

Bestselling author of *Hot Spots*

LYNDA GRATTON

Glow

**HOW YOU CAN
RADIATE ENERGY,
INNOVATION,
AND SUCCESS**

An Excerpt From

Glow:
How You Can Radiate Energy, Innovation, and Success

by Lynda Gratton
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Preface

As I see my children and students grow and take their place in the working world, I am increasingly driven by a vision of people at work *Glowing*. By this I mean that they radiate positive energy—are able to excite and ignite others and through their inspiration and innovation are able to create superior value and success in the workplace.

This is crucial. Work increasingly is how we define ourselves—it's what we spend the majority of our lives engaged in—whether we are men or women, Gen Y or baby boomers. It's what we do when we get up in the morning and often what's on our mind when our head hits the pillow at night. Don't get me wrong—I am not arguing for a total absorption in the world of work—but I do believe that each one of us deserves to live a fulfilling work life, to *Glow* ourselves and to see others *Glow*. Supporting people in organizations to create fulfilling work and innovative performance has been my overriding mission for the past twenty years.

I have written this book for everyone who strives to be more energized and innovative at work—characteristics I believe to be increasingly important to “staying ahead of the curve.”

You could be just finishing your studies and wondering which path to take, midcareer and thinking about reenergizing, or like me a baby boomer considering how best to use my remaining decades of work.

There are two aspects of this book that I believe make it special and worth giving up your time to read and think about. First, it's based on deep research into what energized and innovative people actually do, so the three principles I describe later are ones that will really help you in your working life. Second, it addresses you as a person in the context of your work. This is important, for I have repeatedly seen people wanting to change but being surrounded by colleagues and situations that work against their changing. In this book you will discover how you can learn to *Glow*—but also what it would take for you to influence your immediate colleagues and the wider business or community that you work in.

In developing the ideas in this book I have used my own training as a psychologist and experience of coaching people to be more energized, innovative, and successful. I have also engaged with companies across the world to distinguish between places where energy flourishes and those that are moribund or, worse still, caught in the Big Freeze. Examining nearly two dozen companies in Europe, the United States, and Asia, my colleagues and I have built up a significant data set using state-of-the-art survey methodologies and computer analyses. What we have found is that there are indeed factors that separate the highly energized from the mundane—factors such as the way the company is structured, the behavior of senior executives, the cultivation of trust, and the pathways of network development. I described these factors in *Hot Spots: Why Some Companies Buzz with Energy and Innovation—and Others Don't*, published in 2007, illustrating what it would take for organizations to become places of energy and innovation.

As my colleagues and I began to follow up on the themes of *Hot Spots*, what became increasingly obvious was that high energy and innovation were not simply leveraged by the company. I began to see people who made a real difference through their behavior, competencies, and skills. So I began to ask, “What would it take for a person to really *Glow* with energy and innovation?”

What I discovered is that people who *Glow* had mastered three distinct areas of their life:

- They *Glow* because they have built deeply trusting and cooperative relationships with others.
- They *Glow* because they have extended their networks beyond the obvious to encompass the unusual.
- They *Glow* because they are on an inner quest that ignites their own energy and that of others.

To master these three distinct areas of their working life, people who *Glow* are adept at understanding what they have to do as individuals, what they have to do as members of a team, and how to find their place in a company that encourages them to *Glow*.

These are significant areas of life to master, and so my challenge in this book is to use the examples I have seen to blaze a path that will encourage you to master these three areas in a way that is as elegantly simple as possible. I hope you will see this simplicity in the examples, the profile, and the action points I present. My aim is to engage and inspire you without overburdening you. In the interests of simplicity, I made three decisions about this book. First, there are no references to other people's research or theories except where I have used direct quotes. Instead, I have made reference to others' work in the Recommended Reading section at the back of the book, where you may find more information on themes you would like to pursue. Second, I make little reference to my own research, which frames this book, for complete information on that is available at <http://www.hotspotsmovement.com>. Third, I have tried to focus your attention on the key issues through a simple diagnostic profile I have developed. This is designed to help you understand where you stand with regard to your own attitudes and competencies, your team, and your organization. The profile is included in this book, but you may also download a copy from <http://www.hotspotsmovement.com> where you will also find the *Glow* Checklist.

