

Business Reimagined #65

The Science of Right Thinking with David Bayer

People are operating at a *small fraction* of their full capacity because they're living in stories that are **preventing** them from taking action.

BUSINESS REIMAGINED

Danny Iny David Bayer

In 2014 David launched the Powerful Living Experience, a program that transforms the lives of individuals and organizations through David's unique processes and beliefs-based methodologies. David is currently focused on making the Powerful Living Experience and the Higher Power System available to the recovery community through online programs, private workshops, his books and blog, speaking engagements and the Powerful Living Experience Live Event twice each year.



Voiceover: This is Business Reimagined. Every week, we talk with thought leaders and revolutionaries who are reimagining the way business is done in their industries, like today's guest, David Bayer.

David: So your beliefs produce your thoughts, your thoughts are in alignment with your feelings, your feelings produce your actions. In fact, you can almost think of feelings as fuel for actions. The type of feeling you have will produce a similar type of action even in action, right? A feeling of worry, anxiety, and overwhelm can lead to inaction and your actions produce your results.

Voiceover: This is Business Reimagined with Danny Iny.

Danny: Have you ever gotten to that point where you asked, "Is this it?" Have you experienced the frustration of being successful, but not feeling successful? David Bayer is an entrepreneur, speaker, writer, seminar leader, and coach. By all appearances, he's had it all for nearly two decades, but in truth, he didn't. David had a dark secret that nearly destroyed his life. David's entrepreneurial path to self-destruction and redemption started in college.

David: I launched a business that sold things like posters, bean bags, lava lamps, inflatable furniture to college kids and that was the beginning of my building businesses online, which I've been doing for two decades now.

Danny: During those two decades, David launched multiple businesses, the third being his big break. He learned SEO and launched what would become a six-figure lead generation company. From there he was able to secure millions of dollars of venture capital, but deep down, despite success after success, something was wrong with David.

David: I thought I was going to get my life back. Because I was working sixty, seventy, eighty hours a week, my family wondered what happened to me, my friends wondered what happened to me, and as you and I both know, it's a trap. At each stage of entrepreneurial growth, unless you really start to manage your lifestyle design and the way that you want to be living, you can consistently be caught in that working all the time.

Danny: David fell into that trap. He was working outrageous hours, but there was no balance for him as he chased success after success. Things only got worse.

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David: I was binge drinking, I was addicted to drugs, and I was spending a good portion of my time checking out of my life because inside, I felt very unsuccessful. There was one weekend where I asked myself a life-changing question, which was, "Is this it? Is the idea that you become an entrepreneur, you do something you're passionate about, and you're consistently chasing the next business success and missing the magic moments of your life?"

Danny: David was at rock bottom so he sought the help of a therapist who recommended he work a twelve-step program, so David did. To his amazement, his entire life started falling into place piece by piece. One of those pieces would form the foundation for his life's work.

David: I was at an airport. I was going to meet with some lead vendors, I had a board meeting with our investors the following week, and I found this book at a bookstore at Miami International Airport. It was called "Awakening the Buddha Within" by Lama Surya Das and Buddha had these eight little steps. I thought, "This is pretty incredible. I'm working this twelve-step framework, there are these eight steps that Buddha talks about that are about how to live life and not suffer." What Buddha said, which was really profound was there's actually a right way to think and a wrong way to think.

Danny: David has come to agree that there is a right way to think and we'll dig into that in a few moments. First, it's important to realize that there is a method, a science, and hard evidence behind it.

David: I want to keep this conversation grounded in the science because I think that's a big part of the distinction between our work. Everything really comes back to the brain. Ultimately, the meaning that you give things in your life, the decisions that you've made about life, about yourself, about money, about business, about your industry, about competition, about your relationships, it does become your reality by the nature of how the brain functions. The right way to think is to be giving an empowering meaning to everything that you're experiencing on a moment by moment basis.

Danny: In other words, you're already giving things in your life meaning, it just might not be a meaning that is fulfilling or serving you. You have the power to change that meaning by reframing your experiences if you just allow yourself to do it.

David:

A lot of people don't give themselves permission to reframe, right? Let me take a step back. When we're born, we're born with about a hundred billion neurons and about twenty five billion synaptic connections, so the entire structure of your neural net is not built out by the time you're born. By the time you're about seven years old, you still have about a hundred billion neurons, but you have a quadrillion synaptic connections.

