

Scheming Virtuously

A Handbook for Public Servants

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1 Introduction

“Virtuous people often revenge themselves for the constraints to which they submit by the boredom which they inspire.”

- Confucius

1.1 Mandatory Disclaimer

The opinions expressed are those of the author and may not reflect the views of the Public Service of Canada, its Departments and/or Agencies, or their employees.

1.2 Preamble

It is hard to believe that I have been writing about public service renewal for over two years. I started <http://cpsrenewal.ca> in response to what I thought was a gap in the discourse: an online, open and accessible discussion of the everyday concerns of public servants.

In its simplest form, the handbook is a collection of practical tactics that will help public servants foster a more collaborative and innovative public service culture while upholding core public service values.

-Nicholas Charney

1.3 About Us

Nicholas Charney is the primary author of both *Scheming Virtuously* and the blog <http://cpsrenewal.ca>. Nicholas holds an undergraduate degree in Political Science from Carleton University and a Master’s Degree in Conflict Studies from Saint Paul University. His main areas of interest are organizational management, employee engagement, knowledge management and collaborative/social technologies.

Mike Mangulabnan is editor-in-chief of both *Scheming Virtuously* and the blog <http://cpsrenewal.ca>. Mike holds a Diploma in Advertising from Sheridan College and a joint Bachelor’s Degree in Communications and Philosophy from Ottawa University. His main areas of interest are organizational management, communications, and environmental policy.

1.4 What Is Public Service Renewal?

"Renewal is not about fixing something for all time but updating what we do and how we do it in order to remain relevant and effective now and into the future. It is about keeping the institution of the public service dynamic, fresh and respected. And renewal is not something others do; the impetus for renewal has to come from within, and it has to involve all of us."

- 2008 Report of the Clerk on the Public Service of Canada

This is meant to be a practical guide so we won't bore you with a history lesson or hammer you over the head with what a former Clerk called the "dynamic imperative for renewal".

We know renewal is important. We live its importance every time someone shuts down a good experiment because they are risk averse or because saying why something can't be done is easier than figuring out how it can be done.

While the vast majority of public servants may not have direct input into how the public service addresses the challenges facing it at the macro-level, all of us have the ability to address the challenges where they are most important, at the micro-level.

Addressing challenges at the micro is important because many of the high-level problems plaguing our institutions are the aggregate manifestation of working-level problems. If we continue to absolve ourselves from the responsibility or resign ourselves to the lowest common denominator – "that's just the way it is' syndrome" – then we have no one to blame for our frustrations but ourselves.

So where does that leave us?

First, it is important to remember that public servants are connected by a common responsibility for the system as a whole. This is why we choose to define public service renewal more broadly, asserting that its primary concern is not "staffing up" or retaining employees, but about cultivating a culture of stewardship and innovation.

Second, we must understand that stewardship consists of making us all active agents overseeing the production of a constantly improving system. At its core, stewardship is a combination of deliberate innovation and calculated risk. With this in mind, in this short guide, we propose neither a linear nor a mutually exclusive methodology you can follow to:

1. Engage in public service renewal on your own;
2. Integrate public service renewal into your work environment; and
3. Convince your colleagues (in all directions) to support public service renewal.

The key to all of this is to not let your imagination and enthusiasm be dampened by organizational politics or institutional caution. Be deliberate: look for weaknesses in your organization's existing practices, maximize your advantage and create new opportunities to argue for change.

Remember that this guide is not a “what-to-do” manual, it's a “how-to” manual. That being said, whatever you decide to embark on within your own organization should be needs-based, and aim its impact within certain organizational boundaries. However this doesn't preclude you from working with others outside your organizational boundaries whenever it is merited. Often, embarking on multidirectional initiatives spark domino effects across groups, directorates or departments. If what you create is innovative and valuable it will be replicated elsewhere.