Writing this book has been a hugely enjoyable and inspiring task, not least because I have had to look at myself in a way that I have not before. Working with me on this task have been some truly *Glowing* people. In particular I would like to thank my editors at Berrett-Koehler and FT Prentice Hall. This is the second book I have produced with Steve Piersanti, Richard Stagg, and Liz Gooster, and again the experience has been terrific. I have also discovered that in writing a book for a particular audience, my reviewers have been particularly helpful and insightful. I would like thank Stuart Emery, Faith Gibson, John Hughes, Judith Leary Joyce, Jeffrey Kulick, Christopher Morris, Danielle Scott and Irene Sitbon.

I launched the Hot Spots Movement in September 2007 in order to gain more traction on the topic of individual and organizational energy and innovation. Working with the core team—Andreas Voigt, Marilyn Davison, Johanna Walker, and Talie Wood—has been a wonderful experience. Thanks in particular to Andreas Voigt for the passion he brings to this subject.

On a balmy evening in summer 2008, more than fifty people gathered in a secret garden in central London to support the aims of the movement and to lend their goodwill and grace to it. Our band of well-wishers has become an increasingly important community—as have the many thousands of people across the world who have lent their interest and encouragement.

I believe it is possible for each one of us to become more inspiring and innovative in our work—to truly *Glow*. This book is an invitation to the journey and a heartfelt plea for more humane and engaging work. We deserve it ourselves—and owe it as our legacy to those who come after us. We all benefit when jobs and lives *Glow*.

Chapter One

The Secrets of Glowing

You only have to glance at the morning paper to read that globalization marches on, and technology continuously changes the way you work. The result? There is always someone, somewhere in the world, who will volunteer to do your work faster, quicker, and cheaper. So where does this leave you?

In an ever-changing world, how can you be sure that you will find and pursue great opportunities? How can you ensure that you stay fresh and energized? What will it take for you to become the first person of call when an exciting assignment comes along? How can you relentlessly create value in your work and for yourself? How will you stay ahead of the curve?

Staying Ahead of the Curve

These are everyday questions that you and I and everyone around us must ask ourselves on a fairly frequent basis. It does not matter where you are in your career. You could be fresh out of college and wondering where to go next. You could be in the midst of your career and thinking about how to become more innovative. Or you could be contemplating the final years of your working life and wondering how to stay engaged and energized. Wherever you are in your work life, you want to be sure you stay ahead of the curve.

Fall short in any way, and globalization gobbles you up. Around the world, someone, somewhere, has already put in a bid to do it faster, quicker,

and cheaper. To stay ahead of the curve, you have to work with more energy, more enthusiasm, and most important of all, more innovation. It is this combination that will bring you long-term success in this globalized, technology-enabled world.

But how do you do this without becoming yet another victim of an “extreme job”—working harder and harder just to keep up, your health in jeopardy, alienating your family and friends, and moving further and further away from your true self?

When You Glow

Over the last couple of decades I have watched people who manage to stay ahead of the curve—people who are energized, innovative, and successful—and yet remain healthy and happy. I have interviewed them in their offices, I have watched them as they work, and I have studied them in their teams.

What strikes me as I watch them is that they seem to *Glow*. You can see it in their faces; you can hear it in their voices. They radiate positive energy that has the effect of inspiring others, attracting interesting work, and creating amazing relationships and networks. Think about your own circle of friends and acquaintances. Do you know some people who *Glow*? Do you know others who always seem to be in a perpetual state of Big Freeze?

I am trained as a psychologist, so when I first tried to puzzle out why some people *Glow* and others don't, I thought it was a personality trait. Maybe some people are born to *Glow* and others aren't. But I soon discovered that people with all sorts of different personalities could *Glow*. What I found is that people who *Glow* have something in common, and it's not their personality.

