The Design of Sources of Insight

The What, The Why, and The How

J.D. Meier

Sources of Insight - http://SourcesOfInsight.com
“Stand on the Shoulders of Giants!” …

*Insight and Action for Work and Life*
About Me

Hello. My name is J.D. Meier … the creator of Sources of Insight.

Before we start, here is a little about me …

- I’m a Principal Program Manager on the Microsoft patterns & practices team
- My main focus is: Software Development, Project Management, and Effectiveness
- During the day, I research, author, lead teams around the world, and ship stuff
- I have more than 10+ years of deliberate practice in “best practices” and “execution excellence” (on time, on budget, high impact for 10+ years)
- I’ve performed more than 750+ software architecture and design reviews

As a hobby and passion, I study success inside and outside Microsoft, up and down the chains.

Key Projects (“Blue Books” and Software)

One of my main contributions at Microsoft is creating a series of “Blue Books” that drive customer success on the platform.

My Technical Books (“Blue Book”) for Microsoft:
- Application Architecture Guide 2.0
- Improving Web Services Security (The WCF Security Guide)
- Performance Testing Guidance for Web Applications
- Team Development with VSTS/TFS (The TFS Guide)
- patterns & practices Security Engineering
- Improving Web Application Security (Threats and Countermeasures)
- Improving .NET Application Performance and Scalability
- Building Secure ASP.NET Applications (The first Microsoft “Blue Book”)

My Software / Tools Projects:
- Guidance Explorer (“ITunes for Knowledge”)
- Practices Checker (“Building Codes Inspector for Software Best Practices”)

Blogs
- Sources of Insight (My “Effectiveness” Blog) - http://SourcesOfInsight.com

But … Sources of Insight is not about me.
It’s about the patterns and practices for success from sources around the world.
Why Sources of Insight?

As I mentor people around the world on getting results, one of the challenges I find is that a lot of the world’s best insight is spread across time and space. Another challenge I find is that it can be tough to turn insight into action. It can also be tough to find the right needles among the various hay stacks. Unless you know the right people, the right books, or the right way, making things happen with skill can seem elusive.

I created Sources of Insight as a way to share some of the best ways to make the most of work and life …

Sources of Insight is a place to empower you:

- I wanted a place of strength, inspiration, and proven practices to help you lead a better life.
- I wanted a place to share a hall of heroes from all walks of life.
- I wanted a place to catalog and share some of the world’s best patterns and practices for making a living and living a life.
- I wanted a place for the timeless advice that helps us deal with whatever curve balls life throws our way.
- I wanted a place where some of the world’s best-selling authors and experts can directly share their insights and lessons learned.

Get the world’s best patterns and practices on your side!
What is Sources of Insight?

In a nutshell, Sources of Insight is a treasure trove of some of the world’s best insight and skills for work and life.

It consists of …

- **Success patterns and anti-patterns.** This is “greatness distilled.” Find the keys to success. Success leaves clues and this is a place to share both the patterns that work, and the patterns that don’t. Sometimes the best way to solve a problem is to know how NOT to approach it or what paths to avoid.

- **Books, people, and quotes.** One way to exponentially get results is to draw from books, people, and quotes for insights and actions. I frequently share books and “book nuggets” that really make a difference, as well as quotes, and lessons learned from people of the past and present.

- **Experts.** Everybody is an expert at something. One of the things I regularly do is get experts to share their advice either on their super skill or lessons learned in life.

- **A tribe of leaders and smart people.** That’s you. All leadership starts with self-leadership – lead yourself first. This tribe consists of people who lead a life of action and people with a passion who want more from work and life. It also has a lot of softees (my colleagues at Microsoft), as well as friends from Amazon, Google, Disney, and many others. It is also rich with solo-preneurs and Entrepreneurs. It is also rich with developers, marketers, musicians, middle-managers, and just about all walks of life. The common connection is leading a better life, making a better world, and finding a way forward, a day at a time … with skill.