Hint

You want to be branded as 'an innovative ideas generator' and 'cutting edge'. You do not want to be known as 'goalless' or 'too quick to stir the pot'.

An important caveat: In the public service your relationships and reputation are your best assets. Be conscious that your actions impact both of these assets considerably. Make sure you take care in managing both, and use your judgment to make decisions that you, and others can live with.

Finally, creating a culture of stewardship within the public service is something that can be done equally and applies across all groups and levels.

2 Scheming Virtuously

The term “scheming virtuously” was coined by Dr. Gilles Paquet¹ and is essentially the optimal modus operandi for public servants looking to make change in the public service.

<u>Scheming</u>	+	<u>Virtuous</u>
Given to making plans, sly, crafty		Conforming to moral and ethical principles; morally excellent

Therefore:

Scheming Virtuously = Making crafty plans that conform to moral and ethical principles

Scheming virtuously steers clear of combative positions and analogies. When you scheme virtuously you aren't engaging in a firefight with “hard-line” traditionalists, nor are you a guerrilla soldier engaged in a culture war. You are a public servant using your position, your insight, and your intelligence to identify opportunities for your organization that have yet to be identified, or supporting those that already have been.

Hint

Remember – what you are trying to do is find ways to scheme ethically in order to produce a culture of stewardship. Read this document with that in mind, because that is the spirit in which it is written.

¹ Dr. Gilles Paquet is a Professor Emeritus at the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa. His website is <http://www.gouvernance.ca/>

3 On Scheming

"A poor man might be all schemes but a rich man is all virtuous schemes."

- Unknown

3.1 Within Your Team

Talk to the members of your team. Seek direction, but don't be afraid to ask questions and explore opportunities for improvement. Be open and willing to learn from others on your team.

Try to involve your direct manager whenever possible, he or she may be interested in doing something more efficiently, getting involved in something larger, or delegating more responsibility. Whatever your virtuous scheme is, try to get him or her on board. You may be surprised by his or her interests and willingness, or you may find out that he or she is more likely to be adversarial in the future; but remember, just because your first idea didn't fly, doesn't mean that your second attempt won't be more successful.

Hint

Trying to involve your manager also has the added benefit of allowing you to figure out exactly what their level of involvement is likely to be, and where they sit on certain issues that may be important to you, e.g., work-life integration, learning, or performance management.

3.2 Outside Your Team

Hint

If your manager is reluctant to let you away from the desk to participate in other activities make sure your pitch includes why this particular activity is beneficial to your team, and offer to report back on the event. As long as your work doesn't suffer you should have no problem convincing them of the value of attending conferences, seminars, armchair discussions, etc., especially if these things are free.

There are undoubtedly a lot of people around you with whom you share experiences – positive or negative – and whose experience with certain issues may be greater or weaker than your own. You need to get out there and network beyond your team. Take every opportunity you can to safely get away from the office.

If you're a new hire, you are at a distinct advantage of being able to tell your manager that you are working towards expanding your knowledge and contact base. A good manager should

understand the inherent value in these types of activities.

If you're a not-so-new hire you may be at a slight disadvantage because your manager may expect that you already have a solid knowledge base, and be well connected.

However, they should also have more trust in your ability to identify the good opportunities when they arise, and forgo the less lucrative ones. Use their faith in your judgment to your advantage. Be selective and be prepared to explain why this particular networking opportunity is especially important.

Hint

Don't be afraid to use your team to its potential. Finding the right stride for your team gives everyone a better understanding of the demands being placed on them and the time they can devote to other virtuous activities.

Hint

Try to become more involved. Schedule a recurring hour-long discussion once every couple of weeks, or a longer one every month, and invite staff to come in and share their ideas with you directly. Or solicit more formal input/proposals from staff on an ongoing basis. Open the door broadly, or target the discussions and or proposals to particular areas that, from where you sit, need to be addressed

If you're a middle manager, try to manage both your (and your teams) time and workflow in a proactive manner, but don't micro-manage it. Find ways to increase the amount of time you and your team members have to step out and do some creative collaboration with others outside your team. As a manager, you should understand the workload and operating capacity of your team members and thus be able to identify who may be willing and able to take on additional responsibility, and who can step away to participate in other activities.

