



IT'S

NEVER

ABOUT

US

EXCEPT
THIS
LITTLE
BOOK

 SNP

OUR

LITTLE

BOOK

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To all SNPers... smart, nice, fabulous, creative, curious, crazy, caring, quirky people who are forever part of the tribe. Whether you're here or there, your sparkle lives on!

Thank you.
-Mo & Renn

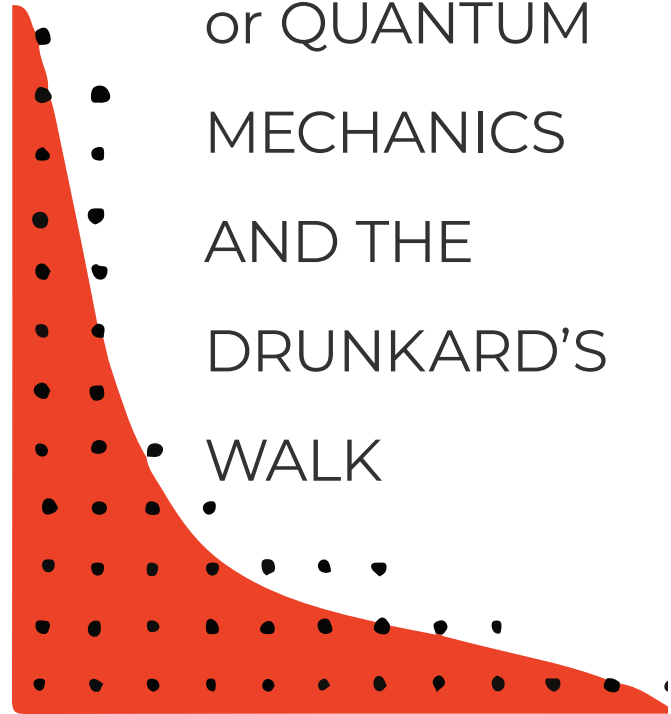
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“Search the world for the good people and help them make their truth persuasive.”

–Aristotle’s Rhetoric

Think of this book as a prelude—an overture, a prologue, a brief introduction. Its aim is not to be encyclopedic. Much like a naturalist's field guide, it's a companion, small enough to be kept at your side. It won't have all the answers but it can help you in the right direction, or at the very least remind you of something you already knew. And certainly remind you that you're working alongside a wacky, weird, wonderful group of people.

WHY
COMMUNICATION
MATTERS,
or QUANTUM
MECHANICS
AND THE
DRUNKARD'S
WALK



**The interaction – Communication skills aren't
"soft" – Change behavior**

It's no secret that human interactions are complex. Temperaments, personalities, moral foundations, and upbringings make every one of us different. That's why it's so important to understand points of view. To do otherwise creates distance, strains the lines of communication, and makes it that much more difficult to achieve anything.

