having an end-game strategy may make common sense.

Although many tribes will not wish to cease existence (fans of a TV show or a group of high school buddies who will eventually be separated upon graduation), others may have disbandment as part of their stated mission (such as the American Cancer Society or ONE (one.org)). Additionally, some tribes are not built with a beneficial legacy intended as a collective goal, but may want memories of their existence to be preserved.



No matter what their purpose for existence is or what they may wish to pass on, an accurate depiction of the tribe is vital to their shared legacy. The challenge for the tribe itself is to separate fact from fiction in both creating their own story, as well as what is being told by outsiders.

It is up to both tribal leaders and members to look toward the future in formulating how their legacy is to be archived and shared. In ancient cultures, this was accomplished in a more rudimentary manner (with myths and storytelling) than what is possible today with current technology. Tribes now have a myriad of options and can choose which formats are most appropriate to their needs to archive their existence, whether it is volumes of data stored in a wide variety of media or a few simple photo albums.

Depending on which part of the tribe's life-cycle they are in, tribal leaders should consider asking the following questions:

- What is our tribal purpose or mission?
- How long do I/we want this tribe to live? Why?
- What would the demise of our tribe mean to its members?
- How long am I/we willing to stick with it? Should I/we prepare other leader(s) to replace me? When? How?
- What is the intended legacy of this tribe?
- Who will be our tribal historian/librarian? How is accuracy determined?
- With so many information storage options available, what needs to be preserved and how?
- If our tribe is ending, what rituals will mark its conclusion? What rituals will honor its memory and contribution?
- Can/should a new tribe be created with some of the members of the extinct one who possess a similar purpose or mission? If so, what should be different?





**Q: Should I sell what I have to offer to an existing tribe or start one of my own?**

**A:** Either is possible, as a tribe leader can also be a part of other tribes.

Some tribes exist already and they will welcome things of benefit to them; in other instances a tribe can, or will, form around what you have to offer.

There may also be sub-sections of already formed tribes that are interested in what you are offering them. Not every member of a tribe will want the same thing.

You can profit from an existing tribe if you manage to become part of it, or better yet, achieve leadership or recognition in it. The Beatles did not invent teenagers and initially did not try to “lead” a tribe, but they certainly became noted by the teenage tribe because they did something remarkable that made a difference and eventually came to be adopted by that tribe as their symbols. The Beatles led by finding a tribe waiting to happen and by giving them something that tribe really wanted.

For another example, someone who creates Star Trek artwork will be offering something of potential value to the Star Trek tribe. Their leadership and the value that the artwork can generate will be derived from the fact that they have offered something only they could do and that they have made it available to people for whom it is meaningful.

In that way, they have an instant audience. They did not create the tribe and they do not lead the tribe as a whole, but they can sell to and profit from the tribe because they are fulfilling a tribal need.

**Q: When it comes to building a tribe or leveraging the power of an existing tribe inside an organization, what is the consultant's role? What is their best approach?**

**A:** There is a big difference between building a tribe and working with an existing tribe. The consultant is not a permanent internal resource. If they are to successfully build a tribe, key elements should already exist within the organization. This could be suitable leader, one or a band of heretics, and enthusiastic potential tribe members. The consultant's role should be to support the building process as invisibly and seamlessly as possible, offering their tools, skills, and knowledge as necessary.

When working to leverage the power of an existing tribe, a consultant can still enjoy the "benefit" of being an outsider, which makes it easier for him or her to be a temporary heretic, taking people out of their comfort zones. Of course, when this happens, it is all too easy for the consultant to be shown the door with the explanation, "you just didn't fit our business model." This organization is clearly not ready for change. But if they are, a consultant can:

- Offer an outsider's opinion on major stumbling blocks and drivers for success that may not be evident to an insider.
- Be non-partisan if this aids the dynamics of the organization or take sides if this propagates a chosen vision.
- Positively "infect" existing tribe members.
- Serve as a mentor to the tribe, a future tribe leader, or perhaps an emergent heretic.
- Act as a corporate teacher or trainer to enable the organization to become more tribal, thus improving idea generation and spread, securing buy-in, and transforming an existing culture.

To increase the likelihood of success within an organization, a consultant should ask the following questions:

- Where is the champion or mentor who will help you navigate the organization before you get there?
- Is there a common ground between you and the tribe?



- Can you ingratiate yourself with the tribe without compromising your values AND delivering value at the same time?
- Are you open to, rather than critical of, the tribe's current corporate culture?
- Did you, and do you continue to, advocate for the organization and its industry?

The symbiotic relationship between consultant and organization (mutualism) benefits both parties. Assuming a consultant is not only motivated by factors such as pay, flexibility, and kudos, they will also want to know that they were at least partially responsible for successfully implementing change, possibly also securing recognition for that. This may not always be possible, especially when organizations believe that a consultant's role is to "take the blame and pass the credit." Therefore, consultants also have a responsibility to themselves, developing and nurturing internal resilience through self-knowledge and self-belief.

## Q: What is the recipe for consciously creating a tribe?

**A:** A tribe is:

"...a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea..."  
– Seth Godin

To bring a tribe together, you first need two things:

1. A group of people who are connected to an idea
2. A leader for those people

Identify a group of people who are connected to an idea. For example, when creating Triiibes, Seth sourced his tribe of followers—people who were "passionate about leading a tribe and making things happen." Perhaps finding the right group of people is as simple as getting the word out?

Without a leader, a tribe is more like a "self-organized group." Once the tribe identifies their leader, it is possible to move on to other aspects of building a tribe.

