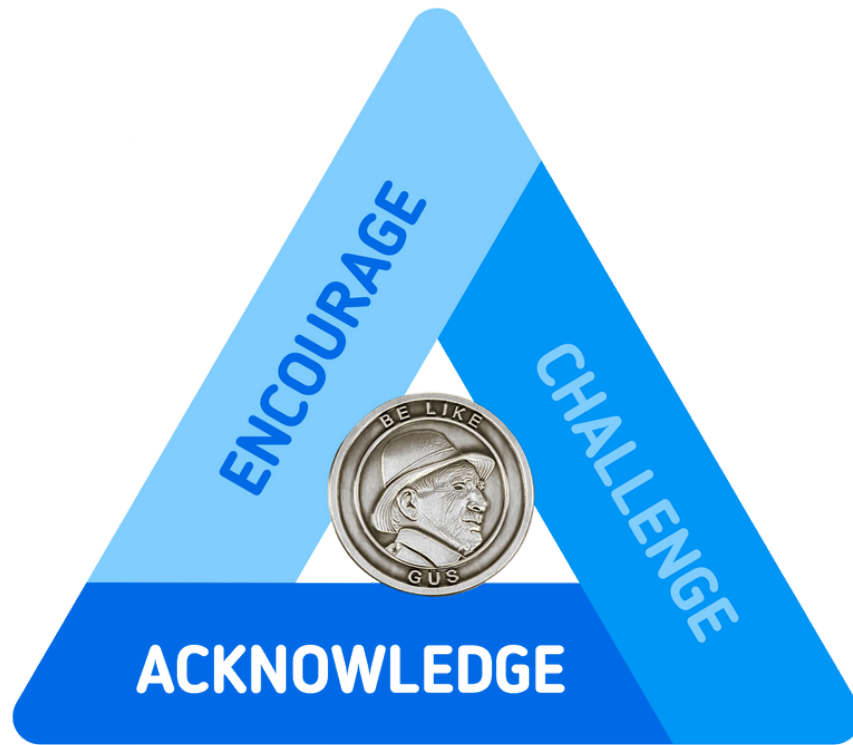




#BeLikeGus Leadership Model

When I was 22, I was homeless, hopeless, and blind to my own potential.

Sitting at a bus stop in downtown Vancouver, a kind man named Gus said to me:

"Joe, If you got clean and faced your challenges, you could do something amazing with your life.

There's more to you than you can see."

For the first time, someone other than my mom or dad, spoke to my potential.

*Gus didn't see a homeless failure. He saw **Possibility**.*

That ten-minute conversation changed the trajectory of my life.

It also became my leadership mantra.

– joe roberts



This model is a tribute to Gus,
and a call to leaders everywhere to do the same:
Encourage, Challenge, and Acknowledge Possibility

1

Encouragement Speaking Possibility

What This Is:

Empathic, belief-based leadership that uplifts and empowers. Leaders who say: **"I believe in you."** even when you can't yet believe in yourself.

Challenges It Addresses:

- Burnout & disengagement
 - Talent retention
 - Lack of innovation
- Disconnection in hybrid teams

Key Insight:

People aren't lazy - they're often uninspired.

Encouragement reignites their "why."

2

Challenge Behavior-Focused Accountability

What This Is:

Leadership that's tough on standards but compassionate with people: separating the person from the behavior.

Challenges It Addresses:

- Avoiding hard conversations
 - Underperformance, quiet quitting
- Lack of psychological safety
 - Passive-aggressive, toxic culture

Key Insight:

Tough feedback, delivered with care, helps people grow, not shrink.

Challenge encourages motivation and accountability

3

Acknowledgement Appreciation of Human Value

What This Is:

Intentional and heartfelt recognition says, "I see you. I value you." Honors not just what people do, but who they are.

Challenges It Addresses:

- Lack of belonging
- Disconnection & invisibility
 - Low trust in leadership
- Culture of 'what's next' vs 'what's now'

Key Insight:

Appreciation is strategic. One moment can reshape how someone sees their worth.

Acknowledgement boosts morale and increases performance

#BeLikeGus

Exercise Worksheet



STEP 1

Encourage: Speak Possibility



Statement: *"I believe in you (+share what you see in them)"*

Why it matters:

Encouragement is most powerful when it's specific and sincere.
It shows you're paying attention.