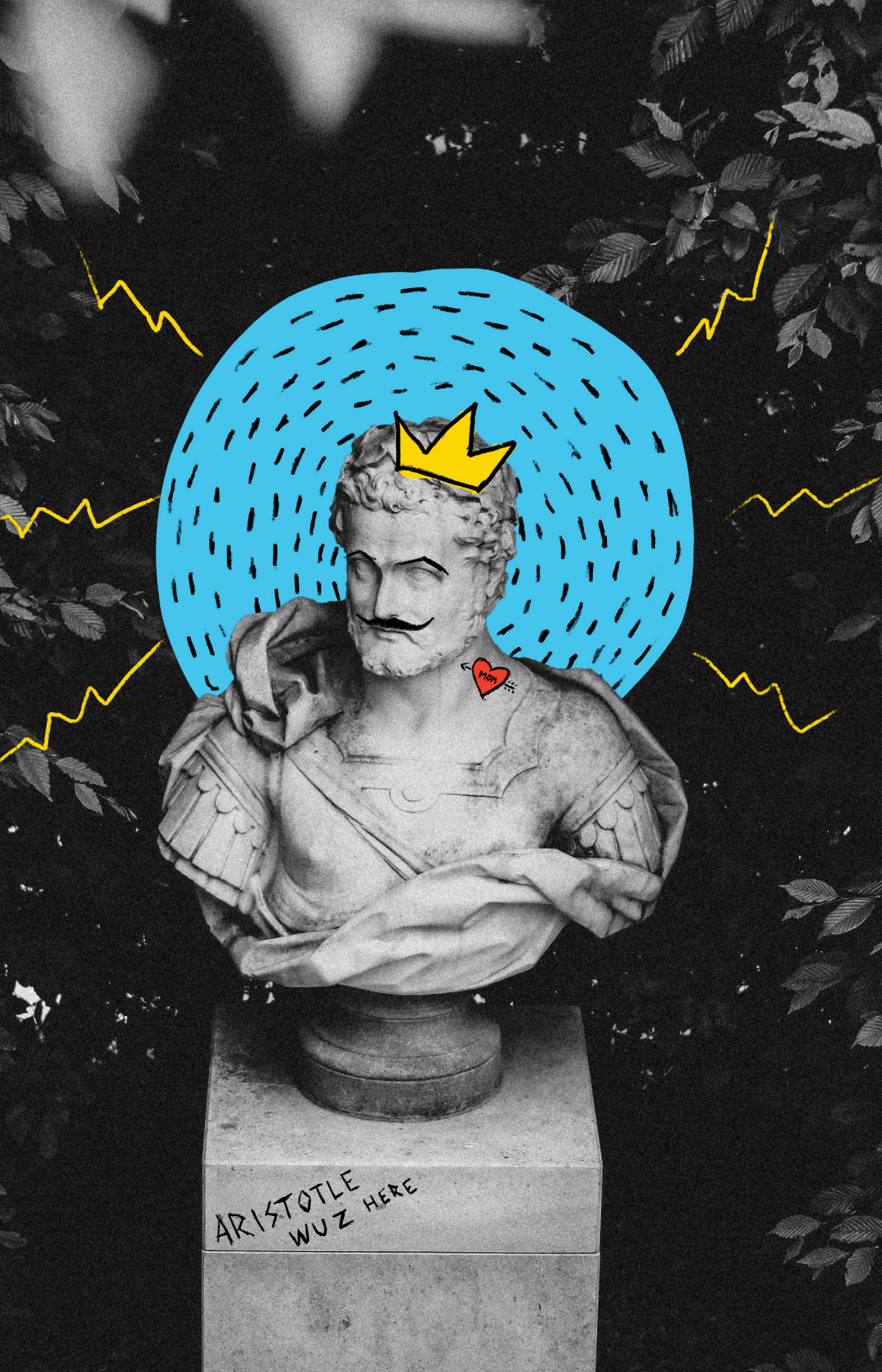
SNP's approach challenges people to adopt an external focus, to think about the audience, about other people, and to realize that it's not about you. This all has to do with *quantum mechanics* and what physicists call the *drunkard's walk*.

Nothing is real until it interacts with something else. That's the core theory behind quantum mechanics. And every interaction is random (that's

the drunkard's walk). Of course, it's a lot more complicated and loaded with scientific jargon than that. But if you thought human interaction was complicated before, how about now? Fortunately, understanding how people communicate—how they interact—just happens to be what we do best at SNP. Sometimes you'll hear people refer to these communications skills as "soft skills," but really they're all that matters. And we have science to back that up.

Now, we can't change how people behave. People can only do that for themselves. But if you can make the interaction with the other person or team memorable enough, then they have a shot at changing their behavior.

What does "memorable" mean? It means engaging all of the senses in an extreme way: writing, reading, listening, watching, experiencing. Everything we do.



THE
STORY
of ARISTOTLE
(MO'S
FIRST
BOYFRIEND)

**Seek understanding – Make content clear –
Make delivery memorable**

We can thank Aristotle for starting our communications obsession. He taught the first public speaking class in Western Civilization in the fourth century BCE. He was inspired, so the story goes, to teach public speaking because of a dispute between two families over a plot of land. The two families asked Aristotle to help them resolve the matter. When Aristotle asked them about the disagreement, they explained that it had been going on for so long that neither could remember how it actually started. At the time, Aristotle believed in Truth with a capital T, so he agreed to help them knowing that the land could not *Truly* go to one or the other. That is, since neither could prove in their favor, the Truth was lost and nothing

could be done. Aristotle assembled a jury and allowed one representative from each family to speak their piece. One was shy, nervous, mumbled down into his shirt-dress, and the other spoke out loud and actually looked at people. To Aristotle's surprise, the jury awarded the land to the latter. So it's not enough to speak the Truth!