If you're a senior manager your chief concerns may revolve around the immediate operational needs of your organization and your days may be completely dominated by meetings and telephone calls. That being said, you set the tone, you lead by example; you need to help create safe time and space for employees to scheme virtuously. If you don't do it, who will?

3.3 With New Arrivals

Want fresh eyes? There is no better way to get a frank and honest question or opinion than to ask a new hire. Who cares if they have no experience with the question? New arrivals are likely to give you a gut reaction and more importantly, one that isn't filtered through gov speak.

New arrivals are a great source of energy, so tap into it, and nurture it. We have spoken with many new arrivals out there that are looking for creative outlets at work, many of which haven't yet found any.

Give them an outlet and harness that energy and reap the rewards.

Hint

Looking to network with other new arrivals? Find out when your department's orientation session is and attend it. Already attended one? Find out when the next one is and show up at the doors afterwards, everyone coming out is potentially the person you are looking for. Find out if your department has a young professional network and find a point of contact. Touch base, signal your intentions and follow up.

3.4 With Not-So-New Arrivals

Limiting your scheming to the new arrivals is a big mistake. Don't assume that because others have experience with the system that they have resigned themselves to it. Many experienced public servants are actively working towards cultivating a culture of stewardship.

In short, not-so-new arrivals are full of valuable insight and are likely able to identify potential stumbling blocks down the road.

Hint

You should be able to tell who these people are after only a few interactions. They usually have open-door policies, respect and promote work-life integration, are facilitators rather than micro-managers and comma-moving micro-editors, and their discourse focuses on how to make things happen - not how to keep things from happening.

3.5 Over Coffee (or Tea)

Never turn down an offer to have a cup of coffee (or tea) with another public servant. An informal discussion now could easily change where you are few months from now.

Use exploratory opportunities to your advantage, and always be honest with people. Public servants are incredibly mobile. Just because they can't offer you an opportunity immediately doesn't mean that they won't be able to do so in the future. Keep an ongoing list of people you could contact in a pinch that could provide timely advice or supporting evidence.

Hint

Make connections and keep connections, drop strategically timed emails to contacts during slow work periods. Create time and space to talk shop and put the feelers out for opportunities to get involved more actively or collaboratively in your organization. Use social media to your advantage. Many public servants are now using both internal and external social media channels to connect with others who share their interests, especially across departments.

3.6 Electronically

You may find them rigid or boring, but check your departmental newsletter and discussion forums, or scour your intranet because there are tons of free networking opportunities.

Use your access to almost limitless information discriminately. Sign up for email lists, RSS feeds, or Google Alerts wherever you see fit. But take care to tailor the incoming information flow to your own needs so as to not be overburdened by blunt email blasts.

Engage yourself responsibly in social media both internally and externally. There are many public servants already having open and honest discussions there, sharing links, and opportunities to participate. Explore the tools and connect with existing communities. If you don't know where to start ask someone for help.

Hint

When you do come across something useful, share it with others who may be interested and ask them to keep you in the loop about similar things – reciprocity is critical in terms of information sharing, especially in the absence of social media and bookmarking behind the government firewall.

3.7 With Tools

Complete your personal learning plan and use it to help you get the skills you need for your next job. If you only ever train for the job you are currently doing how do you expect to ever get where you are going? Select training that will aid you in your quest to implement innovative solutions to the problems you have identified.

Should the need arise to explain something or justify any of your initiatives, having training materials in your back pocket will give you a solid foundation and make it easier for you to back up your work.

Hint

Talk to other people who have already completed their learning plans and involve your manager and your most trusted advisors. Furthermore, take a course on how to write your learning plan (which should be free in most departments); oh and don't forget to hold yourself and your manager accountable to your learning plan.

