

# Opening Doors

to Teamwork and Collaboration

4 Keys That Change  
**EVERYTHING**

Judith H. Katz & Frederick A. Miller

FOREWORD BY WILLIE DEESE



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With love to David Levine, my husband. You hold the key to my heart and steadfastly open the door to my staying honest with myself and loving life every day. Your integrity, insights, and values are key to our living a meaningful life. To Fred Miller, thank you for bringing your brilliance and creativity to our partnership. Your *Street Corner* always opens up new doorways and breakthroughs in our working together. It has been 28 years and going strong! And to the people in KJCG and our clients, thank you for trusting in me, for challenging me, and for helping me to continue to grow and learn with you. You open the door to new ways of being on this journey of life, and for that I am eternally grateful.

—JHK

Our third book. I always thought I would write a book, and thank you, Judith H. Katz, for making that dream come true three times and counting. You are a gift in my life and the best business partner in the world. Of course, I have to appreciate my 100-year-old mother. Every day in my life she has been an inspiration to me. Thank you, Mom, for giving me so many, many gifts. Thanks to Pauline for her love and our 30 years of marriage; and thanks to Kamen and Shay, our two wonderful children, for all the lessons you have taught me—I love you. And, finally, the wonderful people in The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group—every day you open doors for me.

—FAM

To Edith Whitfield Seashore, guide, mentor, sage, and dear friend. Thanks for your many, many gifts. You will be greatly missed.

—FAM & JHK





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# Foreword

by Willie A. Deese, President,  
Merck Manufacturing Division

I was extremely pleased when Fred and Judith asked me to write the foreword to *Opening Doors to Teamwork and Collaboration: 4 Keys That Change Everything*. For more than three decades, we exchanged ideas and worked together to improve organizational environments from the computer industry to the pharmaceutical industry. What I learned through our collaboration has expanded my view and understanding of transformational cultural change in ways that I could not have imagined 30 years ago.

My mental model of a high-performing organization began 35 years ago while working for the Digital Equipment Corporation in Massachusetts. It was a workplace where everyone had the opportunity to do their best. I share this from the perspective of a country boy from North Carolina born in the '50s and raised at a time when not everyone was afforded equal opportunities.

Since then, I've had the privilege to lead national, international, and global organizations that ranged in size from 500 to 30,000 employees, with some spanning more than 30 countries. Through these experiences, I've come to some conclusions that are

fundamental to the way I motivate people and lead organizations.

It's clear to me that people genuinely want to meaningfully contribute and achieve their highest possible potential. They want to work in a place where they are listened to, heard, valued, and respected. And, most of all, they appreciate and enjoy hearing the words "thank you" for a job well done. By realizing this, we are all given the opportunity to improve performance outcomes in organizations everywhere, regardless of our industry, cultural norms, regional practices, language, country, city, neighborhood, or "street corner."

So why isn't more being done to inspire high-performing organizations today? Because it's not easy; in fact, it's darn difficult! It requires leaders to change behaviors and build capabilities to lead and manage in a different way. But the benefits are worth making the changes, changes which this book will clearly explain.

I've worked in companies that placed high value on technical knowledge and skills. These attributes are typically required of high-performing individuals, but are they enough? Do they alone create an environment that allows everyone in the organization to truly do their best work and achieve their full potential? Do these attributes alone help sustain high performance and enable organizational success? I don't think





so. I believe teamwork, collaboration, and trust are the missing pieces needed to complete the high-performing organization puzzle.

I invite you to unlock the high-performing potential of your organization through the *4 Keys That Change Everything*. They can help leaders, like you, deliver transformational organizational change.

**Lean into discomfort.** Be willing to have difficult, straight-talk discussions about performance and expectations up, down, and across the organization. It gets easier with each discussion. In my experience, when these conversations take place with care and concern, people know you want them to succeed.

**Listen as an ally.** Demonstrate respect for your team members and allow for the exchange of thoughts and ideas that lead to better outcomes.

**State your intent and intensity.** Leave little room for misunderstanding, but allow others to discern appropriately whether your decisions and expectations can be influenced. In other words, stakes are firmly positioned but movable. Boulders are heavy but can be moved with effort. Tombstones aren't movable.

**Share your street corner.** Be open and willing to listen to others' views from *their* "street corners" to broaden your understanding across the organization.

Applying these 4 Keys—Lean into Discomfort, Listen as an Ally, State Your Intent and Intensity, and Share Your Street Corner—will unlock the high-performing potential of your organization. In my experience, when the 4 Keys are embraced by people committed to leading in this way, they root teamwork, increase collaboration, and enhance organizational trust, which in turn deliver faster, stronger, and more sustainable business results.

By exploring and embodying the 4 Keys, you can achieve the results I've seen throughout my career in organization after organization. It may be difficult at first, but as Andrew Carnegie said, "Anything in life worth having is worth working for."