That got him thinking. The only way to make the world a better place is to find the good people and help them make their truth persuasive. Aristotle taught that there are three things that make truth persuasive. First, you have to **seek understanding**. Then you have to make your **content clear**. And finally you have to make your **delivery memorable**.

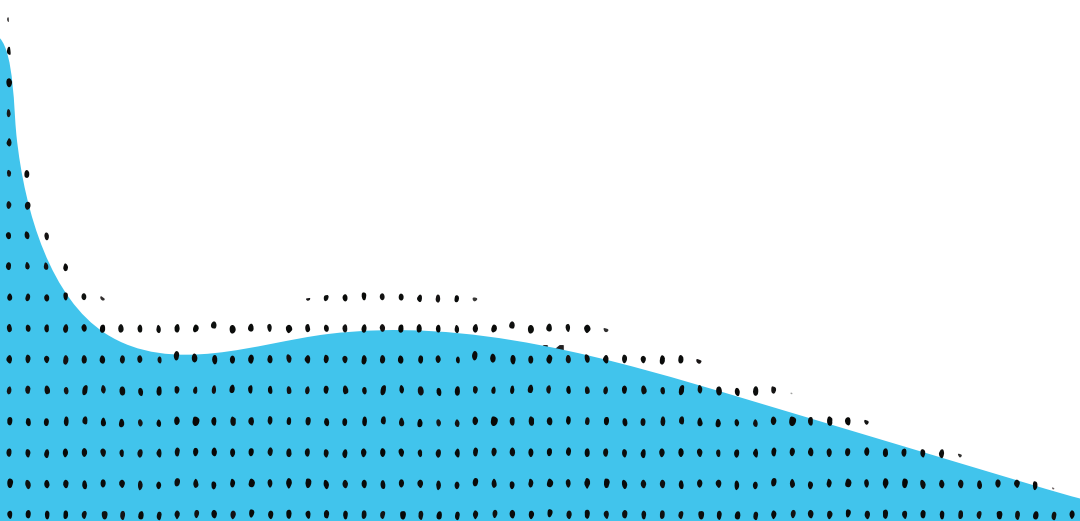
What does it mean to "seek understanding?" It means to listen. Really listen. (Mo's father used to ask: "What do you learn when you're talking?" Yup, the answer is nothing.) And always listen first, especially to the opposite point of view. Just like a lawyer tries to understand his opponent's argument first—it's powerful information. So before prepping, designing, or strategizing your own message, find out what your audience needs and wants to hear. That's seeking understanding.

Once you've done that, you have to make your content clear. That clarity is for the audience's sake, not just your own. Start with an outline of the key points and add supporting detail. The outline may seem basic but that's why it works. It's tried and true. It gives the audience a linear roadmap to follow.

Finally, you have to be memorable. So how do

you do that? There aren't any tips or tricks. But there are mental skills and physical skills that you can learn, practice, and turn into habits. Like how to build content, how to write, speak, work with visuals, and so on. Being memorable is about how you present yourself, your thoughts, your ideas—it's about focusing on how your message will be heard.

PHILOSOPHY



differentiator. Because when we commit to our values as individuals and as a team, our customers learn that they can trust us and that we'll do whatever we can to bring them value.

**The individual – The team – The people
we serve**

It's our philosophy that the individual, the team and the people we serve are all of equal weight. That's one of our differentiators—and it fuels our dedication to quality.

The well-being, health, focus, and dedication of each individual is of total importance because each individual is key to their team and their customer. So we have to take care of ourselves and the people we love.

Then, everyone has to treat each team member with the same dedication as we do ourselves individually. This sets up a standard that allows us to work beautifully together.