So what happened? Well what happened was you started to experience life. Moment by moment, you recorded every experience through these five data collectors that you have, right? Your sight, your sound, your smell, your touch, your taste. The other thing that you recorded at every experience that you had was the meaning that you're attributing to the experience. Let's say for example at three or four years old, you heard your parents arguing and you overheard that they were arguing about money. You would record that experience.

We'd actually see growth of neurosynaptic connections in your brain to record that experience like a hard drive and then the meaning you may gave it is "Money's hard to make" or "Money causes problems" or "Money comes but it never stays". What happens in every future moment is that the brain basically says, "This new experience that we're having as we're collecting data through our five senses, how does this data set match up to what we already know?"

It goes, "Oh, money. Hard to make. Money causes problems." If we're not conscious of the way that we're viewing the world, we get caught in this psycho-cybernetic loop where we're just perceiving the same thing over and over and over again, even though it may not be the case. The classic example is a dog attack. If you're a kid and you got attacked by a dog, what the brain does is every time you experience a dog in the future, the brain says, "Dog is dangerous" because that's the meaning you gave the experience of dog the first time around.

Even if the dog isn't dangerous, the brain will actually interpret the different movements or sounds of the dog as dangerous. Reframing would be being in a present moment with a dog and saying a dog's not dangerous, but the challenge is that most people don't understand how the human being operates so they never give themselves permission to do that type of reframing, if that makes sense.

Danny:

It does. So in the context of the world of education, which is more my wheelhouse, right, a concept that is talked about a lot is scaffolding.

David:

Right.

Danny: New learning is built on top of old learning. What I'm hearing is that it's not just about the new learning, the new experience because reframing the new experience today is kind of a cosmetic thing. It's a thing that people... you can say it, but you don't really believe it if it doesn't line up with the whole foundation that you've already built. Is that accurate?

David: Absolutely accurate.

Danny: How do you fix that?

David: How do you fix that?

Danny: Well, yeah because that sounds like if I've spent a lifetime building a lousy foundation of perceptions and beliefs, it raises a broader question of, "How do you even know if your beliefs are correct? How do you know if your perceptions are serving you?" It can feel like a real can of worms to suddenly dive into, but let's assume you're like, "They were wrong and I want to fix it" and all that. How do you go about doing that? It sounds like you need a positive thinking lobotomy.

David: Well, it sort of is. It's this idea of you've been believing one thing and then what's happened is you've enrolled the brain to only pay attention to it, right? Now you have this entire body of evidence that supports the lousy decision that you've been living in that's not congruent with the life that you're actually trying to create, which by the way, is what's causing you stress and anxiety and overwhelm and suffering in your life. Buddha would call that unintelligent thinking.

What we need to do is we need to, A, become aware of the fact that we've been believing this thing. We have to make the invisible visible and there's a way to do that. Once we become conscious of the fact that we've been believing that dogs are dangerous or that money's hard to make and we realize it's not congruent with the life that we want to have so we need to shift it, then there's some work to be done.

All that's happened is you've had experiences in your life where, again, just to stick with the example, where money wasn't hard to make, it's just that you haven't paid attention to it because it's not where the attention of the brain has been trained. In the work that we do with our clients, we kind of have to go back and we have to find examples where money wasn't hard to make and then we need to begin to put our attention on that and reinforce that.

Again, the brain doesn't know the difference between imagination and what you're actually experiencing. We can actually create new neural growth just by putting our attention consistently on old evidence that we had that we weren't paying attention to that money's easy to make. Then throughout our day what we do is we need to really acknowledge and celebrate when we have experiences where money is easy to make. It's retraining the brain that the dog is actually friendly. As you do that over time, you literally shift the way that you perceive the world.

Danny:

This reminds me a lot of an exercise I learned from Dr. Srikumar Rao. He calls it the alternate reality exercise. You basically decide. Whatever your current fundamental beliefs are that are not serving you, decide what the alternate reality, the alternate beliefs would be. For a period of time, you collect evidence supporting those beliefs and you ignore evidence that doesn't, so essentially doing that retraining.