In order for the group to gather, they need a gathering place. Again, using Triibes as an example, Seth created an online gathering place at Ning. It is important to make sure that the gathering place will adequately accommodate the needs of the tribe (such as communication, discussion, and future projects).

Communication is the most important aspect of building connections. You could argue that high-quality “connections” are the glue that holds a tribe together. In part, people join tribes in order to fulfill their need to feel connected. Tribe members need to feel connected to the tribe leader, to each other and to the “tribal idea.”

## **Q: Why do some tribes grow fast and others more slowly? Is there a preferred growth rate of a tribe?**

**A:** A number of factors contribute to the rate of growth of a tribe. Consider the following:

- Choice of tribal leaders and/or tribe members: Some tribes put a cap on membership growth.
- Type of tribe: Some tribes are not meant to grow fast.
- Exposure: Potential tribe members have not found many tribes.
- Communication: Although the internet allows many forms of social media, not all tribes are designed to leverage these tools. Thus, members might experience difficulty evangelizing the tribe.
- Health: Some tribes are healthy and some are not. Less healthy tribes may grow more slowly than healthy tribes. However, this is not to suggest that a fast-growing tribe = a healthy tribe and vice-versa.
- Member passion: A tribe filled with passionate members is more likely to grow because the passion causes excitement that helps recruit new members and creates a better atmosphere for tribal growth.
- Leadership: Some tribe leaders will lead better than others. Perhaps the best tribe leaders will find the optimal rate of growth for their tribe and help it happen.

At the end of the day, the optimal rate of growth for a tribe will depend on the tribe. It seems logical that the optimal rate of growth would be that rate consistent with the objectives of the tribe and the rate that does not diminish the health of the tribe.



**Q: Which tribe will likely be stronger: one “for something” or one “against something”?**

**A:** There are a range of reasons for joining and contributing to a tribe. Often, the main reason members join is either a strong positive or a negative feeling toward a product, service, or person. The strongest tribes might have that emotional mix somewhat balanced: Consider the Apple tribe—“We hate Microsoft and we love Apple.”

We suspect a tribe will grow faster and be more powerful when both positive and negative sides are represented. A tribe that is anti-Microsoft and not also pro-Apple or pro-Ubuntu Linux or pro-manual typewriters can accomplish much less than one with a specific positive.

Membership is also determined by our feelings of affinity to the other members and/or our desire to be associated with the leader. If it's a tribe breaking away from old limitations, tribal efforts are likely to be more effective when they are both for the positive aspect of the new leader's vision and against the old order of things, than to choose either of those alone.

However, there are plenty of tribes brought to life around an “anti-something” message. Think of DARE, which represents “anti-drugs” for kids, MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Mothers for Peace, the anti-nuclear power tribes, the anti-war tribes, and so on. And, on a very negative note, consider the KKK.

Could it be that tribes start and grow quicker from the negative, but flourish from the positive? “Sheepwalkers” tend to wake up quicker in reaction to something that might negatively affect them. Tribe-building is perhaps easier when feeding on the negative, than beginning from a positive promotion of a creed or product. However, without a positive side, there probably is no tribal staying power.

There are a couple of dimensions to tribal growth and strength:

- *Speed*, of growing to strength, which appears to happen faster in the tribe “against” because of the emergency factor that leads to a higher sense of urgency and necessity. Faster may also mean more superficial and faster disbanding after reaching/fulfilling the mission/goals.
- *Strength*, rooted in numbers, mission/goals, effective communication (bandwidth), strength of emotion, and bonding.





Case in point: In 2003 one of us helped lead a tribe (not a crowd) that formed over proposed closures to three branch libraries. It exploded with activity. Petition drives, protests, performance art, you name it. But the tone was ugly—there was just as much attacking city council and the library board as there were shouts of support for the institutions we wanted to save.

By 2004, we had won the fight and the branches were saved. It was a much, much smaller tribe who continued to work with the library board to fix some of the big problems that caused the “crisis” in the first place. Even today, the tribe is still dealing with a group who just want to be angry.

There are plenty of examples around us of strong tribes built around an “anti-something” proposal or idea. But for us, regarding bonding, shared vision and movement to the future, positivity wins out.

## **Q: Do friends and co-workers necessarily make good tribe members?**

**A:** Like every question about tribal dynamics, it depends on the tribe itself, as well as the dynamics between the members. The best tribe members are those who share a common interest and are passionate about taking action around that interest. If those people happen to be your friends and co-workers, then yes, friends and co-workers make good tribe members.

But friends and family may not always be the most supportive people. The adage “familiarity breeds contempt” has been around for a long time for a reason. People who are closest to you tend to pre-judge you. In some cases, this dynamic can bring a toxic element into the tribe. When this happens, friends and co-workers do not make good tribe members.

The bottom line is that tribes are about relationships, unity, and shared passion. You just never know when there will be overlap.



**Q: We can all learn from the success of others. Which established tribes do you take inspiration from and why?**

**A:** Here are some examples of the brands, products, services, and experience that have inspired us and the reasons why. Click the hyperlinks to find out more.

