



## IAM Touchstones - Summary

The **IAM Touchstones** are intentionally provocative statements that challenge us to be at our *Essential Best* in every situation. Take a look at them over and over again to gain new insights.

### 1. **My Purpose is to Be My Best**

Know that we deserve to be at our best and that there are abundant resources and opportunities to support us in being so.

### 2. **I Can't Be Bad**

Know that self doubt and blame are the biggest obstacles we can put in our own way and that **self love** is essential to overcoming these blocks.

### 3. **I Am 100% Responsible**

Know that we have the power to choose our thoughts, attitudes, beliefs and actions and thus to create **every** aspect of our experiences.

### 4. **I Come First**

Know that putting ourselves first, identifying our wants and taking care of ourselves before others is critical to being our best **and** giving our best to others.

### 5. **We're Always Working For Each Other**

Know that we are perfect reflections of the best and worst in each other and that appreciating **both** results in our best flowing forth unopposed.

### 6. **Play Every Day**

Know that **Drama** happens, struggle is optional and that a sense of humor and a playful attitude are the strongest indicators of your being at your *Essential Best*.



## IAM Touchstone #1: My Purpose is to Be My Best

We are unique; we each have a unique purpose. Yet we can state the unique purpose for each of us exactly the same way: our purpose is to be our best. Now it's up to you to decide what this might look like!

Whether we are deciding our career path, developing as a leader, leading others to be their best or communicating in everyday situations – our ongoing ability to be at our best is the key to success.

We use the **Essence Map™** as a simple guide for you to be at your best:



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What you focus on determines what you experience and how you act. If you focus on **Drama**, you will experience **Drama**. We call this a **Drama Orientation**. If you focus on your *Essential Best* and the *Essential Best* of others, you will experience being at your best - with yourself and others. We call this an **Essential Orientation**.

A simple way to think about an **Essential Orientation** and a **Drama Orientation** is as follows:

*Essential Best* = Abundance  
Drama = Scarcity

With abundance, we know that there is more than enough time, resources and energy for us to be at our *Essential Best*. We know what we want, what is needed to be at our best and we trust these things to come to us.

With scarcity, there is some sort of conflict at play between us being at our best and another person, situation or condition. For example:

- Either I get what I want or you do (I'll make sure I do) ... or
- I'll sacrifice what I want for what you want (I'll be ok when you are) ... or
- I can't get what I want so I'm either dependent or I'm needy.

Conflict happens when we are not clear about what we want. Conflict is inevitable when we don't believe we deserve what we want.

Our challenge to you is to live knowing that you deserve to be at your best and that there are abundant resources and opportunities to support you in being so.

All of the **IAM Touchstones** build on this foundational first: every person has a right to be at their best. Our focus and actions determine to what extent our best is possible.

Our intention is for your best to be at the expense of no one, and indeed for your best to be for the good of those around you. There is more than enough time, energy, resources and space for everyone to be at their best.



## IAM Touchstone #2: I Can't Be Bad

When we are committed to being at our best, we come face-to-face with the edge between our *Essential Best* and our **Drama**. Learning and growing into our *Essential Best* requires moving beyond that which holds us back.

The single biggest obstacle to being at our *Essential Best*, is forgetting who we really are. Instead of using the **Drama** around us as leverage to be our best, we believe that **Drama** is who we are. It is not!

While it is true that people are capable of doing terrible things, the more we focus on these terrible things, the more we create a **Drama Orientation** and the more we get sucked into the vortex of **Drama**.

Our attitude toward situations is the most powerful tool we have in being at our best, ongoing. We have a choice in how we see things. For example, the following thoughts contribute to an...

### Essential Orientation:



### Or a ... Drama Orientation:



As we stand at the edge of our *Essential Best* we are ready to take the next step:

- in our career,
- in being the leader of ourselves,
- in asking the best of others,
- in communicating what we want,
- in creating the life we want.



If we doubt ourselves, if we forget that we are good, if we forget that our true identity is our *Essential Best*, we will stumble at the edge or get lost in seeing our beautiful and wonderful selves.

Yet seeing some **Drama**, self doubt and fear are good signs if they don't first scare us away! These are indicators that we are on the edge of our best, poised to take the next step.