Only when these first two conditions are met can dedication to our customer be our competitive

VALUES

Service – Accountability – Curiosity

Our values are simple: Service, Accountability, and Curiosity.

Service is the highest form of humanity. That's what we believe. No matter what we do, we're always asking, "how can I be of service to you?" But let's not confuse "service" with "servant." Service is an attitude. As Mother Teresa said, "forgive me for my selfishness that I get to serve you!" It's just that it's not about *us*. People are naturally narcissistic—self-interest rules our actions. So we take the limelight off ourselves and do our best to understand someone else instead. As we strive to understand their perspective, their hurdles, and their goals, we figure out how to help. Because we think that's an interesting way to live—to be helpful.

Accountability and service go hand-in-hand. When we say we're going to do something, we do it. When we set a deadline, we meet it. If we need help, we ask for it. And if we drop the ball, we own it and we fix it. Being accountable isn't just about keeping your word, it's one's responsibility to another. Because someone else's time is just as valuable as our own. And we're not just accountable as individuals, but as a company. Everyone here will help you be as successful as possible because your success is our success. Relying on each other like that requires trust. Trust means we have to make good on our word. It's not easy, we know. Every day, with every project, for every person—we have to choose to commit to accountability.

Curiosity is what makes us so good at what we do. How could we really be of service to someone without asking them what they need? How could we teach if we didn't want to learn? We're students for life—always interested in learning and understanding more. But curiosity is more than an insatiable thirst for knowledge. We're actually interested in what others have to say and we're ready to listen. That's another one of our differentiators. Because it's hard to truly understand another person—to be present for them. Usually we think about ourselves, how we're coming across, or even worse, we just want to show the other person how smart we are. But we aren't afraid to ask the dumb questions. For us, being curious means we care, and so our curiosity is also a promise—we

promise we care. Or, as Mo says, "we really do give a shit-osky."

Being disciplined about these values assures three things. One, customers love us, trust us and want to work with us. Two, we can depend on the team and we even like each other (for the most part). And three, as individuals, we actually like ourselves better.

WHAT MAKES
AN SNPer?

Smart – Nice – A heck of a lot more

We're a weird group of people. Journalists, teachers, actors, filmmakers, dancers, musicians, artists, writers. And we're all driven by something—a purpose, an itch to make the world a better place.

We welcome and actually thrive on the individuality that each person brings to this community. There's something about that sparkle that makes our relationships with each other and our customers spectacular.

This is why a strong **work ethic** isn't even a question for an SNPer. We are not the kind of people who punch in and out of work. Our work ethic is a driving source of confidence. We're the kind of folk that if we ever bussed a table whilst

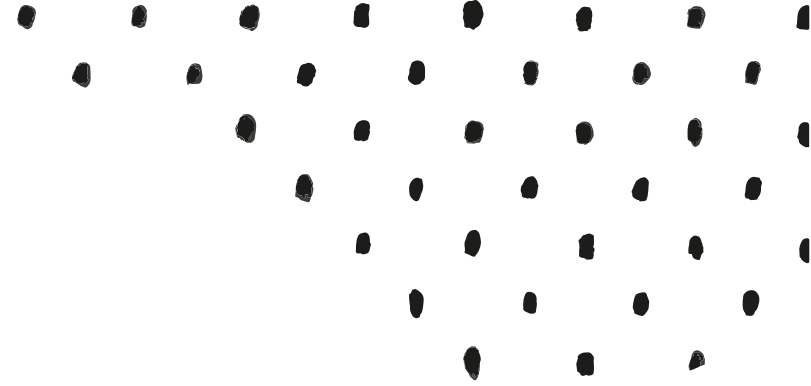
putting ourselves through school, the table was clean, beautiful, and done with aplomb and pride. And not just because a manager or customer was watching us!

We really work at being **honest**. Honesty means we're upfront about our capabilities and about what's possible. With ourselves, our team, and our customers.

We have a **sense of humor**, we're fun, we build a rapport, and we recognize that we work with real people and not nameless, faceless "accounts." Not necessarily cracking jokes (though we have been known to enjoy a good pun), but more about just having a good attitude.