Leading and managing in this way will inspire your team to do their best, and that changes *everything!*



# Welcome to Opening Doors

**CHANGE THE INTERACTION.  
CHANGE THE EXPERIENCE.  
CHANGE THE RESULT.**

The basic building blocks of organizations are our interactions. This book offers a simple method for improving those interactions.

The work and the working environments of organizations are the sum of countless daily interactions. They are the very fabric and foundation of teamwork and collaboration.

While technology is enabling faster and better connectivity, human connection is moving at a much slower pace. In this time of so much change and so many unknowns and unknowables, our human interactions are not keeping pace.

Having clear interaction is critical, and yet we seem to find less time and less capability to understand each other. We expect *Right First Time* technological solutions, but we rarely expect or experience *Right First Time* human interactions. And while we may have tools to provide greater technological connectivity, we often lack the tools for human interaction connectivity.

Organizations are only as productive as the interac-

tions that take place among individuals, teams, and work groups. Very few organizations address the quality of interactions, and—no surprise—very few organizations have been able to create the sense of excitement, energy, productivity, and shared mission that occurs when people truly join each other and experience strong, positive, collaborative, and productive interactions.

*Opening Doors* offers ways to have better, more productive, more satisfying interactions—*Right First Time* interactions—because increasingly, that first time may be only one of a few opportunities we get.

## **The Keys That Open Doors to Better Interactions, Teamwork, and Collaboration**

Can you remember your early days on a new job? You felt excited, maybe a little scared. You saw doors opening for you to bring your skills to your team.

But over time, you became aware of how some doors closed when you felt judged by others. You stopped sharing a difference of opinion for fear of being seen as an outsider, and you did not feel safe to speak up. Other doors closed when you did not feel heard or took unneeded actions because you misinterpreted what people wanted or meant.



How often do the doors to greater teamwork and collaboration close—or never open—because people . . .

- don't trust each other?
- don't feel safe to speak up?
- misunderstand each other's intent?
- don't want to hear different points of view?

How much energy is wasted trying to figure out what is the right key that will unlock the door?

The power of the 4 Keys is that they work! They provide a common language to behaviors that is easily understood and that everyone can use. They open the doors to teamwork and interaction. And when the doors open, inside are the rewards of greater trust, collaboration, understanding, and breakthroughs.

Since we wrote *Be BIG: Step Up, Step Out, Be Bold* in 2008, we have seen the impact the book has made on people's lives at all levels of organizations. People who once felt small found ways to be BIG—BIGGER than they could have imagined. People easily use the language of *Be BIG*; this alone helps them have the courage to raise issues and to challenge team members in a joining way to accomplish more together than they could alone. *Be BIG* continues to make an impact on how individuals see themselves, see their colleagues, and engage together as team members to

achieve so much more. Just the notion of Being BIG and stepping up has changed lives.

The journey toward higher performance and the ability for individuals and teams to work more effectively together begins with Being BIG. That is an important start—to have the courage and to see the possibility of being better individually and collectively. But all too often, people struggle with *how* to Be BIG—how to unleash their own and their team’s potential. What is needed to help people Be BIG is to unlock the doors to improving human interactions, and the 4 Keys That Change *Everything* do just that.

That is the power of the 4 Keys—it is not magical; it is not complicated. It just takes a willingness to apply these behaviors to change your interactions.

This book is for anyone from the shop floor to the executive suite in search of higher performance, greater collaboration, faster and better decision making, stronger problem solving, and the ability to create breakthroughs. For individuals and teams in organizations around the globe, these 4 Keys have opened doors to improved performance. So . . .



- *if you want to experience greater trust, understanding, collaboration . . .*
- *if you need to generate greater productivity and transformative breakthroughs . . .*
- *if you are ready to achieve more with others than you can alone . . .*

. . . then read on, and doors will open for you and your team members too.

## A NOTE ABOUT THE VOICES IN THE 4 KEYS

In addition to the “we” voice—the voice of the authors, Judith and Fred—there are several other voices used in the book.

A voice explores the concepts of the book:

*Appearing as first-person experience and is printed in blue type like this.*

And as illustrated characters when providing their insights:

*This voice appears in  
typeface like this.*

There is also an “I” voice that questions and has doubts:

“This voice appears in quotes like this.”





If this multiple-voice approach feels unfamiliar, we hope you will *Lean into Discomfort* and hang in there with us. We hope you will *Listen as an Ally* to try to understand the Keys from the perspectives of individuals who have actually worked with them. We hope the different voices help to clarify the *Intent and Intensity* of these Keys—what they are, how they are experienced by people in organizations, and how they work in real-life situations. And by *Sharing our Street Corner* with you, we hope it becomes clear that this process of listening to and joining with multiple voices—the reality of teamwork and collaboration—is the surest route to the breakthroughs we are all looking for in our organizations, our work, and our lives.