If we are to grow into our *Essential Best* ongoing, we need to get familiar with the territory of these edgy places of our selves. **It takes heartfelt courage to step over the edge, and self love and self compassion to wade through the blame, doubt and fear within Drama.**

When our intentions are to learn, grow and be healthy, then we can't be bad and it's impossible to fail because whatever happens will be for our good and the good of others. No effort is wasted when we use every experience as material to add to our knowledge and wisdom.

Keep in mind that living at the edge can be a messy place! Others may not understand our intentions and project their fears on us. We may have to get used to the uncertainty, vulnerability and stumbling we experience in the gap between the known and unknown. The rewards are worth the mess: accelerated learning, increased capacity, greater clarity, stronger collaboration.

By remembering that we can't be bad, **every** venture into **Drama** thus becomes a gift of learning, growing and increased health: a chance to connect more deeply with and live out our *Essential Best*!



## IAM Touchstone #3: I Am 100% Responsible

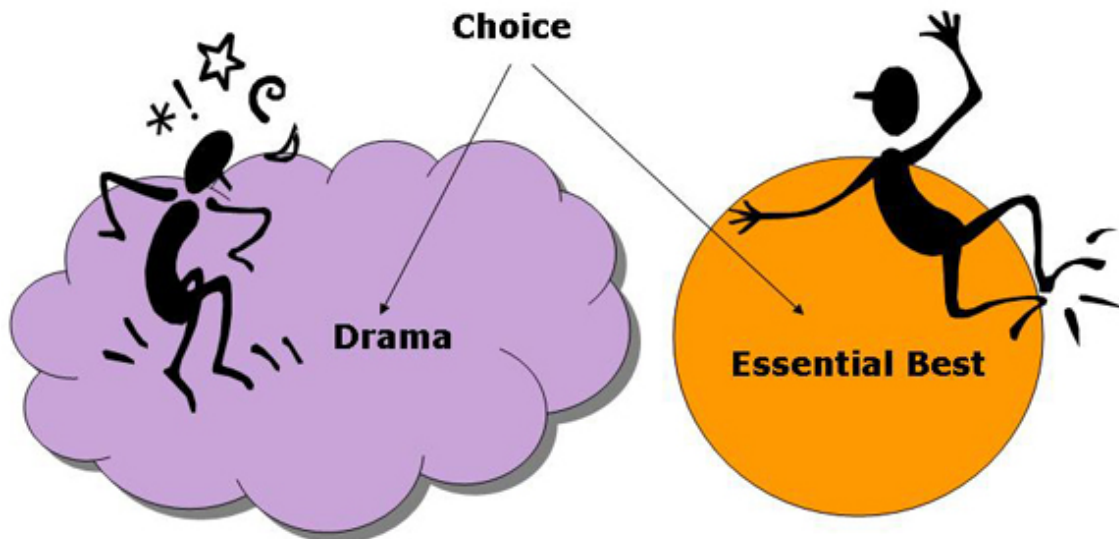
When I look to things outside of myself as the source of my current situation then I remove myself from the place of being able to do anything about it. I become a victim. I lose my ability to be at my *Essential Best* more and more over time.

Being 100% responsible **does not** mean taking on the weight of other people's problems, judging ourselves as bad or wrong, feeling guilt for what is happening nor blaming ourselves for the ills of the world.

Being 100% responsible **does** suggest claiming the power we have over our own thoughts, attitudes, beliefs and assumptions to influence our experiences. It challenges us to let nothing get in the way of being at our *Essential Best*!

This **IAM Touchstones** is deceptively simple. You may say, of course I'm a responsible person! Yes, we're sure you are. And there is always more to learn about being the creator of your own best life.

I Am 100% Responsible is a challenge to step out of **Drama**, choose to be at our *Essential Best*, and handle any **Drama** from there:

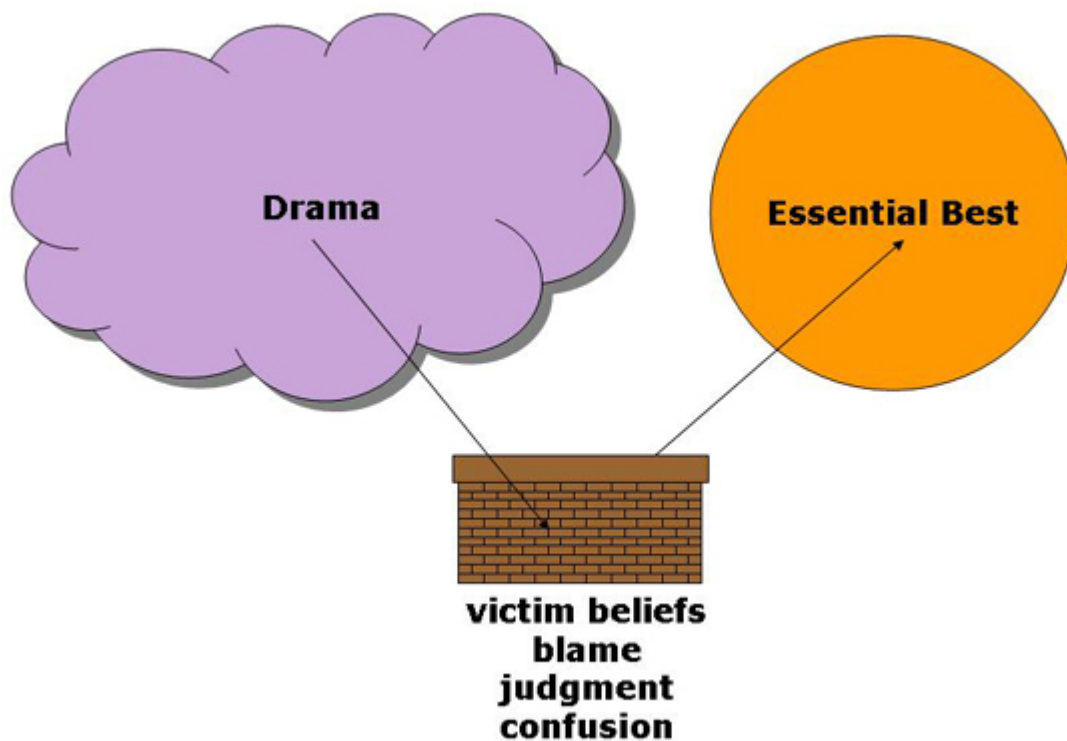


So if we find ourselves blaming or judging others, doubting ourselves, frustrated or angry or afraid to look at the truth about ourselves, we can know we are caught up in **Drama**, not taking responsibility. It's almost impossible to learn or be effective from a place of suffering or struggle. The learning usually comes after we get some distance or

perspective, and accept whatever is true about ourselves, which can take some time.

100% responsibility takes great discipline because it's a challenge to be at our *Essential Best* most of the time: to be happy, joyful, productive, feeling good about ourselves and others and to solve problems from this perspective. It's a challenge to choose our best over **Drama** in a moment. Quite a tall order, we know.

Getting from **Drama** to our *Essential Best* can require navigating through what sometimes may seem like a brick wall of beliefs, judgments, blame and confusion:



But the effort will be more than worthwhile! By being honest about what's going on and sorting through the bricks to the extent we can, we can use **Drama** to clarify our deepest creative desires for ourselves, for those we care deeply about, and for the good of our organization, family and more.

Most importantly, by focusing on our *Essential Best*, rather than getting caught up in **Drama** unaware, we are choosing to take responsibility for our experiences: We wake-up to the ability we have to create our best selves!



## IAM Touchstone #4: I Come First

This Touchstone is tricky to explain, so please read through to the end. First, remember Touchstone #1: My Purpose Is To Be My Best – at the expense of no one.

Putting ourselves first is what allows us to shift our focus from **Drama** to our *Essential Best*, rather than getting caught up in the scarcity dynamics of **Drama**. The “I Come First” Touchstone is intended to create a pause in the action of life, so you can do what’s best for yourself **and** what’s best for others.

Everything in life flows more easily when we take care of our personal growth, learning and health first, making sure we are coming from an **Essential Orientation** to the extent we can.

The simplest way to put our self first is to ask the question: “*What do I want?*” in each and every situation we’re involved in, especially those situations where we might be confused or struggling: experiencing **Drama** of any kind.

We know that this question might seem selfish, but it’s only selfish from a **Drama Orientation** where either/or dynamics are at play: either I get what I want or you do.

From an **Essential Orientation**, asking “*What do I want?*” becomes the single most important action to take to anchor ourselves in our *Essential Best*.