3.8 Safely

Hint

Try having your conversations according to Chatham House Rules: participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

Much of the talk about innovation in the public sector revolves around the need to create safe space.

Safe spaces are places where you have latitude to speculate, and where creativity is encouraged. Many private sector companies (e.g., Google, Disney) have really cool safe spaces designed from the bottom-up to stimulate people and the exchange of ideas.

We may not have those types of physical spaces, but there is nothing preventing us from exerting more control over how we physically interact within

the spaces we do have.

Before scheming, explicitly identify your discussion as a safe space. Allaying the concerns of participants before the discussion starts will ease the flow of information. So too will sharing a personal story of your own experience with the issue. Building trust is the key to scheming safely. Trust has to be earned, and it tends to be earned slowly. But once trust is established you can really dig into the issues at hand.

3.9 Via Existing Channels

Your organization has a whole slew of committees, advisory groups and working groups. Find out what they are, what they do, who chairs them, and how to get a seat at those tables.

They may already be working on initiatives you want to get involved in. They may even be looking to expand their

Hint

Start by reading the meeting minutes. It will help you learn about what these groups do, and whether or not they are the appropriate mechanism through which to bolster your involvement. This will also help you speak intelligently to the issues at hand and circumvent the need to catch up, which may create feelings of resentment within the group by those who consider bringing you up to speed as backtracking.

membership or recruit some fresh eyes. Start talking to members, get more details, signal your eagerness, and offer to help.

3.10 In New Channels

Can't find a group that is tackling the issues you want to work on? Create one. Tap into your contacts. Is there sufficient interest to have an informal meeting to discuss the issue? If it doesn't exist, build it yourself.

Organize an hour-long informal discussion over coffee or lunch. Avoid headaches; it's informal, no need for a stuffy boardroom or formal terms of reference. You are simply having a conversation and being crafty. See what the group can accomplish without adopting the rigid hierarchy of the bureaucracy as the default template. If things are moving well, endeavour to build on and sustain the momentum of the new channel you have created.

Hint

Designate a small space in your own office as a safe space board. Every time you have an idea, write it down on a sticky note and stick it to the board. Whenever you have some time, pick an issue off the board and see if you can do some creative thinking around it. If a colleague ever asks you what the board is for tell them that it is full of ideas that you have yet to try but are eager to work on, you might be surprised who takes notice.

3.11 Opportunistically

Focus on the opportunities, not the problems. Don't let the discourse be dominated by the people afflicted by "this will never work because" disease. Focus on why your idea is a good one. Write down why it's important, whom it's important to, and how it will positively impact your organization.

Try to think like the enterprise. What must the organization do in order to be more innovative? Be specific – does your initiative take aim at your organizations service delivery model, internal processes, public image, or work culture? Qualify and quantify the benefits.

But that doesn't mean you shouldn't anticipate the potential problems. Write down (on a separate sheet) the problems you foresee with your idea – and I don't mean perceived problems like, "Gerry will never approve of this because he is ..." I mean real problems, like potentially prohibitive costs, low return on investment, previous failed attempts, accessibility issues, potential conflicts of interest, etc.

If you can identify real issues at the forefront you can scheme around the obstacles by drafting possible solutions to possible problems. Anticipating problems is important because it shows that you have thought the process through from start to finish and are able to make some adjustments if required.

However, you should take note that anticipating problems too aggressively has been known to cause “this will never work because” disease.

Hint

Writing things down in plain English is important because it allows you to speak intelligently about your initiative when others are interested in it, or are interested in being critical of it. Having something in writing helps you articulate your plan effectively and should make it easier to support. Moreover, should your idea gain traction you can use it to quickly write a brief and capture the momentum of the buy-in, which may be fleeting unless pressed. Furthermore, don't omit important pieces of the puzzle simply because you think it may be poorly received. Instead be prepared to speak to it intelligently.