We **care enough to think** three steps ahead for everything we do. We're always looking for ways to add value. Just 'checking the box' isn't the kind of work we want to do. If we have an opinion about a direction, a choice or a conflict, we respectfully share it. That's what we mean by caring enough to think.

This makes us **radical**. Which is why radical, world-changing companies want to work with us. Communication is a powerful motivator. And we set our standards high (very high). It's what makes us us. As long as we live up to those standards, the good people will find us.



THE SNP TEAM

Common sense – Collaborative – Proactive thinking

For all that we do at SNP, we use common sense, we're collaborative, and we're proactive. That's what makes us better.

Let **common sense** prevail (because there aren't enough rules to cover every variation or every situation). More than just guidance, common sense shapes what we do. When we're coaching or creating, there are times when something outside the ordinary or "what's in the script" is necessary. It's more practical, down to earth, obvious. That's what we mean by "let common sense prevail." For example, we always use a dialogue opener to get the other person talking first. But what if you walk into a meeting and the person is crying because they think they are losing their job?

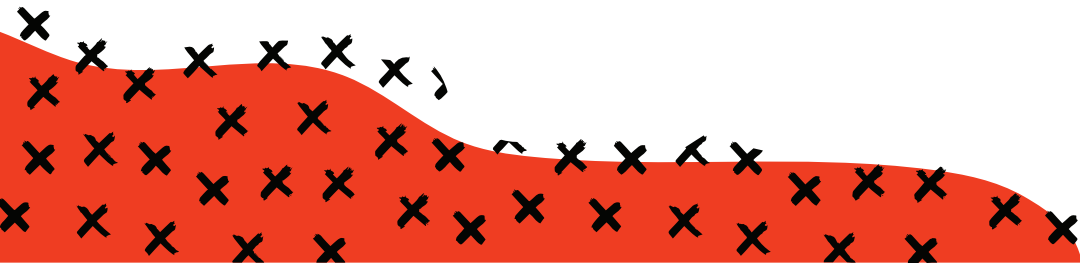
Skip the dialogue opener and start comforting, for goodness' sake! Why? Because common sense prevails!

Being **collaborative** is a mindset and a behavior. When we work with people, we are comfortable being in the lead, and also understand that the collective is definitely intelligent. We review and check in along the way. We ask for feedback and make sure the direction fits the intent. We never forget that it's their meeting, class, speech, strategy, or focus that we're working on. We are partners.

Proactive thinking is what makes us smart and nice. When we tackle a project we aren't just thinking about today, we're wondering about tomorrow. What is the big picture? What do we know about the industry? What thought leadership can lend perspective?

With common sense, a collaborative outlook, and proactive thinking—let's just say we don't get in trouble for the quality of our work.

CUSTOMERS



**The student is the teacher – The good people –
Making the world a better place**

The student is the teacher and the teacher is the student. Socrates said that. And because our customers are such high-performing-team people, naturally we learn from them. Seriously, we learn a lot from them. After all, we don't call them the good people for nothing. They're like us—they believe in service. They want to make the world a better place. They have a bias to action. Our relationships last so long because we share these same values. We think that's pretty cool. And every single day we are grateful to be able to work together with them.

HISTORY

The basement – Broadcast and journalism – Technology

SNP began in the basement of Mo Taylor and Renn Vara’s family home in Mill Valley, California. Originally, it was a radio broadcast production company. The first program Mo and Renn hosted, *Family Talk*, focused on personal and social issues and they interviewed guests on topics ranging from health to prison reform. The show aired on Sunday nights, which is why Mo and Renn named their company SNP, or Sunday Night Productions.

Within two years, SNP had thirty employees and moved their headquarters to San Francisco’s KQED FM public radio station. As the team grew, so did the programming. In addition to *Family Talk*, SNP was soon producing shows on technology and business. Shows like *On Computers*, *On the*

House, *Beyond Computers*, and *Faces in Business*, broadened SNP’s scope, reached new audiences, and helped shape the ethos, mantras, and business paradigms that have made SNP what it is.