# Introduction

## 4 KEYS THAT CHANGE EVERYTHING

We know this is a BIG statement. These 4 Keys *do* change *every* interaction. We have seen it. We have lived it. And yes, we understand why you might be skeptical.

We would doubt such a BIG claim. But we have observed these keys at work in organizations all over the world.

The Keys provide a common language that everyone can use. They are simple and powerful.

**KEY #1** LEAN INTO  
DISCOMFORT  
Opening the Door to Trust

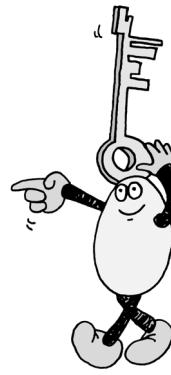
**KEY #2** LISTEN AS AN ALLY  
Opening the Door to Collaboration

**KEY #3** STATE YOUR INTENT  
AND INTENSITY  
Opening the Door to Understanding

**KEY #4** SHARE YOUR  
STREET CORNER  
Opening the Door to Breakthroughs

KEY #1

## OPENS THE DOOR TO TRUST



*Opening this door feels like I am taking a risk, but if I want greater teamwork and collaboration, I need to Lean into the Discomfort I feel in order to get to know you better. How else can we work together? How else can we solve problems and eliminate confusion and wasted effort?*

*When I Lean into Discomfort I help make it safer to be honest and open with you. As I feel safer and you feel safer, we can open the Door to Trust. Unless I am willing to Lean into Discomfort, the door to those possibilities and potential will remain closed.*

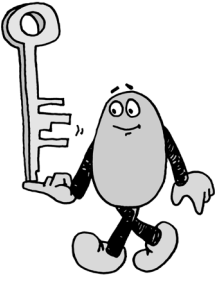
KEY #2

## OPENS THE DOOR TO COLLABORATION



*When I Listen as an Ally, it enables me to hear what you, my team members and colleagues, are saying, and all of us to build on each other's ideas.*

*Slowing down to hear you is the key that unlocks the door to collaboration, which results in faster achievement of our goals.*



KEY #3

## OPENS THE DOOR TO UNDERSTANDING

*When you State Your Intent and Intensity, it helps me, my team members, and my colleagues take the guesswork out of suggestions or directions and opens the door to greater understanding of each other. Stating my Intent and Intensity does the same for you.*

*As the door to understanding is opened, I see how to contribute more quickly, confidently, and decisively. When I know how best to contribute, I know how to add value; and if you do the same, we can each add greater value. And this combined greater value results in our saving time as we achieve Right First Time interactions.*

KEY #4

## OPENS THE DOOR TO BREAKTHROUGHS

*When you Share Your Street Corner and I share mine, we learn to hear differences as contributions, rather than as sources of conflict. As we share our different perspectives, we can see the fuller 360-degree view, use our combined resources, and achieve breakthroughs none of us could have envisioned or accomplished alone.*



By using all 4 Keys, the doors to trust, collaboration, and understanding are open, and the door to breakthroughs unlocks.

## Using the 4 Keys Starts with Joining

**Judging or Joining?** Every interaction begins with this critical decision, and it impacts everything that follows. We do it so quickly and automatically that we are usually not even aware of it.

*When I meet you, do I join you—see you as a friend, an ally, someone on the same side of the table? Or do I judge you—size you up, wonder if you are someone not to be trusted, engage cautiously with you, and deny you the benefit of the doubt?*

*If I decide to join you, I treat you as someone worthy of respect. I listen, am open, extend trust, share information. I am willing to have honest and perhaps difficult conversations. I seek to learn from you. I give you the benefit of the doubt.*

*If I truly want to open doors to teamwork and collaboration, I need to start by seeing what I could gain from joining you.*

*Rather than believing I am better off going it alone, I begin to believe that the best way to succeed is through partnership and collaboration. And by joining you, I am investing in our partnership with the expectation that we will connect and together do great things.*



If we begin by truly joining, we have the ability to open many doors and unlock the potential and power each of us can bring to the team and to the larger organization. But we have heard others say . . .

“Joining is difficult.”

“It is hard to trust others and to earn their trust.”

“It is hard to listen to others, especially when they are not saying things I want or expect to hear.”

“It is hard to define my intentions clearly when others aren’t defining theirs.”

“And it is very, very hard to actively seek out and support perspectives that are different from my own to make sure all Street Corners are heard from.”

We used to think these things too.

But when we began to observe the 4 Keys in action, we noticed that people quickly made them a way of life in their organizations—and in their personal lives as well. People actually like to practice these simple Keys; and when used, these 4 Keys change *Everything*. We invite you to join us as we open new doors.