3.12 With Your Head Up

Make sure you keep your head up and take on new challenges. If none are coming your way, start asking for them. If you are told you don't have enough experience to take them on, engage your manager in a conversation.

Explain that there is a mutual opportunity for both of you: you to learn and apply new skills, and your manager to reap the benefits thereof. Holding people back by refusing them stretch assignments isn't new, nor is it something that is limited to public servants.

People of all ages, within all vocations, with varying degrees of tenure and experiences are denied chances to face new challenges due to this experience trap. Sometimes, disarming that trap may mean keeping your head up and initiating some tough conversations.

Hint

Ask your manager how they got to where they are. If they say “by keeping my head down and following orders” I would start looking for a new job. If they say “by facing and learning from new challenges” ask them how they got those opportunities.

4 On Virtue

"The aggregate happiness of society, which is best promoted by the practice of virtuous policy, is, or ought to be, the end of all government."

- George Washington

Scheming is important, but so is virtue. Are you ready to implement something virtuous? Here are some things to consider that should help to guide your efforts.

4.1 Get Motivated

It doesn't matter where you draw your inspiration from, be it serving Canadians more broadly, working specifically with your colleagues, or simply doing work that you love to do. What matters is that you are actually motivated. Nothing stops innovation and stewardship like indifference.

Hint

Periodically ask yourself: "Why am I here?" and make sure that if someone were to ask you that question, you could answer it in a heartbeat.

So if you aren't motivated, take time to be introspective and find your motivation. If you are motivated – if you are driven – then show it proudly, celebrate it with others, and make it contagious.

4.2 Marshal Support

Hint

Get support for your idea from within your organization, but also from outside of it. You may need to be able to show that other departments have moved or are moving in similar directions.

You are not alone – there are a lot of people out there looking to make their organization more innovative and foster a culture of stewardship. Whatever it is you have chosen to undertake you shouldn't have to start from scratch because there are most likely other people out there already scheming. Schemers are, for the most part, largely approachable. Not only are they willing to share their experiences but they seem to obsess with finding new ways to be innovative.

Getting other people on board is incredibly important and will increase your chances for success. You should be actively looking for opportunities to expand your network.

4.3 Identify Blockages

When you hit a roadblock, keep track of the “why’s” and “by who’s”. This will allow you to streamline your delivery and better anticipate potential blockages in the future. It also shows that you are learning from the process and gives your work more credibility.

The first time you make a mistake, plug the holes. The next time you make that same mistake you deserve to sink because what you should’ve done was build a better boat.

Hint

Don’t create an expectation of deficiency by continuously repeating the same mistakes. Have others in your network review your documents and/or proposals before they go up. Encourage them to be critical and then adjust your delivery to incorporate their input.

4.4 Isolate and Influence

Hint

Go after the key influencers in your department and make them champions, unofficial or otherwise. You know who these people are: when they speak others listen.

When building support, strategy and sequence become incredibly important. When you are shopping for support you should approach the early adopters first. Isolate the roadblocks and keep them out of the equation for as long as possible.

Find the people in your organization that see the value of what you are doing. Moreover, try to get a few of the key influencers who can help bring people down off the fence or exert pressure on those typically saying nay.

Once you have a critical mass, approach the naysayers. Show them what you are proposing, show them your support base, and ask for their participation. The more pressure you can bring to bear on the naysayers, the less likely they are to continue saying nay.

4.5 Gather Evidence

You are obviously behind your idea; there are obviously reasons why you are behind it. State them clearly. Write them down. Support your argument. Compile a list of all of the similar initiatives that are being implemented elsewhere.

Use your tools: find examples by searching the corners and back alleys of your organization and other (including private) organizations. Whenever possible, find someone willing to give you a first-hand account.