You *Glow* when you radiate positive energy—that fosters a great working experience for yourself, excites and ignites others, and through your inspiration and innovation creates superior value and success in your work.

All of us have moments when we feel we are *Glowing*. It could be when a project goes particularly well or when working with a colleague feels especially rewarding or when suddenly someone you barely know comes up with an idea for a problem that has been on your mind for ages. It is at these times that you feel great about what you are doing, times when working with others has never seemed more natural, times when you really feel part of something bigger—times when you feel really successful.

When you radiate this positive energy, great things happen to you. When you *Glow*, you are able to create or find and flourish in what I call Hot Spots.

- *Glowing* is something that happens to you and involves your radiating energy and innovation.
- Hot Spots are times, places, and occasions when whole groups or a community of people become highly energized and innovative.

So your challenge is to learn how to *Glow* and then to create, find, and flourish in Hot Spots.

Glowing Every Day

The challenge is that sometimes the very actions you think will make you indispensable are exactly those that make you disposable.

I see examples every day of people taking what they sincerely believe to be the best course of action to create value for themselves and others, yet instead of *Glowing* and creating or finding a Hot Spot, they are inadvertently behaving in ways and creating situations that reduce their value and leave them devoid of energy and unattractive to others.

How Fred Becomes Disposable

Fred has been in his company for five years and really wants to succeed. One day his manager gives Fred a tough piece of work to do. It really tests the

limits of Fred's competence, but he is delighted to have the opportunity. Faced with this tough task, here is what Fred does:

1. First, he decides to "put his head down" so he can really concentrate on the task at hand.
2. Then he decides to close his office door so that he will not be disturbed and to reduce the temptation of wandering around and being distracted by others.
3. Then he increases his working hours and stays late into the evening in order to meet the tough deadline.
4. Finally, Fred works on the task all by himself to make sure that his boss will realize just how indispensable he is.

Sound familiar? That's the position many of us would take. Faced with a tough assignment, you hunker down, concentrate, and reduce what you perceive as distractions, and try to do it yourself. It's one of the reasons work becomes extreme—as people like Fred try to stay ahead of the curve by working longer and longer hours.

Fred's not stupid. He behaves as he does because he assumes that what he is doing will help him stay ahead of the curve. So what was in Fred's mind when he took this course of action? This is what he told me:

I have the answers, so I need to really concentrate to get them out of my head. . . . Others will be a distraction—so I need to reduce my interactions with other people to ensure I can really concentrate. . . . Working long hours will increase my productivity and be the key to success.

What Fred had forgotten was that there is always someone, somewhere, who is eager to do it faster, quicker, and cheaper—and work even longer hours.

So what happens to Fred? Over time his assumptions about how to outperform others and the actions he takes leave him drained and deenergized. He's put all his energy into getting through the task and arrives home every night bad-tempered and irritable. His headaches become so bothersome that he arranges to see a doctor, who tells him they are stress-related.

Fred does not become disposable because of his headaches (although they did not help). He is disposable because he is failing to add significant value to the project. Yes, he is working harder and working longer hours. But what he was not doing was working with flair. Fred failed to add value because he failed to bring enthusiasm and innovation to the project.

Over time Fred discovered that rather than enjoying the task, he was entering what I call the Big Freeze, a time when energy is drained and innovation ceases.

By closing in on himself, Fred has inadvertently violated the very principles that would keep him energized, increase his value, and ensure that he stays ahead of the curve by being innovative. To understand what these principles may be, let's turn to Frank, who takes a rather different approach than Fred did.

How Frank Stays Ahead of the Curve

When Frank's manager gives him a tough piece of work to do, here is what Frank does:

1. First, he turns to colleagues he trusts and who trust him and asks them for advice and insight into the problem.
2. Then he reaches out into his extended network to find others who have faced similar problems and to discover what they have actually done.
3. He also redefines the problem in such a way that it ignites others' interest and enthusiasm and injects energy and innovation into the community.

The result is that Frank exceeds others' expectations because he is able to bring innovation and flair to the project.