Then Renn hatched an idea: to produce corporate TalkRadio. It was the podcast before the podcast was created. He imagined a better way for executives to communicate and connect with their employees. By using burgeoning technology to give executives a platform for discussing company-relevant topics, they could create a stronger sense of community that would otherwise be lacking in a larger, corporate setting. Renn and Mo also realized this could address the issue of “cascading information,” those instances when a leader talks to their staff who then re-interpret the message to their team and so on until it’s unrecognizable (like the game “Telephone”). They started producing these TalkRadios and some of the earliest customers have even remained with SNP to this day.

The vision was to create processes that would allow leaders to candidly talk and listen to their teams, their customers, and each other. “More than talk” was SNP’s maxim. By having these open channels of communication, they could run faster, waste less time, and be able to truly focus all of their energies on their mission. Underlying it all was SNP’s ability to craft their narrative, illuminate their truth, and heighten the clarity of their purpose.

SNP always understood the importance of evolving, adapting, and taking advantage of new

technology. Throughout the company's history there has been an emphasis on learning. So as new technology became available, they didn't hesitate to apply the TalkRadio format to the new mediums. They even succeeded in producing the first ever live-event webcast with Silicon Graphics International well before any other platform had come on the market.

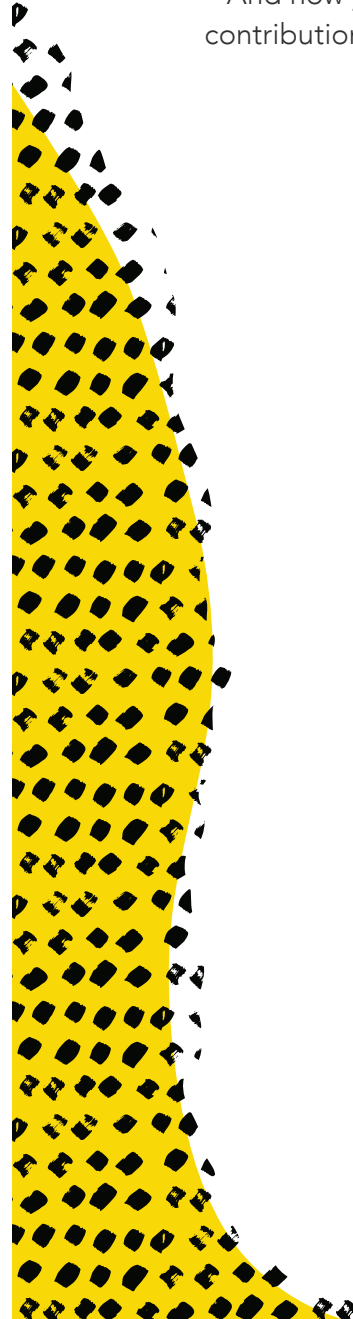
The production business grew and all the while Mo was delivering public speaking to some of the leaders based on what she had learned from her mentor, Emmett Wolfe, at her previous company, Communispond. At the turn of the century, dot-com startups were on the rise and many of them turned to SNP to learn best communications practices as their first-time leaders took the helm.

During this time Mo and Renn were lucky enough to glimpse the inner workings of some of these companies' leaders. From delivering Talk Radio, webevents, and building content for company-wide meetings, they learned how leaders resolve their differences, make tough decisions, handle tradeoffs, innovate, and inspire their teams to keep going despite the challenges.

There were many ups and downs as the years went by. The dot-com era, recessions, tech bubbles bursting, COVID. Throughout all of it, SNP has always had the good fortune to work with the artists who are trying to ignite a Human Renaissance. Some people call these artists "engineers." Some of them are founders. No matter what you call them,

their passion is to connect the globe. And they can't do it alone, which is why we asked ourselves, "what's our responsibility?"

And now you're part of this history. What will your contribution be? We're excited to find out.