Wondering what career path to take? Ask yourself, “*What do I want?*”

Struggling to communicate confidently with others? Ask yourself, “*What do I want?*”

Developing leadership skills to inspire an effective group or organization? Ask yourself, “*What do I want?*”



Involved in a bizarre situation of dysfunctional behavior? Ask yourself, "What do **I** want?"

Coaching others to be at their best? Ask yourself, "What do **I** want?"

Now, from a place of calm clarity about ourselves, we can better respond to further questions such as:

- What's my next best career step?
- How do I express what I want and respect the needs of others?
- How do I best communicate my vision for my group or organization?
- How do I extract myself from this Drama?
- Who do I want to be coaching?

We do understand that this question 'what do I want?' can be tricky to answer, especially if you haven't spent much time and energy thinking about it or if you have beliefs that discourage you from this type of self respect and self care.

Or maybe you have asked for what you want and it's not happening.

In these types of situations, we like to play with the statement:

**I always get what I want or something better.**

In other words, even when we don't get what we want, we're getting the **Drama** we need to further clarify what we want. It's all in how you look at it!

By putting our self first, and by clarifying what we want, we create the discipline needed to take 100% responsibility for being at our

*Essential Best.*



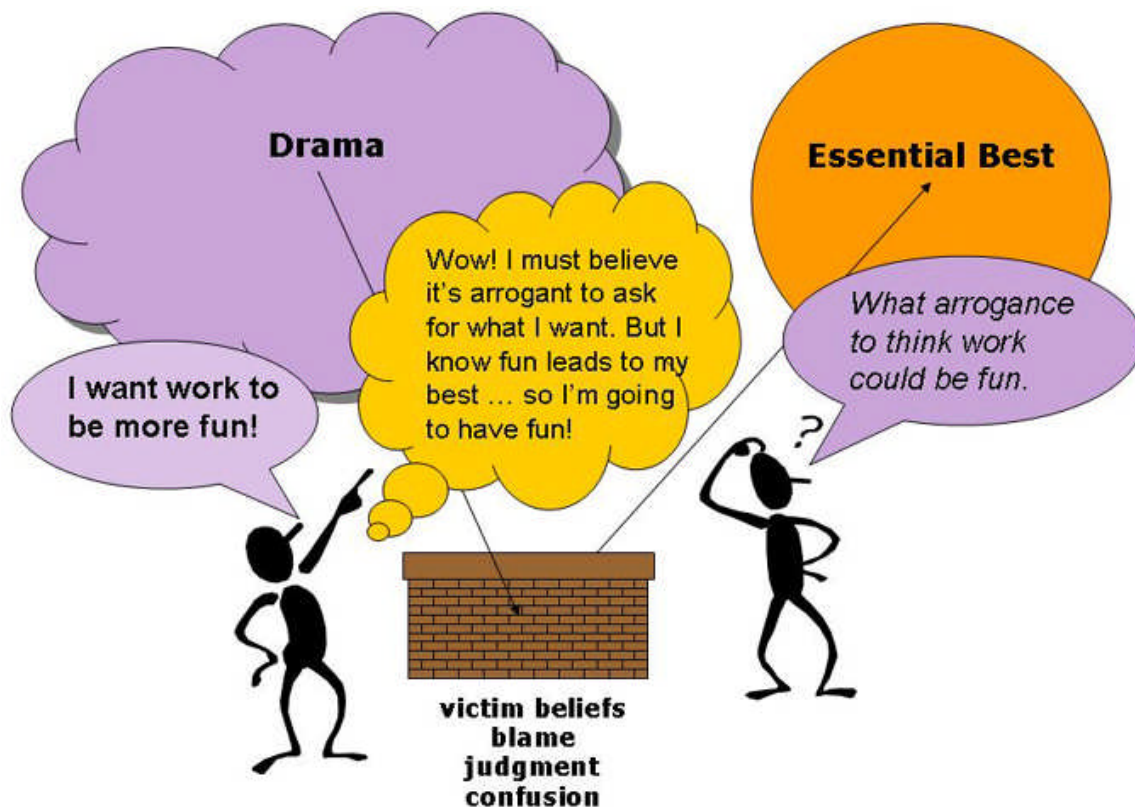
## IAM Touchstone #5: We're Always Working For Each Other

Our goal for IAM learning participants is for you to be continually exploring and enjoying your *Essential Best* and the *Essential Best* of others. With the **Energy Map™** we offer the idea that a 'Spark' of energy is a good indicator of whether or not you are investing your self in ways that bring out your best.