- [Disney](#) - their core value is “make people happy.”
- [Live Aid](#) - the first not-for-profit that was led by a true heretic.
- [Virgin](#) - Branson never seems to see obstacles, only opportunity.
- [Apple Computer](#) - they make people excited to see, use, and own their products.
- [Mozilla](#) - They are exceedingly customer-focused and make themselves open to developers, hence the existence of so many great add-ons for their browser, Firefox.
- [Greenpeace](#) - it redefined activism.
- [Habitat for Humanity](#) - from a New Orleans native’s perspective, H4H has done more than any other organization to rebuild the city.
- [Renaissance Festivals](#) - the US has arguably less history than other countries, so faires are a great—and tribal—way to make up for this!
- [Mythbusters](#) - their passion is infectious. They have inspired a generation to look beyond what is deemed possible for “impossible” solutions. Who would have thought you could actually float a lead balloon?
- [Wikipedia](#) - now we have more room in our bookcases and, in a click, most of the answers to those awkward questions our kids ask us.
- [Grameen Bank](#) – this organization has to date empowered over 7 million women to build new lives for themselves and their families.
- [Pink Ribbon Campaign](#) – visibly encouraging awareness of breast cancer across the world while generating revenue.

- Harry Potter - Who wouldn't have wanted to inspire a whole generation of children to read and be enthralled by books?

And finally some products that may not necessarily have created a tribe, but have certainly carved a niche:  
For example:


- Sharpie pens
- Band-Aids
- Kleenex
- Dyson
- Post-it notes
- Ikea
- Innocent drinks

What other inspirations come to mind?

## Q: Would nations be better off if their governments operated as tribes?

**A:** Much of a tribe's potency comes from its narrowness. It does not operate at the lowest common denominator nor serve every point of view. Therefore, it would likely not serve the best interests of the citizens for a government to operate as a tribe.

For example, one of the most pointed criticisms of government in the United States is that it sometimes serves the interests of certain groups of people (whether those people are structured as tribes or just have similar interests) at the expense of the general public. Many regulatory bodies are swayed by interest groups who have a financial stake in the regulations regardless of the consequences for the general public. Similar examples exist in other governments across the world.



On a small scale, however, tribal approaches might be one way to improve people's appreciation of the role of government by soliciting (in the most direct fashion possible) the input of the public and then taking action based on that input. For example, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) of the state of New Jersey might ask a few employees to start a tribe whose mission is to make its operations much more customer-centric. The employees could be selected from different divisions of that DMV. It could act to promote certain initiatives, invite frequent visitors to the DMV to join their discussions, and figure out what steps could be taken to improve the customer's experiences. As this tribe has successes, it grows in size, scope, and influence.

## Q: Who are some of the most successful tribal leaders of all time, and why?

**A:** The following leaders come from many different countries, eras, and fields of endeavor. What they have in common is that they all founded tribes that had a much larger impact than any single individual—or even organization—could accomplish on their own.

- **Al Gore:** For his ability to tell a story and deliver a message, which could be spread one person at a time.
- **Emmeline Pankhurst:** She led with passion and infected others with it, ultimately resulting in a global movement for women's suffrage
- **Franklin D. Roosevelt:** He was a true leader—someone who envisioned a totally new direction rather than sticking with the status quo—and he got his tribe back to work.
- **Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi:** He did not hold any positions of power, but through his actions and example, he changed the world.
- **Lech Walesa:** He had the ability to take the people with him and through the Solidarity movement and others it inspired, changed the political landscape of Europe.
- **Martin Luther:** He had a vision of how the church ought to operate, and told it so—at great risk to his life and liberty—opening the door to the greater diversity of Christian denominations that exist today.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr.:** He created a tribe that brought people together across racial lines to effect non-violent change, at a time when few thought such a thing possible.

- **Nelson Mandela:** At the price of great personal suffering, he helped both black and white South Africans envision and then achieve a land without apartheid. And without bitterness.
- **Walt Disney:** He had immense vision and stuck to his core values, redefining the way the world consumes (and thinks about) entertainment.
- **Winston Churchill:** He mobilized a very scared island (and eventually, the world) to stand up and fight the Nazis, even though he promised nothing but “blood, toil, tears, and sweat.”

### Q: If you build it, will they come?

**A:** People will be attracted to your idea if they perceive it as something that adds value to their lives. People ignore those things that do not provide value to them on a personal, professional, or emotional basis. If they perceive value, however, they will come—as long as they know it exists. For example, think about the more than 108 million current websites that exist and how many you know about. It is very likely that you would find value from at least one of those 108 million websites, if you only knew about it.

The more you spread your tribal idea, the more it interests people and the faster it spreads. Telling a friend, blogging, and speaking are just three examples of methods of letting people know you (and your tribe) exist. The trick is sending a message that people “get” because it speaks to their needs and shows them the value they will receive by joining.

### Q: Can a group become a tribe in a quantum leap?

**A:** In a word, yes, but only if the person leading the tribe has the ability to organize a group into a tribe quickly and efficiently. Some organizations have a lot of people (a group) who sit on the sidelines because they have no clear leader. Blogs have hundreds or thousands of readers who never add a single comment. They are a group, but not a tribe. A tribe has a leader, a group does not.

Groups of people want to be a part of something bigger; they just need to be led. The transformation of group to tribe, by way of either “drip, drip, drip” or quantum leap, depends on how much of a foundation the leader has



established and nurtured beforehand. The “foundation” consists of:

- the leader’s reputation as an expert and the trust factor
- the clarity and importance of message
- a group-base ready and willing to turn into a tribe

Barack Obama is a good example of a leader who built a foundation from which a quantum leap could take place. Most people were unaware of Obama until he was nominated as a presidential candidate; now the entire world knows him and he has a tremendous amount of support. He has created a huge tribe in a quantum leap, but he laid out a good foundation long before he ever came to the attention of the populace.

