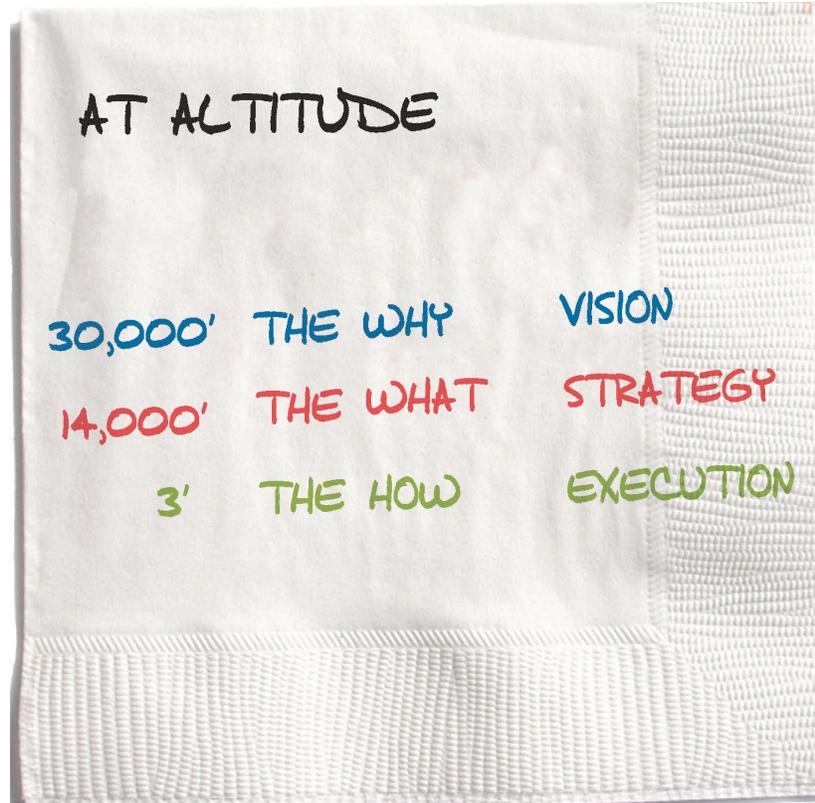


# THE ALTITUDE FRAMEWORK

Our For Impact *ALTITUDE* FRAMEWORK is one of our most referenced and utilized tools by our team, our coaches and our clients.



The Altitude Framework works great for **Presentations, Engagement Tools, Agendas/Meetings, Speaking, Strategic Plans** and **Action Plans**.

It's also a great Framework to respond to **questions**. (*"At what level/altitude is the best or appropriate response?"*)

And, it's a powerful **coaching model**. (*"Let's talk about this issue/topic at this particular level/altitude."*)

And, it's proven to be one of the most effective metaphors for working with your **Board** and **Volunteer Leadership!**

At For Impact, we use this for everything from keynote speeches to our website. It's a part of our mind mapping as we lay out our content, our guides and our books. We have color-coded it as **blue... red... green**. And, it allows us to talk 'shorthand' and reach decisions ten times faster than a normal process.

One of the reasons that this framing device has been so popular is its obvious **SIMPLICITY**. Everyone can understand the hierarchy of **WHY, WHAT** and **HOW...** and they can intuitively get the connection between **VISION, STRATEGY** and **EXECUTION**.

Here are some ways to help you understand and apply... **AT ALTITUDE**:

- **For Perspective**

30,000'	View from the Airplane	A Green Blur	Telescope	Re-Imagine
14,000	Top of Mountain	A Forest	Binoculars	Re-Design
3'	Nap of the Earth	A Tree	Glasses	Re-Allocate

- **At 30,000'**: An airplane's 'cruising' altitude. Plenty of blue sky, a great view, etc. (At 30,000', our brain even seems to work better!)

At this level/altitude, it's all about your **vision**, your **aspirations**, your **raison d'etre**. It's a place to think and talk about your **mission**, your **meaning**, your **values**. It's a place for guiding principles, big hairy audacious goals and definite chief aims (as Napoleon Hill calls them).

My good friend Christopher Celeste pointed out that leaders and visionaries have the ability to see the horizon. Obviously, you can't do that from 3'. There's a better view at 14,000'... but an absolute gorgeous view at 30,000'. You can see the curve of the earth, the rising and setting of the sun. The **perspective** at 30,000' is unmatched. This is where you can think about making Steve Jobs' "*dent in the universe*"... and dream about **changing the world!**

*"He who knows the 'WHY' of his existence... can bear almost any 'HOW'."*  
Viktor Frankl

- **At 14,000'**: It's the view and perspective from the 'top of the mountain'. (In the Rockies, they're called four-teeners). The air is thinner, soaring eagles and other raptors. If 30,000' is about **vision**... then 14,000' is about **focus**. A place to talk about Strategic Plans and Business Models and Funding Models, and finding clarity around Priorities.

At 14,000', Everything's A Project (EAP). Every project has goals, timelines, a team leader, a team, a budget, constraints, etc.

**Special Note:** This is also the right place to add the 'WHO' to the WHAT. For me, 'WHO' **not** 'HOW' is the most important decision on a project. This is where assignments need to be made, team or project leaders selected, responsibility and accountability determined, etc.