You can see that Frank takes a completely different approach than Fred. Clearly, he has a different set of assumptions in mind about how the work should be done. When I quizzed Frank about his way of working, this is what he said:

I know I don't have all the answers, so I really need others to cooperate with me to solve this tricky project. I want my solution to be as innovative

as possible. . . . It's important to me that I reach out to people I know who have some knowledge in this field to give me insights. But I also realize that people who are very different from me may also have an interesting angle, so I try to spend time with a wider circle of acquaintances. . . . For me, the most important key to success is to create an idea or a task that others are drawn to so we can solve it together.

By opening up, Frank begins to take actions that energized, high-value, innovative, and ultimately indispensable people take. People like Frank *Glow*.

You hear it in their positive, upbeat attitude toward life, you feel it in their warmth and emotional connectivity, and you see it in the way they connect with others, build networks, and engage with inspiring questions. People who *Glow* have a huge advantage over the Freds of this world. When you *Glow*, people feel good about you; they want to be around you, they want to be part of what you are doing, they want you to succeed, and they become your loyal supporters.

I must admit, however, the sad truth is that much of the time, you are more likely to have Fred's experiences than Frank's. My research has shown that the majority of people feel energized, engaged, and innovative less than 20 percent of their working lives. What a terrible waste.

As you can see in Fred's story, this is not because Fred is lazy, stupid, or incompetent. Far from it. And you, like Fred, do the very best you can. The problem is that the way you think about your work—your assumptions about what makes for success and the habits and skills you develop—can inadvertently push you into the Big Freeze rather than encourage and enable you to *Glow*.

For a couple of decades now I have been fascinated by the Big Freeze, where Fred has found himself—and in people like Frank who have instead taken a path that taught them to *Glow*. My research projects have helped me understand what it is that people like Frank actually do. I have also tried to apply these principles to my own working life so that I might understand what it takes and feel some of the challenges and opportunities that come when you strive to *Glow*.

In this book you will discover a whole host of people who, like Frank, have learned what it takes to *Glow* and have translated this understanding into their day-to-day actions. I will share some of my own experiences and insights as I have tried to *Glow* in my own working life. You will find insights, tools, and techniques that will help you *Glow*—and thus create a working environment that you feel really, really good about. Isn't that what you deserve for your efforts?

And it's more than just a reward. The truth is that the Big Freeze that Fred experiences doesn't just affect his performance on the job. It also affects his health—his headaches tell you that he is more likely to suffer from all sorts of stress-related diseases. It also affects his family and friends when he comes home tired and bad-tempered and disinclined to engage with the people around him. And of course it affects his long-term prospects. As Fred gets deeper into the cycle of the Big Freeze, he begins to lose his value and become less successful. He doesn't develop new skills, fails to make important connections, and over time depletes his personal capital. So when opportunities come along, Fred is the last to be offered them.

I'd like to make one last point about Fred and Frank. When you think about their story, perhaps you regard it as a tale about how one person learned to *Glow* and the other found himself in the Big Freeze. Certainly, their attitudes, skills, and habits played an important role in their success or failure at staying ahead of the curve. But this is not simply a story about two men alone in the working world. Like you, Fred and Frank are part of a larger group of people—a team, a company, a community—and they are also part of wider business networks and informal networks of suppliers and clients and contacts. So one of the reasons Frank stays ahead of the curve is because of the way he works with the people around him and the choices he makes about those he works with.

For example, Frank cannot be cooperative unless the people around him are willing to cooperate with him. It takes two hands to clap! And Frank cannot reach out to a wider network if those around him discourage him from doing so. Frank is a resource himself, but his immediate colleagues and team are also a resource, and so is the network in which he works.

The implications of this are that although there are actions Fred can take by himself, many of the actions he takes are the result of the wider context of his life and work. (We will be returning to this wider context after looking more deeply at what it takes to *Glow*.)

When I observed and interviewed people like Frank who *Glow*, I discovered that people like Frank live life according to three principles that form the foundation for their daily behavior. These principles are brought to life every day by nine actions. Together these principles and actions create a frame for their work life that stokes their enthusiasm and enables them to *Glow*.