Now what's interesting is that when I went through this exercise ... and I saw this with other people doing it as well, the biggest challenge was identifying those beliefs that aren't serving you to begin with because they tend to be baked so deeply into our worldview and our way of looking at things, they become invisible to us. They're not like, "Hey, there's this belief I have that's bad for me", it's like, "There is reality." You don't even realize that it's a perception. How can someone get the fact that the way they see the world which they think is just that, is the world, is actually a lens or a filter they're putting onto it? How do you develop that awareness to begin with?

David:

It's such a great question. If I'm hearing the question properly, it does get to that "How do you become conscious of what you're unconscious of?"

Danny:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). I think so, yeah.

David:

Okay. Our reactions to the experiences that we're having in life are in the moment that we react to an experience that we don't prefer, that we don't enjoy. That reaction that we're having is actually our unconscious becoming conscious. This is where it probably gets into the world that you get a little uncomfortable with because the suggestion, and it's not the suggestion I'm making.

If you look at everybody who we refer to as one name because they're so well-known as powerful, creative, intelligent people, from Einstein to Edison to Gandhi to Buddha to Thoreau

to Aristotle to Socrates to Jesus, they disagreed on a lot of things. They agreed on one thing and one thing only and Buddha said it in his way when he said, "The mind is everything. What you think, you become."

The only thing if you really go and study all these people that they said is that what you think is the effect is actually the cause. What you think is the cause is actually the effect. In other words, your inner world is actually what's creating your external experiences. Your question is, how do we become aware of what we're not aware of? The answer is we need to start paying attention to our reactions to our experiences in life. When we notice our reaction to our experiences in life, that's when we become conscious of our unconscious mind.

Danny: Let's go a level deeper. Conceptually, that makes a lot of sense. Practically, how does that work?

David: Yeah, so let me think of an example. I think about a business meeting and I think about being in a business meeting. Someone proposes a project and someone else at the table says, "Here's why I think that project can't work." I think about my reaction to that. Let's say I'm proposing a project and someone says, "Listen, here's why I don't think that project's going to work." My reaction becomes, "Why are people always trying to sabotage my ideas?"

I need to become aware of my reaction to my experiences and realize that I believe that people are always trying to sabotage my ideas. When you start to realize that your reaction to the experiences you're having is the revealing of your unconscious mind. It's a little bit tricky, Danny, because you have to understand the entire body of work. You have to understand how the human being operates.

You have to understand that the unconscious mind is driving your behavior, then you have to understand that you have to become conscious of your unconscious mind and that the way to do that is to start paying attention to your reaction to things. You have to understand that you can actually change the way that you're viewing things, that decisions or interpretation or framing is flexible. That's why so many people get stuck because they're not aware of how all of these different distinctions tie together into a new way of managing your reality and changing the way that you view the world.

Danny: This sounds kind of red pill/blue pill, right? It sounds like it's not the kind of thing you can dip your toe in and "Let's try one little thing and see if it works." It's either you're all in and doing the work and buying into and it works or it doesn't. You can't just dabble. Is that accurate?



David:

I think so. I think there are a lot of people that are dabbling in personal development. The personal development 1.0 is positive thinking. It's distinctions like "Just believe" or "Have vision" or "Imagination is powerful", but it doesn't tie back into how we function, especially at a neurophysiological level. The brain is this extraordinary technology and so if you really go all in on it, I think you can create extraordinary shifts in your life.

We see people who have done that. I listen as I attend different events and I'm speaking on stages and people tell their stories. For the most part, the big shift came in their life when they got involved in personal development, when they started becoming aware of their inner world and questioning the way that they were viewing the world and then aligning the way they're viewing the world, really the way they want the world to be.

Most people don't really buy into that. They think it sounds woo woo. "Wait a minute I can't just give a meaning to the world that fits my needs." If you look at all the great spiritual teachings and what the great philosophers talked about and if you look at the nature of the brain and the way that reality is, there is a conclusion there that, yes, you can. In fact, the most successful people in the world and the entrepreneurs who are having success are doing that, whether they're conscious of it or not.

Danny:

I want to dig into a choice of words that you just made, which is "kind of interpreting life however I want." Those weren't the words, but that was the gist of it.

David:

Sure.