- **At 3'**: Literally, it's 'boots on the ground', 'feet on the street'. It's tactical, it's **execution** and it's **action!**

*"There's an art of finding one's direction in the lower regions by the memory of*

*what one saw higher up. When one can no longer see, one can at least still know."*  
Rene Daumal

- **On Boards:** ALTITUDE really helps determine ATTITUDE. Here's how you can use this Framework to create dialogue with your board around their relationship with your organization.
  - Your COLLECTIVE BOARD should be engaged at the **30,000' level** (the WHY) around VISION and PURPOSE and MISSION.
  - INDIVIDUAL Board Members (CHAMPION) can be engaged with you at the **14,000' level** around STRATEGY (the what) needs to be done. They should be **specifically** asked to help within their own areas of **expertise** and **experience**.
  - **No** Board, nor Board Member, should be engaged with you or your organization **at 3'!!!** (the HOW).

*"Our Board is AFRAID OF HEIGHTS!!!"*

Irish Social Entrepreneur

\*We can't tell you how many times organizational leaders and staff have come up and said, *"My Board is at 3" (inches)! They even tell us what kind of sodas should go in the soda machine!"*

While we primarily use this for Boards, there's a case to be made that no one should be dealing with issues at 3"! Micro-micro-managing. Sweating the really, really small stuff, etc.

**Action:** Review this ALTITUDE FRAMEWORK with your board. Encourage them to get and stay 'HIGH'. ☺

- **Entrepreneurial Application:** ALTITUDE is a great way for an entrepreneur to answer these 3 critical questions:
  - WHY... are you in business?
  - WHAT... business are you in?
  - HOW... do you make money?

Social Entrepreneurs can use this Framework to talk with angel investors, recruit talent or even organize the Business Model and Plan.

- **Latitude.** A small shift in the first two letters of 'ALTITUDE' opens up an entirely different way of looking at this... LATITUDE. Many of our Frameworks are laid out horizontally, still using our blue, red, green color code. Impact Drives Income. Think Big, Build Simple, Act Now. Cast A Vision, Staff A Vision, Fund A Vision.

- **Engagement Tools:** While there have been many different uses and permutations of this ‘thinking’ **at altitude**... one of our favorite uses is for a **one-on-one** presentation.

All of our Engagement Tools are designed **at altitude**.

30,000’	Why	Purpose	(Blue)
14,000’	What	Priorities	(Red)
3’	How	Plan	(Green)

We have used this with hundreds of organizations on thousands of visits. It works.

Here is a deeper explanation of the power of ‘altitude’ on a visit/presentation:

\*\*\*The Altitude Framework is a vital, integral, critical part of our presentation FLOW. First, the WHY. Once they’re on board... move to the WHAT. Once they understand the WHAT... it’s onto the HOW.

**Note:** Nick Fellers has a really great way to use ‘altitude’ on the presentation. When training or coaching, Nick makes this very clear: When in doubt... when challenged... when questioned... **ALWAYS GO BACK UP TO 30,000’!**

**Get ‘buy-in’ at the highest level.** As you make the Case for Support, the prospect/potential investor needs to understand and acknowledge their acceptance of the ‘blue’ PURPOSE (Vision, Message, etc.) of the organization. Sometimes this is “*You had me at hello.*” (Renee to Tom Cruise) Other times, it may take the entire first visit to get them to understand and agree that this is an important cause and case. Regardless, it doesn’t make any sense to talk about Priorities or the Plan or how they can help if they don’t ‘get it’ at the highest level. To put this in another way, there can be no ‘dissent’ on the descent! I think of this as kind of the opposite of getting the ‘bends’. If a diver ascends too quickly, they get a case of the ‘bends’. It’s painful and many times life-threatening. During a presentation, the prospect can get the ‘reverse-bends’ if you descend too rapidly. (“*Hello. Thanks for seeing me. Here’s our campaign. Can you give \$100,000?*”)

**‘Permission to Proceed’.** We have actually incorporated this specific terminology into the presentation. (It’s actually the words used to complete a ‘transfer’ on a high ropes challenge course!) “*It seems like you’re fully engaged with both our Mission and our Message. Would it be okay (permission to proceed) to go deeper and talk about our Priorities and then our Plan to make all this happen???*”

**Altitude is not always top-down or hierarchical.** You can ‘enter’ at any level. You can focus on any level. You can travel up and down... and even side to side, especially when you’re using an Engagement Tool.

*“You cannot deal with the WHAT, the HOW, the WHO... until you totally understand the ‘WHY’.”* Suddes

**Closing Thought: ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING!** Attitude really **is** everything! And, your ALTITUDE effects your ATTITUDE. If you’re always at 3’, it’s hard to maintain a positive, visionary, can-do attitude.

I would encourage you to use this metaphor / framework as a way to increase your impact (personally or organizationally).

*“See your life from the heightened perspective is more a matter of attitude not altitude.”* Jeff Salz

*“The ultimate human freedom: the ability to choose one’s attitude at a given set of circumstances.”* Viktor Frankl

*“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their minds (attitude/thinking).”* William James