Another example is Rudy Giuliani. Giuliani brought together a disparate group of shell-shocked New Yorkers after 9/11 and created a tribe, with round-the-clock attention to widely different needs in a tension-filled, complex situation. He was not particularly popular with a large segment of the population prior to 9/11, but he got a lot of good things done, and created a tribe of believers and supporters. With a clear and important message, and a base of individuals ready to act, he transformed a chaotic group into a calm tribe that moved into action in a quantum leap.

For quantum movement to a tribe, group members must share a predisposition to hear, see, and feel the common passion, goal, or belief. Having a common goal unites a tribe quickly. A leader who shares the same predisposition of the group may already exist in the membership and quickly emerge from its ranks rather than come from the outside. If this leader can communicate to the group that they are not alone—that there are other people in the tribe who share a common goal—and can interconnect the members quickly, the group can leap to a tribe. A system must exist or be built so that the group can communicate with the leader and with each other.

People strive to be part of something bigger than themselves—they want to be part of a movement. So, again: Yes, a group can become a tribe in a quantum leap with the right leadership, a strong foundation, and a common goal.

## Q: Do you need to create a “language” for your tribe?

**A:** A tribe, by its very nature, is likely to develop a number of terms and meanings specific to the tribe. After all, this is exactly what “jargon” means: a number of words and meanings specific to a group. You will not need to develop it and there is almost nothing you can do to stop it; it will just happen. Tribal language makes people who use it feel more connected, special, and part of the tribe. It can help tribe members better communicate and connect with each other.

Tribe leaders frequently initiate new terminology (for example, purple cow or balloon factory) and tribe members frequently add to it (for example, monkey). The language provides a shorthand for ideas and has an important function as tribal demarcation.

Tribe-specific language helps to identify the tribe, so in the iPhone Hackers tribe, the words “jailbreak” and “unlock” became a default language used to communicate with each other and with their followers.

Special languages develop by themselves from conversations and events known only to members of the group, almost as an act of evolution. A tribe’s language tends to pinpoint things of significance to the members. Certain touchstones or major events that all tribe members are intimately familiar with can be a good bond. In this way, language can act as a shorthand for the group. It tells tribe members that they belong.

Having distinctive language elements that just happen of out a shared experience are a way of bonding and feeling exclusive. However, going as far as needing a new language as a prerequisite for starting a tribe is probably a step too far because that, by comparison, can act as a barrier to entry.

By definition, a tribe has insiders and outsiders. Some tribal languages evolve as a means of creating exclusivity. language is significant in creating not just insiders but outsiders. For example, London is known for its cockney rhyming slang. It is believed that it originated with market stall sellers and the criminal underworld (smugglers, mainly) who wanted the ability to speak in the open, but in their own code.





**Q: How does TribalSpeak evolve—does TribalMind come first or is it a contagious outgrowth of TribalSpeak?**


**A:** TribalSpeak evolves out of connections, relationships, and stories a tribe shares, regardless of how big or small the tribe is. Even between couples a form of TribalMind/ TribalSpeak emerges as the two bond and share emotional connections. Many times TribalSpeak is a form of shorthand—using a word or phrase to describe a recurring action or pointing to a significant event. Seth gave a presentation in New York that moved many of us (emotionally and physically). We now ask other tribe members, “Did you go to NY?” or “Were you there?” It reinforces bonds, makes communication more efficient, and serves to identify individuals as members.

**Q: What do tribes need to stay together, enduring and sustaining throughout life-cycle changes?**

**A:** Tribes sustain themselves by communicating their mission and shared core values. Members should be sharing examples and stories with fellow and prospective tribe members. The tribe should still be passionate about its mission and should welcome all types of members, even though their needs are different.

Tribes must be motivated to connect and stay connected, and sustain themselves with:

- Passion
- Communication
- Trust
- Language (their own vocabulary)
- Openness to new ideas
- Responsibility
- Sense of belonging

- 
- Respect
  - Putting aside personal goals for the greater collective good
  - A sense of “Us” (in contrast to “Them”)
  - Mutually agreed-upon values
  - Rules (written or unwritten)
  - Different perspectives with a common thread
  - Devotion to a cause
  - Culture (“These are our values; this is how we behave...”)
  - Risk-taking and acceptance of setbacks or failures
  - Shared successes
  - Sacrifice (when tribe members sacrifice money, time, and other valuable resources for the greater good, the tribe thrives)
  - Momentum
  - Network (“a tribe is a network of people with different functions who work together”)

Think of it as maintaining a fire. If you pile the wood too tightly, it does not get enough oxygen. If you use the wood too sparingly, it will not burn well. Sustaining a campfire requires:

- Balancing the elements (energizing, galvanizing, and creative leadership)
- Frequent fire-tending (walking among the troops to see what they are thinking)
- A hot bed of coals (the ideas, synergy, and vision that keep everyone fired up)



**Q:** On page 138 of *Tribes*, Seth writes, “What leaders do: they give people stories they can tell themselves. Stories about the future and about change.” How does the use of stories help tribes to grow bigger and stronger?

**A:** Howard Gardner identifies effective storytelling as the principal trait of the leader. He says that a leader can communicate to his audience (tribe) by:

- taking an existing story (a traditional leader)
- modifying an existing story (an innovative leader)
- crafting a whole new story (a visionary leader)

In light of Seth’s comments, yes, they are stories about their own future—stories they can tell each other, in order to modify their behavior.

There are great examples of political and social leaders using stories in this way. The use of story rather than hard facts and figures makes a leader’s message more interesting, persuasive, easier to internalize—and easier to pass on. Gandhi told his people a simple story about ALL people having much more in common than their differences and the possibility of resolving things without recourse to violence when confronting each other. Martin Luther King, Jr., took a story and told it in a way that was more appropriate for his own audience: he just told them about his dream. The NRA becomes increasingly powerful each time it tells the story *Liberals want to take away your guns*. Liberals band together in resistance when they tell each other *Conservatives only want to give tax breaks to the wealthy*.