The Three Principles That Are the Foundation of Glowing

People like Frank approach their working lives by applying three broad principles: a cooperative mindset, jumping across worlds, and igniting latent energy.

The First Principle: A Cooperative Mindset

Recall that the first action Frank took when faced with a tough problem was to reach out to others—and his colleagues responded positively to him and were willing and enthusiastic in their support of him. This sort of interaction is not a one-off event. For Frank, this approach is part of his deeply held beliefs about others and is also the result of skills and habits he has polished over time. Frank is able to reach out because he has a warm and positive attitude toward others. In his working life, he reinforces this by generally choosing to work in places where he knows cooperation flourishes. Frank has also over time developed great conversational and relationship skills and habits that enable him to establish high-quality connections with others. These relationships bring him great pleasure both on the job and away from work.

Three actions support the principle of cooperation. The first is the development of habits and skills of cooperation. The second is becoming adept at

listening to others and engaging in good conversations with others. The third is taking action around where and with whom you work. This may seem like an unusual action to be considering with regard to cooperation. But recall that Frank worked with people who were prepared to support him when he needed help. He knew he could reach out to them because he had helped cultivate a cooperative environment; the flip side of that coin is that in the past he had made conscious decisions to leave places where cooperation was limited and to move to his current job, where cooperation flourished. That does not mean, by the way, that you should leave your job immediately if the climate isn't right. What it does mean is that the next time you have an opportunity to accept a project, take a new job, or join a different company, you will want to ensure that cooperation will thrive in the new environment.

The Second Principle: Jumping Across Worlds

When Frank faced a difficult task, he reached out into his extended network to find other people who had faced similar problems. Recall that in the face of a similar task, Fred hunkered down and closed in on himself, whereas Frank opened up to others. Frank knew that in his wider circle, there could be people who offer another point of view or a new way of looking at the problem. This reaching out—particularly to people who are different—will be crucial to your capacity to *Glow* and to innovate in your work. And to meet people who are different, you must be prepared to jump across the boundary that surrounds you—the boundary that perhaps separates your part of the business from another part—into other worlds or across age groups and nationalities. The fresh perceptions that come from jumping across worlds will be crucial to your capacity to remain excited and innovative—to *Glow*.

This sounds like a major change from your standard everyday existence. So how will you implement this principle on a daily basis? I'll tell you what I have found. People who are good at jumping across worlds place a high value on their network and know precisely what their network is doing for them. They also take action to increase the value of their network by seizing

the right opportunities to jump the boundaries. They make sure that when innovation is important, they have access to people who are different and can bring fresh perspectives and insights.

Just as important as cooperation in the place you work is your capacity to jump across worlds. There are workplaces where huge walls around everything make it almost impossible for you to jump over them. There are other places where great pathways between functions or businesses or age groups that you can easily tap into are already thriving. People like Frank who *Glow* are aware of this and are very careful to understand what a company or team is like before joining. Are the walls unscalable, or are they just the right height for jumping?

The Third Principle: Igniting Latent Energy

When Frank thought about how to proceed in his work, he knew that bringing other people in could be a great source of innovation. But how would he attract them to work with him? All the talented people around him already have plenty of work on their plate; why would they agree to cooperate with him? Part of the reason, of course, is that by practicing the first two principles, Frank has created a feeling of goodwill around him. But that's not enough. What he also needs to do is to entice and excite people.

When, like Frank, you learn the habits and skills of cooperation and have become adept at jumping across worlds, you create what I call latent energy. By that I mean that you have generated within yourself and in your immediate community the potential to become really energized. However, if you want to make use of this potential or latent energy, you need to be adept sparking it with some form of ignition, for only when latent energy is ignited can it deliver the excitement and innovation that are so crucial to *Glowing*. Three actions support the principle of igniting latent energy. The first is to ask questions that spark energy, to engross and interest others' as well as you own curiosity—questions like “how can we fundamentally change our customer experience?” to bigger questions like “How could we make a real difference

in our community?” to truly enormous questions like “What does this mean for world hunger?” The second action is to create visions that compel. These are visions of the future that you and your colleagues can buy into, that encourage others to imagine the future and to become excited about being involved in that future. The third action you can take is to work with others to craft meaningful and exciting work.

