INSIDE THE BOOK · FROM CHAPTER THREE

The Ninth *Executive*

A field study in the physics of presence.

An excerpt from the book by Michael J. Gonzales

Early in my tenure at HP, my boss, who was the Chief of Staff, handed me a task that seemed deceptively simple.

"Take the two interns," she said, "and interview the nine executives who lead this organization. Ask them all the same question: *What does your team do and what are your goals for this year? Then report back to me.*"

I didn't realize it at the time, but I was about to witness a live-action field guide to failure. I was about to see a version of the "8 Archetypes of Dissonance" in their natural habitat.

IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT

The Archetypes of Dissonance

The first eight interviews provided a masterclass in what I call "Archetypes of Dissonance." These high-stakes executives were hiding in plain sight. They were narrators trapped in a deficit mindset, obscuring their lack of resonance with a smoke screen of technical jargon and defensive bluster.

THE DEMOLITIONIST

One executive walked in looking like he'd just stepped off a private jet and was already late for a better one. "What are we doing here, boys?" he asked impatiently. When we stumbled to answer his question he smacked the table, "Come on! I've got bigger fish to fry today." His "flashing sign" said: *I am more important than you and the mission.* He wasn't building resonance; he was building a wall.

THE EVERYTHING BURGER

This leader didn't present a strategy; they presented a junk drawer. By cataloging every task the team delivered, they effectively stood for nothing. If there was a flashing sign on their forehead, it would have read: *"I am terrified of being irrelevant, so I've decided to be everything to everyone. Please don't look closely enough to see that I'm actually nowhere."*

THE DATA DUMPER

Then came the data-dumper. She launched into a PhD dissertation about marketing databases, data integrators, and the "interfacing of aggregated contacts into a data lake." We were in a lake, alright — and drowning in information without a paddle.

By the end of the eighth interview, the interns and I weren't just exhausted, we were buried in rubble. We had a mountain of data but zero architecture. We couldn't quite point to where the blueprints failed, but we could feel the floor giving way beneath every word.

THE OUTLIER

The Ninth Walks In

Then, the Ninth Executive walked in.

The atmosphere in the room shifted before he even sat down. He didn't lead with his title or his laundry list. He led with *curiosity*. He asked us a few clarifying questions: "How are our newest hire and two interns doing? How can I make this time most valuable for your project?"

He was calibrating the frequency. Once he understood the "who," he launched into the "what."

It wasn't a presentation; it was a demonstration of pure Resonance. He traded the "Data Lake" for a clear stream of purpose, showing us not just the work, but the soul behind it. By stripping away the camouflage, he made himself visible. He tuned his frequency to ours, making us feel that this wasn't just another meeting, but the most important moment of his day.

We went from being three newbies on a boring assignment to three co-workers enamored with a vision of what we instantly believed we could create together. He didn't just give us an answer; he gave us a reason to care.

THE INEVITABILITY OF RESONANCE

A Different Game

That day, I placed a mental bet. I looked at the Ninth Executive and thought: *This person is playing a different game.* He wasn't just "good at his job." He was an architect of resonance. He understood the Principle of Transference; that the feeling he held about his work would be the feeling we walked away with. If he felt conviction, we would feel belief.

The result was inevitable. By the end of the year, he hadn't just mesmerized three newcomers; he had outperformed every one of his peers by a landslide. Today, while the others have likely faded into the middle-

management ether, he is the CMO of a thriving AI startup.

> *I could feel it in the first thirty seconds. It wasn't magic. It was the "flashing sign" on his head, which read: I know where we are going. I know why it matters. I'm inviting you to come with me and you can trust me.*

Resonance is the ultimate competitive advantage, yet it remains elusive for those trapped in the "Deficit" mindset. The Ninth Executive proved that you don't need to hide behind a wall of metrics or tear others down to be a giant.

KEY LESSONS · THE RESONANCE BRIEF

The Clarity Test

If you cannot explain what your team does to an intern in three minutes, you don't have a strategy, you have a "data lake" — and your audience may be drowning in it.

Congruence over Posturing

Authority is not something you claim; it is something you create through your belief in the message.

The Transference Rule

Your audience will never feel more excited about your message than you do. You are the thermostat, not the thermometer.

> *I tell my clients: "You don't need to be a different person. You just need to stop leaving the best version of yourself in the parking lot."*

Your move, *Architect.*

Resonance isn't a skill you buy — it's a state you've already lived. File your own Field Report: Hunting the 9th Executive and capture the three words of your Resonance Blueprint.

Then go deeper: the full blueprint exercises and the complete build live in the book.

architectingresonance.com/excerpts.html · mike@architectingresonance.com

© 2026 Michael J. Gonzales. From *The Resonance Playbook: How Leaders Turn Clarity into Action*. This excerpt is shared for personal use — please don't reproduce without permission.