You can see that a story can be very personal—for example, it can be about you or the leader (or another individual who personifies your quest for a tribe), or it can perhaps be described as a “concept story.” Consider these examples. A charity seeking your donations to improve the quality of life for children in an impoverished community does not necessarily couch it in those terms. Instead, it might ask you to help a specific child, making their name, age, and situation abundantly clear.

Alternatively, a leader might be so driven to communicate a fundamental concept to her audience that she turns to a story to do this. Nordstrom’s guarantee of accepting returns on car tires illustrates this beautifully. They did

not sell car tires, but they did want to tell the story of their customer-centered approach to doing business. However, all leaders need to make sure that their story is, at some level, authentic. If it is not somehow telling a fundamental truth, then it is no longer valuable—in fact, it can be even more damaging than worthless.

## Q: How do you create, inspire, or find the stories and songs of a tribe?

**A:** If a tribe truly inspires passion in its members, it is probably remarkable in some way (that is, worthy of making a remark about). Humans share stories about things that inspire them, and as such, the idea(s) that drive the existence of the tribe will spread. As the tribe's uniqueness spreads, it attracts more fans and acquaintances.

Over time, by nature of its being remarkable, the tribe will inspire stories (fact and fiction) and songs (poetic and musical). And those early expressions will inspire variations and new additions as more members make the tribe their own.

As these stories and songs surface naturally and grow organically, the tribe can begin collecting them, sharing them, and anthologizing them.

The act of creating and sharing these songs and stories can also bond tribal connections. For example, when the tribe (or a sub-group within the tribe) gets together, they may tell stories about their experience in the tribe. Others will share their own experiences, connecting new experiences to the shared history that brought them to this point.

There are many ways to facilitate these connections, such as participating in shared activities, acknowledging contributions, or using one of the many tools designed to facilitate this communication, such as anecdote circles. The point is that the group feels connected and is comfortable to create, share, and build on tribal lore.

## Q: Can a tribe change the world?

**A:** Yes! In fact, some would argue that only a tribe can change the world. Throughout history, tribes created most of the key advances within modern civilization, such as:

- Science (The Royal Society)
- American Democracy (Committees of Correspondence)
- Anti-slavery movement (Abolitionists and the Underground Railroad)

These ideas were originally considered fringe, even radical, requiring a very devoted tribe to sustain; today, they are so pervasive that we hardly think of them as tribes at all.

Coffeehouses in 17th Century Europe became lightning rods for tribal formation. These establishments became centers of information and idea exchange. Over time, many became “headquarters” for tribes that turned themselves into world changing enterprises (including Lloyds of London, the London Stock Exchange, and The Royal Society). The English monarchy attempted to suppress the coffee house movement, and failed—the rest, as they say, is history.

A recent example of a tribe changing the world is the campaign of Barack Obama, who was elected America’s first African American president in 2008. As a “movement with members” rather than just a “campaign with consumers,” Obama’s tribe:

1. took ownership of the message.
2. mobilized each other to get out the vote.
3. built a new tribe spanning existing political, ideological, and racial barriers.
4. defeated the Democrat and Republican “machines.”
5. changed the way the world viewed America.

The ultimate test for Obama—and all leaders who seek lasting change—will be whether he and his tribe can continue expanding to encompass the rest of society, including those who currently disagree with him, in the way that Americans today consider themselves part of the “tribe” of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Whether contemplating the impact of tribes in an historical context or pondering the effect of tribal activities on the interesting times in which we live, there is no doubt that a tribe can change the world. That is why it is



so important that we understand how and why tribes form and exist—so that we can change our neighborhoods, regions, countries, and the world as a whole through the tribes in which we participate and lead.

The last word goes to anthropologist Margaret Mead, a student of tribes for much of her life, who said:

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*



## Credits & Contributor Links

**Project Initiator:** Seth Godin

**Project Lead:** Megan Elizabeth Morris

**Organizational Assistance:** Bernadette Jiwa, Bonnie Diczhazy, Char James-Tanny, Ed Welch, Karen Lynn, Kyeli Smith, Martin Whitmore, Tom Bentley, Trish Lambert

**Group Leaders:** Anne McCrossan, Bernd Nurnberger, David Trilling, Ed Welch, Ellen Di Resta, Jamie Haeuser, Joel Cohen, Jon Dale, Joy Brazelle, Lisa Amphlett, Trish Lambert, Wendy Siegel

**Editors / Proofers:** Char James-Tanny, Jeffrey Lee Simons, Laura Hicks, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Tom Bentley, Trish Lambert

**EBook design/layout:** Paul Durban

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And *especially* the askers, answerers, editors and organizers of each Q&A, listed below:

**Q: Why do people join tribes?** (asked by Betsy Wuebker)

Contributors: Bonnie Larner, John Otterstedt, Marcos Gaser, Trish Lambert

**Q: What is needed to create the initiative that leads to tribe formation?** (asked by Lori Hoeck)

Contributors: Becky Blanton, Bernd Nurnberger, Bonnie Larner, Jaguar Julie, Laura Hicks, Lori Hoeck, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C., Steven Devijver, Tom Bentley, Trish Lambert

**Q: What are the top mistakes leaders make that kill their tribes?** (asked by Jon Dale)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, Elizabeth Cook, Jessica Harkins, Jon Dale, Mike Donk, Molly McMahan, Suzanne Matthiessen, Tom Bentley, Trish Lambert