Glowing is about living these three principles. You live them through skills, habits, and choices that reflect these principles and weave them into your day-to-day experiences.

The Nine Actions That Will Make You Glow Every Day

Let’s now pull the nine actions together—three in support of each principle—and take a closer look at what you have to do to significantly increase your personal happiness and your capacity to build your personal value through innovation and energy.

Actions That Support the First Principle, a Cooperative Mindset

Action 1 People who *Glow* have positive ways of thinking about others and five *daily habits of cooperation*. They have realistic and positive expectations of others and are prepared to share valuable information with others, to act with discretion, to use the language of cooperation, and to make and keep commitments.

Action 2 People who *Glow* know the *art of great conversation*, and use conversation as the bedrock of their cooperation with others. They are able to bring emotional authenticity and analytical rigor to their conversations.

Action 3 People who *Glow* are astute at acting on the “*smell of the place*.” They know the signs of the Big Freeze and how to avoid them and take action

to ensure that they move to teams and communities where cooperation flourishes.

Actions That Support the Second Principle, Jumping Across Worlds

Action 4 People who *Glow* are skilled at increasing the value of their networks and at balancing their networks between acquaintances and close friends who are similar to them with more extensive networks of people who are very different from them. They know that sometimes the most interesting and most innovative ideas come from people whom they barely know and who are very different from them.

Action 5 People who *Glow* have *broad and extensive networks* and are skilled at escaping the boundaries that constrain them. They allow for serendipity in their life and are prepared to meet new people and take untrodden paths to broaden their experiences.

Action 6 People who *Glow* are adept at *finding and moving to boundaryless places*. They know how to escape from the Fortress and connect with teams and places that encourage them to grow by creating opportunities to jump across worlds.

Actions That Support the Third Principle, Igniting Latent Energy

Action 7 People who *Glow* are adept at asking the big questions that spark energy, which requires courage and focus.

Action 8 People who *Glow* are able to create a compelling vision that sparks energy and is so exciting and engaging that others are drawn to it.

Action 9 People who *Glow* are able to craft meaningful and exciting work that stimulates them and others.

These nine actions will ensure that you stay ahead of the curve and are more likely to find yourself *Glowing* than in the Big Freeze. In Chapter Two you will discover the resources that will help you *Glow*.

Key Points in Chapter One

The Secrets of Glowing

In this ever-changing world, you must stay ahead of the curve and be the first point of call when new opportunities arise.

You do this by *Glowing*—by radiating positive energy that fosters a great working experience for yourself, that excites and ignites others through your inspiration, and that reflects the innovation and enthusiasm that deliver superior value in your work.

The challenge is that sometimes the very actions you think will make you indispensable are exactly those that make you disposable. You forget that there is always someone, somewhere, who will do it faster, quicker, and cheaper.

When you *Glow*, you design your working life around three principles:

The First Principle: A Cooperative Mindset

You have a warm and positive attitude toward others and choose to work where cooperation flourishes. You have developed conversational and relationship skills and habits.

The Second Principle: Jumping Across Worlds

You have jumped across into other worlds and have learned to appreciate and learn from people who are very different from you.

The Third Principle: Igniting Latent Energy

You are able to ignite your own energy and the energy of those around you by discovering sources of ignition.

You live these principles on a daily basis through nine actions:

- Action 1** You practice the daily habits of cooperation.
- Action 2** You master the art of great conversation.
- Action 3** You act on the “smell of the place.”
- Action 4** You know how to increase the value of your network.

- Action 5** You are skilled at escaping the boundaries that constrain you.
- Action 6** You find and move to boundaryless places.
- Action 7** You ask questions that spark energy.
- Action 8** You create visions that compel.
- Action 9** You craft meaningful and exciting work.

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