LINES of
BUSINESS

Coaching and training – Broadcast – Creative

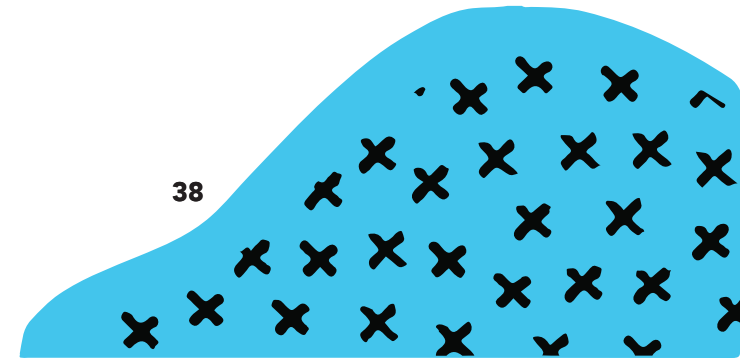
SNP's lines of business are focused on high-performing leaders, emerging leaders, and their teams. We take them on the journey from start-up to world-stage. And we do it through coaching, training, broadcast, and creative services. Underneath all of it is content.

Coaching: SNP's one-on-one coaching starts on the outside—what your team, manager, and customers experience—and uses that to inform behavior. Our coaches are audience advocates, consulting with leaders and emerging leaders on career development, strategy, and—obviously—communication. While all SNP coaches teach the skills, we know that the best coaching is based on a good, solid connection.

Training: SNP courses offer timely, relevant, and critical skills to extend the leader's effectiveness and influence. From active listening to leadership presence, our classroom environment works to change behaviour in positive ways.

Broadcast: Podcasts, webcasts, and producing large-scale meetings are our bread and butter. We've been doing it since before it was cool and we're still the best of the best.

Creative: Graphics, video work, web design, and the like bring life to the content of our work. We work in all forms of media to help support someone's message. By working to understand their content, we don't just create SNP-ized projects—we create truly personalized and customer-specific content.



ALLIANCE

**Unusual experience – Extraordinary exposure –
Dedication to your purpose**

This is not an easy place to work. We look adorable from the outside, but inside...it's more complicated. We ask a lot of you at SNP. Dedication to the mission. Strong, unquestionable work ethic. We have high expectations and accountability to ourselves, the team, and our customers. Equally. In return, SNP offers you the opportunity to work with amazing people, fast-track your career, and learn skills that will give you advantages in both life and work.

That may sound a bit corporate, so what do we mean by "career growth?"

Career growth at SNP is not wrapped up into a title, a move between salary brackets, or the adoption of a team of direct-reports who are

all awaiting their annual reviews in June. Career growth is access and knowledge. It's who you get to work with and what projects you get to work on. If you're looking for a title change in a year or for your paycheck to have a 3.2% cost-of-living increase after two years, we're not for you. If you're looking for the skills and experiences that will launch you into your next adventure (and be an adventure along the way): welcome.

And we make you this promise: we are dedicated to helping you achieve your goals both professionally and personally. Whether you are short-term, mid-term or long-term. We're committed to making your work life fulfilling, creative, interesting, and connected to the road you want to travel. Whether you're like Mo's sister, the school teacher who saves one kid every year, or Gandhi, who had a real-deal scaling gig for helping people.

As you search for your purpose, we have your back.

THANKS for
READING 🌈

We hope this look inside SNP helps you understand our mission and our reason for being. Now it's your turn. Ask questions. Listen. Challenge us. Make your mark. This is now your journey too. We're glad you're here.

RESOURCES

Rhetoric, Aristotle
(Presentation matters.)

The Order of Time, Carlo Rovelli
(Quantum mechanics endorses our work.)

The Drunkard's Walk, Leonard Mlodinow
(Persistence and grit are the keys to success.
Math proves it.)

The Righteous Mind, Jonathan Haidt
(Rationalization and bias impede our ability to
learn and grow.)