**Q: Is it possible to earn a living leading a tribe? How? Should you be driven by profit?** (asked by Marcos Gaser)

Contributors: Amie Gillingham, Anne McCrossan, Becky Blanton, Bernd Nurnberger, Bill Wagner, Bonnie Larner, Ed Welch, Ellen Di Resta, Dr. Ernie Prabhakar, Gabriel Gloege, John Furst, John Otterstedt, Kayla Lamoreaux, Laura Hicks, Marcos Gaser, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Michael Brooke, Suzanne Matthiessen, Tom Bentley, Wendy Siegel

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**Q: How do tribe members deal with a leader who has abandoned tribal protocol?** (asked by Tom Bentley)

Contributors: Ed Welch, Jon Dale, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Patty Newbold, Tom Bentley, Trish Lambert

**Q: Are good tribe leaders extroverted, introverted, or does it matter?** (asked by Jaguar Julie)

Contributors: Bonnie Larner, Ed Welch, Jaguar Julie, Jule Kucera, Tom Bentley, Trish Lambert

**Q: How does a tribe awaken its “sheepwalkers,” or do they have a viable function in the tribe?** (asked by Lori Hoeck)

Contributors: Anne McCrossan, Bernd Nurnberger, Ed Welch, Frances Schagen, Davender Gupta, Jon Dale, Jule Kucera, Laura Hicks, Marcos Gaser, Molly McMahan, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C.

**Q: What is the value of transparency to a tribe? How much is too much? How much is not enough?** (asked by Ryan J. Markel)

Contributors: Ed Welch, Ellen Di Resta, Keith Jennings, Bob Poole, Tim Maly

**Q: How does one get over fear and give oneself permission to become a leader?** (asked by Mike Baldwin and Joy Brazelle)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, Bonnie Larner, Brendan Mitchell, David Trilling, Ed Welch, Jule Kucera, Laura Hicks, Lori Hoeck, Marcos Gaser, Patty Newbold, Suzanne Matthiessen, Tom Bentley, Trish Lambert

**Q: Do tribes find leaders or do leaders find tribes?** (asked by Paul Durban)

Contributors: Bonnie Larner, David Trilling, Laura Hicks, Marcos Gaser, Tom Bentley, Trish Lambert

**Q: Can a leader successfully lead two or more tribes simultaneously?** (asked by Jaguar Julie)

Contributors: Cedric Peterson, Char James-Tanny, Marcos Gaser, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Michael Brooke, Molly McMahan, Peter Hodges, Tom Bentley, Trish Lambert

**Q: How does the leader of the tribe walk the fine line between being inclusive and allowing the tribe to become a democracy? Between setting direction and becoming an autocratic factory?** (asked by Ellen Di Resta)

Contributors: Dimitri Limberopulos, Ellen Di Resta, Joe Noonan, Joel D. Canfield, Laura Hicks, Shawn McCormick, Tom Bentley

**Q: Can a tribe function successfully with more than one leader? If so, how?** (asked by Jaguar Julie)

Contributors: Jaguar Julie, Joy Brazelle, Michael Jastram, Michael Schutz, Steven Devijver

**Q: There are plenty of leaders who seem to get it right in the beginning but who turn awfully wrong in the end. Are leaders too concerned with being right? What separates a great leader from a despotic one?** (asked by Hannes Couvreur)

Contributors: David Trilling, Lisa Amphlett, Marcos Gaser, Suzanne Matthiessen

**Q: Is it possible to influence a tribe without being the leader?** (asked by Pamela Waugh)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, Bob Poole, Bonnie Larner, David Trilling, Ellen Di Resta, Jule Kucera, Keith Jennings, Laura Hicks, Marcos Gaser

**Q: What are the top 10 things leaders can do to encourage/tighten their tribe?** (asked by Jon Dale)

Contributors: Anne McCrossan, Bernadette Jiwa, Jon Dale, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Mike Donk, Tom Bentley, Tom Ziglar, Tony Williams

**Q: How does a tribe communicate effectively with all of its members?** (asked by Jaguar Julie)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, Ed Welch, Jaguar Julie, Laura Hicks, Trish Lambert

**Q: What is the impact of “social media” on modern tribal behavior, today and in the future?** (asked by Ed Welch)

Contributors: Bonnie Larner, Bob Poole, Ellen Di Resta, Keith Jennings, Marcos Gaser, Stephen Martell

**Q: How can technology “tighten” tribes?** (asked by Ryan Hinricher)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, Bob Poole, Didier Daglinckx, Ed Welch, Ellen Di Resta, Keith Jennings, Patty Newbold

**Q: Can I turn my blog into a tribe?** (asked by Pace Smith)

Contributors: Bob Poole, Char James-Tanny, Ed Welch, Ellen Di Resta, Kayla Lamoreaux, Keith Jennings, Laura Hicks, Marcos Gaser, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Pace Smith, Patty Newbold

**Q: How can a tribe allow members to contribute and participate?** (asked by Pace Smith)

Contributors: Joy Brazelle, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Pace Smith, Steven Devijver

**Q: How can you build a tribe so everyone stays active and has a role to play?** (asked by Lori Osterberg)

Contributors: Ed Welch, Judy Vorfeld, Lori Hoeck, Marcos Gaser, Sam Accetta

**Q: What are the analytics for a tribe with regards to expected participation? 80/20?** (asked by Jaguar Julie)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, Jaguar Julie, John W. Furst, Joy Brazelle, Mike Donk

**Q: How much or little interaction between tribe members is necessary in a tribe?** (asked John W. Furst)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, John W. Furst, Joy Brazelle, Laura Hicks, Tom Bentley

**Q: Why and how does the tribal pulse get taken?** (asked by Mike Donk)

Contributors: Anne McCrossan, Joe Noonan, Shawn McCormick, Steven Devijver, Trish Lambert

**Q: Do you have to be present to participate in a tribe?** (asked by Kathryn)

Contributors: Ed Welch, Joy Brazelle, Kathryn, Laura Hicks

**Q: Does a tribe need a strategy? If so, why?** (asked by Anne McCrossan)

Contributors: Anne McCrossan, Mike Donk, Steven Devijver, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C.