Use your networks. If others are doing it, get their documents, meet with them, ask them to brief you, or bring them in to brief your managers if all parties are amenable. If you are looking to implement something that has already been

done successfully elsewhere, try to get someone at your manager's level to come in and brief your manager. Exert pressure from the ground-up and laterally to maximize the efficiency of your evidence.

Ultimately you need to gather your evidence and present it in a compelling way because you will need to reassure decision-makers and executives that your idea doesn't pose an unmanageable risk.

You will need to feel out the situation. If faced with reluctant or conservative decision makers, the best opening gambit might be: "All of these organizations (get your list out) are already doing it". Then again mentioning what other departments are doing might actually make the situation more adversarial than it has to be. Trust your instincts and in either case, you will need to explain how your plan aligns strategically with the organization's mission or vision. In the end, you need to build a case without completely dismantling your relationships – remember this is most likely an iterative process, not a one-shot deal.

Hint

Do your homework. You need to have a good handle on how exactly your initiative dovetails into your departmental priorities. Try linking it into mission or value statements, human resource actions plans, or departmental priorities. If you can show how your initiative supports any one of these and offer your evidence you should be well on your way to getting larger buy-in from where it counts.

4.6 Follow the Rules (Whenever Possible)

Hint

Understanding the system is paramount; respecting it doesn't mean that you shouldn't look to scheme with people in positions of influence within the system. Connect unofficially with those who can move things along the pipeline or provide key insights. These people are incredibly important. While you don't necessarily need them behind your idea, their willingness to share pertinent information with you is critical.

Whenever possible feed your idea into the system through the proper channels and in the proper format. Make your pitch to your manager, the departmental champion, or the committee: whoever the next logical step is in the ideas chain.

But remember that 'set it and forget it' does not apply to innovation. Make sure you stay tuned-in to the progress (or lack thereof) of your initiatives within the pipeline. A good way to do this is to periodically touch base with those who have insight into the pipeline. But don't be too aggressive – you want to signal that you are committed to the idea and want to see it implemented. You don't want to be seen as a pest.

When your initiative comes back down the chain – yes it will come back, so you'd better expect it – take a good hard look at

the feedback. Write up your initial thoughts and then step back for a minute or two.

When you are ready, come back to your proposal and start sharpening it by systematically addressing the concerns of those evaluating it, or supplementing it in a manner that answers their criticisms. Remember, everyone has an opinion. You don't always have to change your initiative based on someone else's reaction to it, if you move too quickly in response to others, you may never get to implement the idea. Once your review is completed, send it back up the pipe again.

In the (hopefully) rare case that your initiative comes back down without any feedback on it, find out how far it went, why it came back, and what the reaction to it was. Try asking the keepers of the pipeline. Then follow up with the people who sent it back and start asking for answers, and be prepared to take whatever criticism may come.

4.7 Don't Underestimate Small Victories

Big victories are elusive— at least on the time frame you probably have in mind. Small victories are incredibly important because they are likely to be your only victories. So, score early and score often.

Hint

If you are interested in scoring a big victory why not queue up your small victories towards a larger goal? Dream big and then scheme all the way backwards and try to map out exactly how you can get there.

Small victories create momentum and give your name (or the name of your group) some street credit within the organization; this in turn gives you more creative space and greater creative license. It also makes the people important to your success (the decision-makers) more inclined to lend their support since you have a proven track record.

Leverage the sum of your small victories to promote your activities and get more people from your organization behind you.

4.8 Relish Victories (Privately)

One of the biggest stumbling blocks out there is the need for personal recognition. Often, the need to be recognized for one's work overshadows the value of what is actually being done.

Don't let your pride or need for recognition get in the way of the work itself, and never pull the plug on something because your

Hint

Relish your victories privately, with your friends or your partner, over drinks or a meal. You all know the real story, and besides karma will sort all that out. don't worry.

work gets plagiarized by someone else who sells it as their own. In the end, you and those around you know exactly what happened.