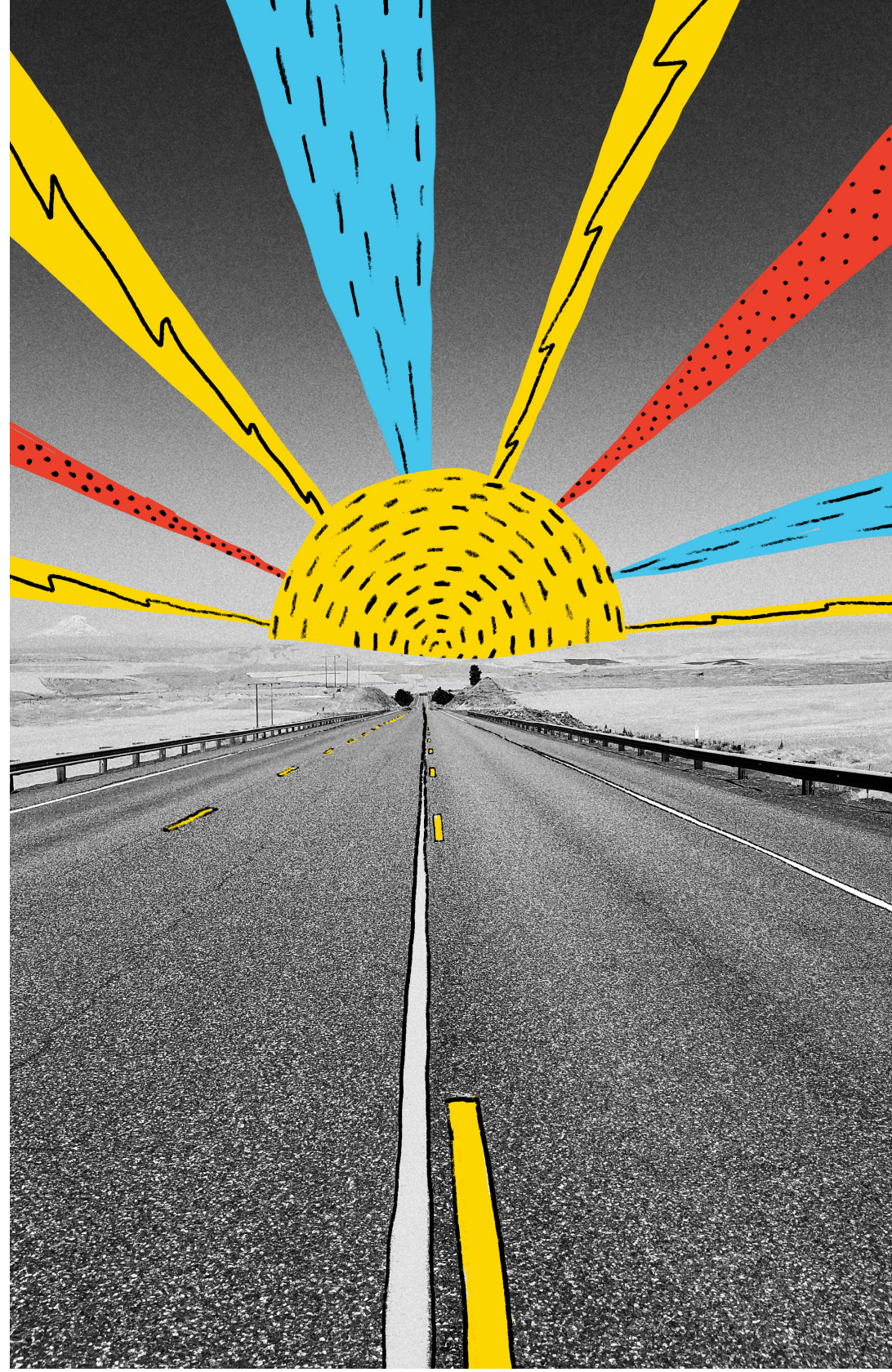
Humankind: A Hopeful History, Rutger Bragan
(Humans are better than we think we are.)

The Beginner's Guide to Stoicism, Mathew J.
Van Natta
(Stoicism is the foundation of great leaders.)

Meditations, Marcus Aurelius, Gregory Hays transl.
(Private thoughts from one of history's
great leaders.)

The Elephant in the Brain, Kevin Simler and
Robin Hanson
(Why we act the way we do and why we do it.)

**Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth,
and Art**, Lewis Hyde
(The world is made by those who challenge the
status quo.)



This book was designed and bound by SNP Communications. It is issued in an edition of 60 copies. The title font, Montserrat, was designed by Julieta Ulanovsky. The main text, Avenir, was designed by Adrian Frutiger. Given the content of this little book, it seems relevant to note that, in French, *avenir* means **future.**





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