*"You've got something in you that's bigger than this moment.
I see a future version of you that's doing amazing things."*



Acknowledge **effort**, not just outcomes.

Notice when someone tries, improves, or shows up fully.

Statement: *"I saw how much effort you put into that."*



Provide meaningful opportunities

Let them lead something, make a call, own a decision.

Opportunity is a powerful vote of confidence.

STEP 2

Challenge: Behavior Focused Accountability

Tough Stuff Conversation

Practice delivering tough feedback using this formula:

- "Here's what I noticed..."
- "Here's the impact it had..."
- "How can we work together to resolve this?"

◆ Goal: Create clarity – Separate person from behaviour

Exercise: If "you" were coaching "you"

Ask: "If you were your own coach, what behavior would you challenge yourself on right now?"

◆ Goal: Promote self-awareness and internal accountability – it's often more powerful when it comes from within.

The Accountability Contract

Each person sets one behavior they want to change and makes a simple written agreement with a peer or leader. It includes:

- What I will do
- When I will do it
- How I'll track it
- How we'll check in

◆ Goal: Encourage self-responsibility and consistency.
Shared ownership raises follow-through.

STEP 3

Acknowledge: Appreciation of Human Value

The “I See You” Shoutout

Publicly acknowledge a colleague or teammate in a meeting or group setting. Focus not on results, but the character or effort they brought (“I saw how you stay calm under pressure...”).

◆ Impact: People feel seen, not just measured. This builds psychological safety and trust.

Exercise: Catch Someone Doing It Right

Each day for a week, intentionally look for something someone is doing well – no matter how small – and call it out in the moment.

◆ Impact: This rewires your focus toward strengths and contributions, reinforcing positive behaviors through appreciation.

The Appreciation Three

Ask: Who are 3 people who shaped who you are today? Write their names. Then write:

- What they did
- How it helped you
- One thing you’ve never said to them but should

◆ Impact: This brings awareness to the village behind your success – and often sparks meaningful conversations.

The Gratitude Letter

Write a letter (or email, or even a voice note) to someone who helped shape your life – a mentor, friend, parent, teacher, boss – and thank them specifically for how they impacted you. Then, if possible, read it to them.

◆ Impact: Deep appreciation becomes real and transformative when it’s delivered, not just felt.

TAKE THE TEST

How Gus Like Are You

Rate yourself from 1 to 5 for each statement:

1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Always

Score

◆ 1. Encouragement / Speaking Possibility

- ☐ I take time to speak to people's strengths and potential.
- ☐ I regularly tell others what I see in them – beyond their current role or situation.
- ☐ I offer encouragement even when someone is struggling or underperforming.
- ☐ I give people meaningful chances to grow, stretch, or lead.
- ☐ I call out effort and progress – not just outcomes.

◆ 2. Challenge / Behavior-Focused Accountability

- ☐ I address behavior issues directly instead of avoiding hard conversations.
- ☐ I give feedback that's clear, specific, and focused on improvement.
- ☐ I separate who someone is from what they did.
- ☐ I help people take ownership of their choices and results.
- ☐ I model the same standards I expect from others.

◆ 3. Acknowledgment / Appreciation of Human Value

- ☐ I intentionally thank people for their contribution – even small things.
- ☐ I recognize people publicly when they demonstrate character, not just performance.
- ☐ I make people feel seen and heard in meetings or group settings.
- ☐ I catch people doing things right – and tell them.
- ☐ I reflect on the people who helped shape me, and express my gratitude.

◆ 4. Self-Awareness & Integrity

- ☐ I reflect on how I show up as a leader – and where I can grow.
- ☐ I check in with others about how my leadership makes them feel.
- ☐ I lead with values – even when it's uncomfortable.
- ☐ I stay humble enough to be coachable.
- ☐ I try to leave people better than I found them.

🔍 Scoring:

80-100 You're leading like Gus! Keep going – and lift others to do the same!

60-79 Strong foundation. There's room to go deeper in a few areas.

40-59 Awareness is growing – now it's time to take bolder action.

Below 40 Gus moments start with small shifts. Pick one pillar to focus on this week/month.