Sources of Insight is a collection of wisdom of the ages and modern day sages!
WIIFY? (What’s In It for You)

There is a lot of value for you on multiple levels. What you make of it is up to you, but here are some ideas:

- **Find your purpose.** Sources of Insight as some of the best know-how for finding your purpose. If you don’t believe me, check out my free “You 2.0” eBook or check out the guest posts by Janine de Nysschen.
- **Find your passion.** This is you unleashed. Your passion is your fuel. It’s your staying power. It’s your path to greatness. One of the ways to find your passion is to first find your values. When you see the world through your lens of values, you naturally find the experiences that light your fire.
- **Find your super skill.** Giving your best where you have your best to give is a way to find your way forward in life, fund your life style, and create sustainable results, while growing where it counts.
- **Fill your quiver with skills.** Through lessons learned, proven practices, and named techniques, you’ll fill your quiver with specialty arrows and expand your mental toolbox for dealing with more situations in life with skill.
- **Add lenses to how you see things.** Expand your ability to see the chessboard. Take a look from the balcony. Add mental models to your repertoire. See things from multiple perspectives. Change the way you see things and you change your results. “Seeing” things is more than half the battle.
- **Expand your tribe.** There is always somebody new to meet, that just might be the catalyst you need in your life.
- **Know thyself.** There is a wealth of mental models and lenses you can use to know yourself with skill. By knowing your strengths, weaknesses, and preferences, you can better adapt, adjust, and avoid situations with skill and set yourself up for success more often or change yourself in more effective ways.
- **Level the playing field.** What you don’t know can hurt you. Whether it’s knowing how the system works, or knowing how things work, or knowing how people work, or knowing how you work, what you don’t know can work against you. It’s like playing a game where nobody showed you the rules, then fouling you here and there while you fumble your way through. By learning some of the “system” of how things work, you can get the system on your side and better leverage natural principles, patterns, and practices to improve your effectiveness in any situation.

*Use Sources of Insight to improve your effectiveness.*
The How
Hot Spots for Life

I’m a fan of focus. I’m also a fan of balance. To bring these two ideas together, I created “Hot Spots for Life”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hot Spot</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>Skills to improve your intellectual horsepower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>Skills to stay flexible and strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Skills to improve your emotional intelligence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Skills to pay the bills, find a way to do more of what you love,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grow by what you do, fund your life style, and find a sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>path forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Skills to help build financial freedom and respond to an ever-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>changing economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Skills to find your tribe, grow your network, deal with people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you can’t stand, improve your interpersonal skills, and improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationships with friends, families, and lovers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Skills to find your passion, enjoy your hobbies, grow a sense of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>humor, play more, laugh more, live more … and let your inner-kid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>out to play.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a simple set of categories that help me invest and spread my time and energy where it counts. They also help me focus the content for Sources of Insight. “Hot Spots for Life” are the primary focal points of Sources of Insight. I believe that learning some of the proven principles, patterns, and practices in these areas helps you succeed more often, in more areas of your life.

For more on Hot Spots, see http://sourcesofinsight.com/2009/06/11/hot-spots-for-life/

Hot Spots are your heat map for life!
Some of my guest posts are people I know. Some are best selling authors. Some are simply experts in an interesting area. You can browse featured guests from the “Guests” menu.
Periodically I do a drill down on lessons learned from a particular person or hero. It’s part of the “greatness distilled” series.
Quotes Collections

I continue to add quotes collections as a regular feature. You can browse the quotes collections by topic or by people.
Finding Your Way Around Sources of Insight
You can browse hot topics from the home page.
“Popular Posts” on the sidebar is a short list of some of the pillar content. For example, the Lessons Learned from Seth Godin post received 19,000+ visits within a couple of days.
The “Archives” menu is the simplest way to browse through all the posts. They are organized by time.
You browse collections of books, people (heroes), and quotes.
The categories are chosen to help you get to some of the most relevant and specific content. For example, insight on “Fear” and “Happiness” is only a click away.
The End
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