Danny:

I think that's where a lot of people would have resistance. Whatever happens, there are positive potential interpretations, and there are negative potential interpretations. There are positive and negative potential interpretations that are plausible and then there are the ones that feel like they're a stretch. It's like you're really reaching. You're really like, "This is an exercise in imagination or creative thinking more than it is a realistic interpretation of reality."

I think that's where a lot of people who come at this with cautious skepticism will say, "Okay, now you're just, now this is nonsense." How far do we need to be willing to push our perspective and our perception beyond what is currently our – let's call it our comfort zone? Because the challenge of course is that what seems plausible now is completely a function of what your current perspective is.

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David: Well, I think we can always find examples that are extreme, right? That may test the model of what we're talking about. I think what's important is that we understand that the brain works with images. Whatever images we create in our brain, the brain doesn't know the difference between that and what we experience so it'll build neurosynaptic connections that represent that experience.

Those connections in our brain determine the thoughts and the ideas that we, you could say, attract or manufacture, but the thoughts and the ideas that we have. Your thinking is aligned with the mental images that you're creating and your perception of the world becomes aligned with the mental images that you're creating. Moment by moment, this meaning that we're giving to the experiences that we're having in our life are creating images. The brain is like this heat seeking missile, right?

It's like the moment you decide that you're going to speak on twelve stages this year, you enroll your brain to accomplish that. The moment that you make a decision that money's hard to make, you enroll your brain in proving that out. The moment you make a decision that dogs are dangerous, you enroll your brain in making that happen for you. Most people are not conscious of how they're enrolling or training their brain. Now I don't know what type of extreme example you'd be talking about. I'm certainly happy to give my thoughts on one if you have an example.

Danny: Well, so here's an easy one, right? Let's say that as a child, I was attacked by a dog.

David: Yep.

Danny: Right? There is a perspective of that was an isolated incident and that's not how dogs are, then there's also a perspective of, "That dog was attacking me to be nice to me. That dog was attacking me." At that point, it kind of becomes a stretch. It's like, "Come on, who are we kidding?"

David: Got it; trying to give a meaning that it was a pleasurable experience that you were attacked by a dog.

Danny: For example.

David: Yeah. I think it's particular to every individual how far they want to stretch the frame on the reframe. The challenge for most people is that they have one experience in their life that's not congruent with an empowering future, but they relive that experience over and over and over again. Someone will have one bad talk and then never get on stage again because the conclusion becomes that they're no good at speaking. That's really what we're talking about.

If you look at society today, if you look at entrepreneurship, people are operating at a small fraction of their full capacity because they're living in stories that are preventing them from taking action. It's preventing them from living courageously, it's preventing them from having faith in themselves, self-confidence, self-love, self-acknowledgement and it's all because of these stories that have been created.

I think what's different about what we talk about is these stories aren't just stories, they're the structure of your brain. If we go back and look at what we can do to change your brain, we change your life. What we've found is that that's really; if we were going to sum it down to one thing, it's changing the decisions that you've been making unconsciously that aren't congruent with what you're consciously trying to accomplish in the world.

Danny: To what extent are those decisions within the control of your conscious mind? I guess what I'm asking is, how much is the way you think a function of your experience which you can just kind of meander through unintentionally or be intentional but crafting in a way that supports you and how much of it is essentially a function of genetics? Nature as opposed to nurture? Some people seem to be just wired to think negatively. What's the balance there?

David: Yeah. Honestly I don't know, Danny, if it's genetics versus environmental influence, but the way I look at it is that everybody had different programs installed in them before the prefrontal cortex was fully formed and you could make conscious decisions. Up until about the age of seven, other people's beliefs became your beliefs. In tandem with that are in the moment unconscious conclusions you came to as a four year old when your little buddy didn't meet you by the drinking fountain and you decided you can't trust people.

What's happened is it's formed the structure of your brain and it's determined how you think and how you perceive the world. Unless you're conscious of it, in every moment, your brain is simply viewing the present moment through the lens of the past. It's like that movie "Groundhog Day" with Bill Murray.