**Q: How does strategy work in a tribe?** (asked by Anne McCrossan)

Contributors: Anne McCrossan, Bernd Nurnberger, Jule Kucera, Shawn McCormick, Tom Bentley

**Q: How is a tribe different from a fan base, a special interest group, or a community?** (asked by Bernd Nurnberger and Joel Cohen)

Contributors: Anjali Ramachandran, Bernd Nurnberger, Joel Cohen, Laura Hicks, Steven Devijver, Trish Lambert

**Q: What are the differences between predominantly online and offline tribes?** (asked by John Otterstedt)

Contributors: Anjali Ramachandran, Bill Wagner, Ed Welch, Steven Devijver

**Q: Are there sub-tribes within a larger tribe?** (asked by Lisa Barnard)

Contributors: Jaguar Julie, Joy Brazelle, Rex Williams

**Q: What are the advantages and disadvantages of restricted membership?** (asked by Paul Durban)

Contributors: Bob Poole, Ed Welch, Ellen Di Resta, Keith Jennings, Rex Williams

**Q: What are tribes good at doing and accomplishing and what are they not so good at doing and accomplishing?** (asked by David Trilling)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, David Trilling, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Patty Newbold

**Q: Do tribes need a goal or reason for existing, or can they exist based on nothing more than a common passion for something?** (asked by Bonnie Larner)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, Cedric Peterson, Ellen Di Resta, Laura Hicks, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Mike Donk, Pamela Waugh, Trish Lambert

**Q: Can a tribe be too big? Too small? Can two people make a tribe?** (asked by Jaguar Julie)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, Cedric Peterson, Jaguar Julie, Jule Kucera, Pace Smith, Trish Lambert

**Q: Is dissent healthy or harmful for a tribe?** (asked by Tom Bentley)

Contributors: badmsm, Michele Castrini, Tom Bentley

**Q: Should a tribe ever decide to remove “problem” members?** (asked by Shawn McCormick)

Contributors: Anne McCrossan, Bernd Nurnberger, Ed Welch, John W. Furst, Jon Dale, Jule Kucera, Lori Hoeck, Mary McKnight, Mike Donk, Molly McMahan, Pace Smith, Patty Newbold, Rahul Deodhar, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C., Shawn McCormick, Tom Bentley

**Q: What happens when a tribe becomes corrupt?** (asked by Mike Donk)

Contributors: Dr. Ernie Prabhakar, Kayla Lamoreaux, Keith Jennings, Rex Williams, Suzanne Matthiessen, Wendy Siegel

**Q: What is the best way to market the tribes concept to businesses that obviously need to learn about tribes?** (asked by Ed Welch)

Contributors: Bob Poole, Bonnie Larner, Ellen Di Resta, Keith Jennings, Patty Newbold

**Q: How can we talk about “tribes” without evoking visions of grass huts and tiki masks?** (asked by Pace Smith)

Contributors: Becky Blanton, Bernd Nurnberger, Bonnie Larner, Ed Welch, Jaguar Julie, Laura Hicks, Lori Hoeck, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Michael Brooke, Patty Newbold, Tim Maly, Tom Bentley

**Q: How can a tribe best groom the next generation?** (asked by Keith Jennings)

Contributors: Dr. Ernie Prabhakar, Kayla Lamoreaux, Keith Jennings, Marcos Gaser, Rex Williams, Suzanne Matthiessen, Wendy Siegel

**Q: How can you build a tribe when faced with stiff competition from a competing tribe?** (asked by John Otterstedt)

Contributors: Ed Welch, John Otterstedt, Judy Vorfeld, Laura Hicks, Rick Wilson, DMD, Stephen Martell

**Q: Can a business competitor steal or destroy my tribe?** (asked by John W. Furst)

Contributors: David Trilling, Ed Welch, Jamie Haeuser, Lisa Amphlett

**Q: How can a tribe make it past “The Dip”?** (asked by Debbie Levitt)

Contributors: Bernd Nurnberger, Debbie Levitt, Dr. Ernie Prabhakar, Kayla Lamoreaux, Keith Jennings, Patty Newbold, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C., Suzanne Matthiessen, Wendy Siegel



**Q: Can “tribe” mentality redefine corporate thinking?** (asked by Bonnie Diczhazy).

Contributors: David Trilling, Ed Welch, Joost van den Ossenblok, Kathryn, Laura Hicks, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C.

**Q: Does marketing to a tribe inherently go against the concept of a tribe?** (asked by Lisa Barnard)

Contributors: Andrew Mackie, Bob Poole, Char James-Tanny, Ellen Di Resta, Keith Jennings, Patty Newbold, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C.