WHO WAS YOUR GUS?

Honor the person who believed in you

No one achieves success alone.

Behind every accomplishment, every breakthrough, every second chance – there's someone who showed up. Someone who believed in us when we didn't believe in ourselves.

This is your moment to acknowledge them.

Reflection Prompts:

- Who showed up for you – and may not even know it?
- What did they say or do that stayed with you?
- Who in your world could use a Gus moment right now?

Why It Matters:

We live in a world that celebrates outcomes, but overlooks those who helped us get there.

This challenge is a chance to change that.

To honor the shoulders we stood on – and then offer our own.

Because when we acknowledge others, we don't just show gratitude.

We create a ripple of belief, courage, and connection the world desperately needs.

Let's flood the internet with goodness. Let's Be Like Gus.



Your Mission:

- 1) Think back – Who spoke to your potential? Who challenged you, encouraged you, or simply saw you when you needed it most?

- 2) Reach out: write them a letter, call them, give them a shout out on social media. Let them know the impact they made.

Because believing in someone is powerful. But knowing it mattered? That's life-changing.

- 3) Pay it forward

This week I will be a Gus to: _____

- 4) Speak possibility. Offer support. Acknowledge someone deeply.

- 5) Share your story on social using **#BeLikeGus** to inspire others to do the same.

CHALLENGE

#BeLikeGus | Monday Challenge

Change 3 lives this week!

Inspired by the leadership model of #BeLikeGus, this challenge invites you to lean into the moments that matter – with intention, courage, and heart.

Your Mission:

Every Monday, plan with intention to have 3 meaningful conversations with 3 different people:

◆ Person 1. **Encourage**

Who in your life is doubting themselves right now? _____

Speak to their possibility, not their problems. Tell them what you see in them.

💬 "You've got something in you that's bigger than this moment..."

◆ Person 2. **Challenge**

Who have you been avoiding a hard conversation with? _____

Have the courageous conversation – with care and clarity.

💬 "Here's what I noticed... here's the impact it had... let's work on this together."

◆ Person 3. **Acknowledge**

Who has helped shape who you are – but never heard it from you? _____

Thank them. Fully. Specifically. Let them feel seen and valued.

💬 "Because of you, I..."

◆ Reflection Prompts (Optional):

- How did each person respond?
- How did you feel after each conversation?
- What did this show you about the kind of leader you are – or want to be?

◆ Bonus

Challenge your entire leadership team (or organization!)

3 people. 3 conversations. Every week for 12 weeks

Schedule time for team reflection and discussion

Build a culture of belief, accountability, and gratitude – one conversation at a time.

Who will guide you?

Behind every success story, there's someone who believed in us, challenged us, or saw something we didn't see in ourselves. That person is your Gus.

At a bus stop in Vancouver, a man named Gus spoke possibility into Joe Roberts' life. That 10-minute conversation shifted Joe's trajectory – from hopelessness to a future filled with possibility.

A Guide to Finding Your Gus

A "Gus" is someone who helps you see possibility, holds you accountable, and makes you feel seen. The right Gus will accelerate your growth as a leader and as a person.

Step 1: Define What You Need Right Now

- Where am I feeling stuck, uncertain, or ready to grow?

- Do I need more: encouragement ____ challenge ____ or acknowledgment ____

Step 2: Look Around You

Potential Guses are often closer than you think. Who in your world:

- Inspires you with their example?
- Isn't afraid to tell you the truth?
- Makes you feel valued and seen?

List 3 people who could fit:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 3: Test the Fit

Ask yourself:

- Does this person genuinely want the best for me?
- Will they encourage me when I doubt myself?
- Will they challenge me when I need accountability?
- Will they acknowledge me so I feel seen and supported?

☒ If "yes" to at least 3 of 4, they may be your Gus.

Step 4: Make the Ask

Don't overcomplicate it. Invite them into your journey. Try:

"You've had an impact on me, and I'd value your mentorship. Would you be open to encouraging, challenging, and acknowledging me as I grow?"

Step 5: Keep the Relationship Alive

- Schedule regular check-ins (weekly, monthly, quarterly)
- Be open to feedback – especially the tough kind.
- Show gratitude. (Remember: acknowledgment flows both ways.)

My Gus is: _____