At the point that you become aware that "Wait a minute, I am literally having this experience through the lens of the past. Is there another way that I can interpret this present moment that might be more empowering? Not that the dog that attacked me is friendly, but that maybe failure isn't inevitable for me. Maybe it's not that I'm unloved, maybe it's not that relationships don't work out, maybe it's not that there's no good men or women out there. Maybe I can come up with a more empowering reframe." If you can, what's so fascinating is we understand the brain as it starts to manipulate ... It starts to change your future.

Danny:

This makes a lot of sense and honestly, I'm feeling inspired to dig deeper into your work. I want to say for anyone who's listening to this, I've looked at David's work, other people on my team have looked at David's work, it's really top notch. I'm not one to put a stamp of approval on most personal development type stuff because often it is wishful thinking and it's not based on science, etc, etc. David's stuff really is a cut above, so I highly recommend it.

David, the question that I'm having right now is ... Let's say I'm onboard, the way we interpret our reality is a huge part of how we choose to then act on that reality. It's a very important part of how we learn to get better and we improve and create a better future, but if you take that internal work, there's also the "external work" of developing practical, tangible skills of doing work in the business or whatever area of life you're looking to improve.

How can someone who's busy and has to prioritize, how would you guide them to decide where to invest their time and energy? I see some people who they're lacking a lot of practical, tangible skills, their business is not going anywhere in particular, and they're very focused on a lot of inner game stuff. Part of me thinks like, "If you just did more work on your business, things would move forward a lot more." How do you balance that?

David:

Well, first Danny, I love this conversation because I appreciate your – as I listen between the lines – I appreciate your perspective, which is, "Listen, you can't think yourself into success. You have to be able to take action." The mechanics, the tactics, the strategies, and the execution are really important and that something has happened over the last fifteen, sixteen, seventeen years especially as "The Secret" came out where people can think their way into prosperity. It's a balance.

One of the things that I tell my students is ... Because we teach a lot of tactics and strategies. I'm a strategist at my core, I've been an entrepreneur for twenty years. What I found was that I could teach people the tactics, the strategies, and the mechanics, but if they didn't have their



mind set properly, they didn't execute on them. I believe that if you get your mind set properly, you're always going to eventually find the strategy you need and execute on it because you'll try and fail and recalibrate and try and fail again.

I do want to speak for a moment to this thinking your way into success. I remember when the movie "The Secret" came out and all of a sudden, people were thinking about a million dollars and thinking about their favorite sports car and thinking about their favorite shoes or handbags. The million dollars and the sports car and the shoes and handbags didn't show up and so people believed that this idea that thoughts create your reality was BS.

What I found is this: Most people aren't really aware of what they're thinking. While they want the million dollars, while they want the sports car, while they're putting their attention on the fancy shoes or handbags, what's really going on that they're thinking at an unconscious level is, "Why don't I have it yet? How come he or she has it and I don't have it? I'm not good enough. Am I ever going to have it?"

That's actually the predominant pattern. We have to get our mindset straight. If we do that, then we need to move on to the next piece which you spoke to, which is the [00:25:00] tactics, the strategies, the mechanics, and taking action. There's a part of the human being operating system that I call the five primary drivers. The five primary drivers says this. It says, "Whatever you believe - dogs are dangerous, money's hard to make - in the present moment, that's going to determine how you think. Your thoughts can only be aligned with the core beliefs."

If you believe that you're not good enough when you're at a social gathering, you're going to be having thoughts of "People don't like me." Your thoughts produce your feelings and it's always like produces like. If you're having thoughts of "People don't like me", you're going to feel anxious or some other emotion that's tied to not being good enough. So your beliefs produce your thoughts, your thoughts are in alignment with your feelings, your feelings produce your actions. In fact, you can almost think of feelings as fuel for actions.

The type of feeling you have will produce a similar type of action even in action, right? A feeling of worry, anxiety, and overwhelm can lead to inaction and your actions produce your results. Oftentimes, we teach people as trainers the tools, the tactics, and the strategies, but they're never able to execute at the action level and that's because of an issue with mindset. I spoke to someone the other day and they said, "Every time I sit down ..." They had the "I'm not good enough" syndrome.

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They know what they need to do to grow their business. They have to sit down and they have to make sales calls, but they don't because they believe that they're not good enough and people are going to reject them. Even if they do get the client, they're not going to be able to deliver effectively on them and they're going to let the client down. That's all mindset stuff. Ultimately what it does is it prevents people from executing on the strategies that they already have.