**Q: Do tribes have an expiration date, and if so, how can one recognize when it is time for a tribe to die?** (asked by Tom Bentley)

Contributors: Anne McCrossan, Brendan Mitchell, Ed Welch, Laura Hicks, Molly McMahan, Tom Bentley

**Q: Should a tribe consider that it will end one day and plan for its extinction, as well as archive its potential contribution or legacy?** (asked by Suzanne Matthiessen)

Contributors: Ed Welch, Dr. Ernie Prabhakar, Kayla Lamoreaux, Marcos Gaser, Molly McMahan, Rex Williams, Suzanne Matthiessen, Wendy Siegel

**Q: Should I sell what I have to offer to an existing tribe or start one of my own?** (asked by John W. Furst)

Contributors: Anne McCrossan, Ed Welch, Jon Dale, Jule Kucera, Marcos Gaser, Molly McMahan, Natasha Vincent, Tom Bentley

**Q: When it comes to building a tribe or leveraging the power of an existing tribe inside an organization, what is the consultant’s role? What is their best approach?** (asked by Scott Clark)

Contributors: David Trilling, John W. Furst, Lisa Amphlett, Natasha Vincent, Patty Newbold

**Q: What is the recipe for consciously creating a tribe?** (asked by Trish Lambert)

Contributors: Ed Welch, Joe Noonan, Rick Wilson, DMD, Sam Accetta

**Q: Why do some tribes grow fast and others more slowly? Is there a preferred growth rate of a tribe?** (asked by Ed Welch)

Contributors: Ed Welch, Tom Bentley

**Q: Which tribe will likely be stronger: one “for something” or one “against something”?** (asked by Tim Blair)

Contributors: Bernadette Jiwa, Bernd Nurnberger, Jaguar Julie, Mark Dyck, Patty Newbold, Tom Bentley

**Q: Do friends and co-workers necessarily make good tribe members?** (asked by Bonnie Larner)

Contributors: Bonnie Larner, Dale Llewellyn, Ed Welch, Joy Brazelle, Laura Hicks, Michele Castrini

**Q: We can all learn from the success of others. Which established tribes do you take inspiration from and why?** (asked by Bernadette Jiwa)

Contributors: Bernadette Jiwa, David Trilling, Jamie Haeuser, Lisa Amphlett

**Q: Would nations be better off if their governments operated as tribes?** (asked by Bonnie Diczhazy)

Contributors: Bonnie Diczhazy, David Trilling, John W. Furst, Trish Lambert

**Q: Who are some of the most successful tribal leaders of all time, and why?** (asked by Bernadette Jiwa)

Contributors: Bernadette Jiwa, Bonnie Larner, David Trilling, Dr. Ernie Prabhakar, John W. Furst, Kayla Lamoreaux, Mary Louise Penaz, Michael Klein, Paul Durban, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C., Steven Devijver, Suzanne Matthiessen, Wendy Siegel

**Q: If you build it, will they come?** (asked by Steve Weisman)

Contributors: Anjali Ramachandran, Becky Blanton, Didier Daglinckx, Ed Welch, John Otterstedt, Marcos Gaser, Steve Weisman, Tom Bentley

**Q: Can a group become a tribe in a quantum leap?** (asked by Bob Poole)

Contributors: Anjali Ramachandran, Bob Poole, Bonnie Diczhazy, Ed Welch, Megan Elizabeth Morris, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C., Steven Devijver, Tom Bentley

**Q: Do you need to create a “language” for your tribe?** (asked by Saleh AlShebil)

Contributors: Anne McCrossan, Becky Blanton, Brendan Mitchell, David Trilling, Didier Daglinckx, Ed Welch, John W. Furst, Jule Kucera, Molly McMahan, Saleh AlShebil, Suzanne Matthiessen, Tony Williams

**Q: How does TribalSpeak evolve—does TribalMind come first or is it a contagious outgrowth of TribalSpeak?** (asked by Suzanne Matthiessen)

Contributors: Becky Blanton, Bonnie Larner, Saleh AlShebil, Suzanne Matthiessen

**Q: What do tribes need to stay together, enduring and sustaining throughout life-cycle changes?** (asked by Anne McCrossan and Ed Welch)

Contributors: Bernadette Jiwa, Char James-Tanny, David Trilling, Ed Welch, Jon Dale, Jule Kucera, Laura Hicks, Lori Hoeck, Reed S. Shiraki, D.C., Saleh AlShebil, Shawn McCormick, Tom Bentley

**Q: On page 138 of Tribes, Seth writes, “What leaders do: they give people stories they can tell themselves. Stories about the future and about change.” How does the use of stories help tribes to grow bigger and stronger?** (asked by JD Stein)

Contributors: David Trilling, Ed Welch, Frances Schagen, Isabel Parlett, Lisa Amphlett, Marcos Gaser, Rick Wilson, DMD

**Q: How do you create, inspire, or find the stories and songs of a tribe?** (asked by Lori Hoeck)

Contributors: Bob Poole, Ellen Di Resta, Keith Jennings, Mike Donk

**Q: Can a tribe change the world?** (asked by Wendy Siegel)

Contributors: Dr. Ernie Prabhakar, Kayla Lamoreaux, Steven Devijver, Suzanne Matthiessen, Trish Lambert, Wendy Siegel



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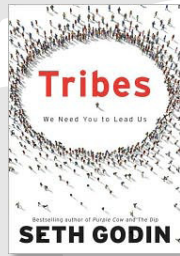
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Already an Amazon bestseller, *Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us*, is short and small and simple. It argues, as clearly as Seth Godin is capable, that leadership is the best marketing tactic to any organization--a company, a school, a church, a job seeker.

Our role today is to find, connect and lead tribes in order to make change happen.

Your leadership primer is waiting for you [here](#).