4.9 Build a Narrative

While you celebrate your success remember that you are building narratives. You are building your own personal story, but you are also building stories about your department, your directorate, and your division.

Work culture is simply the aggregate of the stories being told within the workplace. So if you change the stories, you can change the culture. If you want to start changing the culture by building new narratives, you need to start to do dramatic things worthy of being spread within the organization organically and by word of mouth. Stories told in official emails and statements aren't nearly as compelling as those told by peers.

Hint

For a while there may be a disconnection between the new stories and the old ones. That disconnect is likely to create tension. Try to harness that tension in way that supports the new stories while historicizing the old ones.

Moreover, keep an eye out for others who do story-worthy things that represent the culture you want to create. Listen to their stories and tell others their stories.

4.10 Bend The Rules (When You Want To Break Them) ...

Hint

You'd better produce results if you plan on bending the rules. Even then, it is no guarantee that even the most positive results will overshadow the rule bending. At the end of the day, make sure you respect yourself and your decisions.

Even if you trust your intelligence, are able to differentiate the sense from nonsense, and can scheme in a virtuous manner, there may inevitably come a time when you are faced with a tough decision. The organizational culture is hierarchical, and largely rules-based. Sometimes the only way to change something is to bend the rules a little.

This may seem like a cop out, but it isn't. We can't tell you what to do, or exactly how to do it, but we can tell you that you'd better be willing to live out the consequences.

At the end of the day, you need to be able to look yourself in the mirror and feel proud of what you have accomplished and what is yet to come, and if that means bending the rules to achieve the results you believe in, then so be it as long as you are willing to own it, for better or for worse.

4.11 Act Now

Engaging in real conversations about the issues within our culture has historically been something we as an organization haven't been very good at. More often than not we are quick to rationalize why we can't have the conversation, even if we know it is one that should be had or one that could bear fruit.

Hint

If you are willing to raise your hand to complain, you'd better be willing to get off your ass and do something about it.

Move beyond the history of the organization, act now. Choose engagement over avoidance. Accept consequences and take risks. Our so-called risk-averse culture is perplexing given how hard it is to terminate an employee, especially when they are conducting themselves in accordance with the principles laid out in this handbook.

End learned helplessness, don't wait to act, don't count on a change coming down the pipe without you. Have the courage, the judgment and humility to get involved, to take risks, to stand on points of principle, call nonsense by its name, and temper all of that with good judgment.

5 Don't Be a Dead Hero

This should go without saying, but whatever you do – don't be an idiot.

You are no good to your organization as a dead hero. Sure you raised a stink about whatever, people cheered (in their heads), but in the end you have accomplished nothing because no one in their right mind is willing to collaborate or champion something that was just over-advocated by someone who stirred the pot with reckless disregard.

Remember that your relationships and reputation are your best assets, and that your actions impact both of these assets considerably. They also impact those around you so take care in managing them.

At its core, scheming virtuously is about using your judgment to make decisions that you can live with while creating a culture of innovation and stewardship within the public service.

Hint

1. Admit you are not powerless.
2. Believe that working in the Public Service, as something greater than yourself, could help you achieve a meaningful living.
3. Decide to turn your attention and skills over to the Public Service and to the care of your fellow Public Servants.
4. Take stock of your character.
5. Admit to your group, to yourself and to your manager the exact nature of your needs.
6. Be entirely ready to demonstrate your commitment to the Public Service by ameliorating yourself.
7. Humbly ask for help from others whenever required.
8. Distinguish sense from nonsense whenever possible.
9. Keep a list of everything you determine to be nonsense.
10. Work to make sense of the nonsensical, but learn from others and pick your battles.
11. Through hard work and experience, seek to improve your awareness the Public Service and build your knowledge of right and wrong and the strength to follow that knowledge.
12. Renew yourself prior to making demands on others or on the organization to do it for you. Carry this message to Public Servants and practice these principles in all your work endeavours.

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