Danny:

This is really interesting for me because, and this is not my strength and working with people who are blocked by a lot of head trash is just not my, it's not really my wheelhouse. When someone comes to me and says, "I know what I need to do, but I'm not doing it because I lack the confidence. I need to go work on my confidence", to me, that feels like avoidance.

To me, I kind of want to shake them and tell them, "Look, you're not going to be confident in advance of doing it. You're going to step out of your comfort zone, you're going to do it, you're going to stumble, but eventually you're going to get it right. Then you're going to have confidence, which is legitimate and not some made up feeling." Am I way off base with that?

David:

I don't think you're way off base on that. What occurred to me is I'd love to have you on one of our group calls so you can see actually what we do. No, we need to figure out specifically what is the unconscious decision that this person is making about themselves or about their business or about success or failure and we need to show them that that's just not true and give them a reframe. Once they have the reframe, they can move forward.

I don't think they need to go out and work on their confidence, I think they need to become aware of what they're not aware of and then realize that they can reframe it. That's it. Once you reframe it, once you reestablish a new belief, it changes the way you think, it changes the way you feel, it changes the actions that you're taking, and it produces different results. That's it and that's why I love working at that foundational level of beliefs or what I call "decisions".

The reason why I call them decisions, Danny, is because for years, I was trying to do belief change work. Right? What do you do when you believe that you can't trust people in business? How do you just believe that you can just trust people in business? There was this two millimeter distinction that I realized, which was that beliefs are decisions. They're unconscious decisions that we've been making.

Now with decisions, I knew what to do. If I've decided that I can't trust people in business, I realized that I can just decide that I can trust people in business. Now I have to look at my

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history and say, "Well, were there times that I could trust people in business? Yeah, there was this guy and this woman and that guy. I wasn't really paying attention to that." Now what about all those times that I got screwed in business? Then I have to go, "Well, was I really screwed or is that just a story?"

This is, Danny, where I think it's hard because it does tie in these universal principles, this idea that you're being guided and that there's an intelligent plan and an unfolding. You have to give some sort of empowering context to the crap that happened in the past. If you think it's just crap and you're worried that the crap can happen again, you're not going to take action.

This is a much larger conversation and I think the reason why we've been so successful in the change work with entrepreneurs is because we do combine the neuroscience with the psychology. I don't like spirituality as much. I like traditions or principles. I love spirituality, but if you combine all three of those things, then people can have a platform or a framework for creating rapid change.

Danny: I think isn't it Einstein who said "The most important decision you'll ever make is whether we live in a benevolent universe or not."?

David: Yes.

Danny: Yeah. I'm with you. I think his choice of words is interesting and hopefully I'm not misquoting him, but I think the choice of words is interesting is that he called it a decision, right? It's not about whether the universe is benevolent as an objective reality, it's about whether that's how you choose to experience it.

David: Correct, because you have this extraordinary technology between your ears that will actually fabricate that reality. Elon Musk said something about two months ago. He said in his opinion, there's a one in a billion chance that we're not living in a simulation. I believe that that simulation, the quality of the simulation, is based on the decisions you're making which are structuring the technology between your ears which is manufacturing your experience.

Audra: That was David Bayer reminding you that you have the power to reframe your experiences to change your reality. How do you become aware of perceptions you don't realize you have? Pay attention to your gut reactions to things. Acknowledge them and try to uncover without judgment the underlying reason, then figure out if that reason is a truth or if it's a result of you



training your brain to believe something that doesn't support the life you want to live. You can learn more about David and his work at davidbayer.com. That's davidbayer.com, where you can get Mind Hack for free, which includes the e-book, blueprint, and training. This has been Business Reimagined with Danny Iny. Join us next time as we talk with Yanik Silver.

Yanik:

It is really about this coming business shift that really I think can change everything. Forbes.com quoted me on this idea that within the next four to seven years, that companies without a genuine or core impact of what they're doing are going to be at a competitive disadvantage. I see this happening from the inside out and the outside in and it's a way to really, I'll say, align the true soul of what your business is with almost what you are meant to put out there in the world. That gets your customers wanting to buy more and spread the message and what you're doing gets your team members so engaged.

Voiceover:

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