When we experience **Drama** with other people, instead of a Spark of energy we may instead 'Trigger' behaviors in each other that are not effective and/or emotions that don't feel good. One of our tendencies can be to make these people and situations around us bad or wrong.

We may want to avoid **Drama** because it doesn't feel good and that's mostly appropriate... except for when **Drama** is useful!

When creating the **Essence Map™**, Karen purposefully chose purple, her favorite color, for **Drama** – to give it honor and respect. When it's hard to see the brick walls we put between ourselves and our *Essential Best*, the people around us can be exactly the mirrors we need to see our **Drama** patterns – how we get in our own way:



The quickest way to discover the next level of your *Essential Best* is to know that the people around you are *always working for you* especially those who have triggered something big for you!

Noticing how we see others or how others see us can be a great way to identify our brick wall thoughts.

We are constantly either sparking or triggering each other. We have control over how we see and use these experiences.

By playing with the statement:

### **We are always working for each other**

we can instantly shift from being controlled by **Drama** to being in charge of **Drama** – leveraging the mirror **Drama** gives us on those pesky brick walls.

One of our favorite sayings as we're working through a bit of **Drama** is to ask:

### **How's s/he working for you?**

in a playful and challenging way. You never know. The person that 'caused' your **Drama** may be **exactly** the key to the next step in your career, the catalyst to help you clarify your wants, or the thorn in your side that unleashes your passions.

We're always working for each other is the key thought needed to maximize the learning and development we can achieve from simple, affordable, everyday situations.

Please know that we are **not** encouraging you to seek out or purposefully cause **Drama**, or to make fun of people of in the midst of **Drama**.

We **are** challenging you to become, more and more, the ultimate cause of everything you experience. The ability to see the benefits of our humanity to each other allows the conditions and situations around us to become gifts in discovering the *Essential Best* in ourselves.



## IAM Touchstone #6: Play Every Day

One of our favorite exercises is to ask people what it looks like, feels like, tastes like or smells like when they are at their best. People's answers are surprisingly similar, and always include fun, humor, play or similar words.

It's common sense: we're at our best when we're having fun.

The farther we get from humor and play, the farther we get from learning, growth and health. Seriousness can be like a wedge that drives us farther into a vortex of **Drama**. We like to say:

**Drama Happens  
Struggle is Optional  
Let Your Brilliance Shine!**

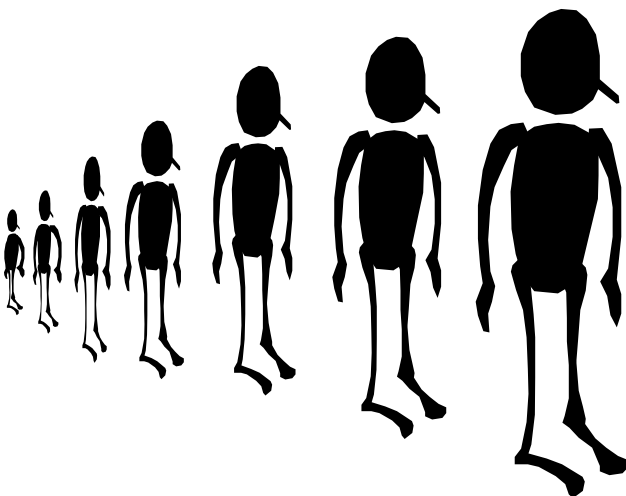


**Drama** is always an invitation to see more clearly something about ourselves and how we engage with the world. It does not need to be a mandate to struggle or

suffer. We like to decline invitations to struggle! Play is one of the best ways to ensure that **Drama** is an opportunity or challenge, rather than a way to create more **Drama** about the **Drama**!

Play can be frustrating, especially to those determined to be serious about **Drama**. So don't be surprised if people resist your playfulness.

And of course there are some things that require us to be serious. And yet even in dire situations, humor can be just the thing to light the way forward.



Everyday life is like a learning laboratory! When we use everyday situations as lessons perfectly designed just for us, we build confidence little by little, preparing for those bigger events.

We are all at our *Essential Best* when we are playful:

- We are more creative
- We see more possibilities
- We are more charismatic and enjoyable
- We are more likely to get what we want

Our challenge to you is to play every day, so you can let your brilliance shine and give all of us the gift of your *Essential Best*.