

One Question to Change the World: Epic or Banal?

We live in a world that feels fake.
Our jobs, services, and democracy seem to be
failing. The environment is in a death spiral.

In private, we all admit something is deeply wrong,
but in public, we pretend everything is normal.

We are told not to take it personally, to focus on
“systemic change.” This is a lie designed to keep us passive.

The truth is, breaking the fake world is* personal.
It begins with one decision, sparked by one question.

EPIC

BANAL



The Fake World and the Silent Bystander

Everyone knows our current path is unsustainable, but no one dares to say the emperor has no clothes. This silence is the essence of the Fake World. It's a collective agreement to ignore a terrifying reality.

This isn't new. During WWII, German citizens watched trains full of people head to concentration camps. They saw the smoke from the chimneys. But because their neighbors kept tending their gardens, they went back to tending their own gardens.

Today, our 'garden tending' is doom-scrolling. We are watching our own children being loaded onto the train. The oven is the overheating atmosphere. The silence is the same.



The Three Actors on the World Stage: Zillionaire, Banal, Epic

To understand the Fake World, we need a new vocabulary.

Human moral development generally follows three stages.

We can map these stages onto three archetypes that explain who holds power, why the majority complies, and how we can break free.

- * **The Zillionaire:** The selfish, power-hungry actor. (Pre-Conventional Morality)
- * **The Banal:** The passive herd animal, the everyday bystander. (Conventional Morality)
- * **The Epic:** The one who dares to be honest and just. (Post-Conventional Morality)



The Zillionaire Mindset: Pre-Conventional Morality

The Zillionaire operates at the moral level of a small child. This “pre-conventional” stage is not defined by principles, but by a simple calculation: “Can I get away with this?” The only deterrent is the threat of punishment versus the size of the reward.

Analogy: A toddler deciding whether to steal a cookie from the jar. If the punishment is just a scolding, the cookie is worth it. If it’s a spanking, maybe not.

The Zillionaire isn’t necessarily a person; it’s any entity (a corporation, a leader with immunity) powerful enough to know there will be no consequences for its actions. They can operate on a global scale with the moral reasoning of a toddler.

| Trait | Description |
|-------------------|--|
| Principles: | None. Avoids punishment, seeks reward. |
| Universal Values: | None. Only self-interest. |
| Empathy: | Limited to personal gain. |
| Responsibility: | Short-term; avoiding immediate consequences. |

Case Study: The Psychology of the “Episodic Man”

Psychological analysis suggests some leaders, like Donald Trump, lack a “narrative identity.” They do not see life as a story with a past, present, and future. Instead, life is a series of disconnected episodes, each a battle to be won in the moment.

Key Traits of the Episodic Man:

- **No Past, No Future:** Yesterday’s statements are irrelevant if they don’t help win today. Contradiction is not a concern.
- **No Development:** The protagonist never changes, learns, or grows. They are a “stable genius.”
- **Primal Authenticity:** They are always “all in” on the present moment, which can be perceived as shameless, authentic, and powerful.

Mary Trump, Ph.D., describes this archetype’s origin in a childhood of emotional deprivation, with an absent mother and a sociopathic father, leading to an inability to form empathy and a personality that meets all nine DSM-V criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder.



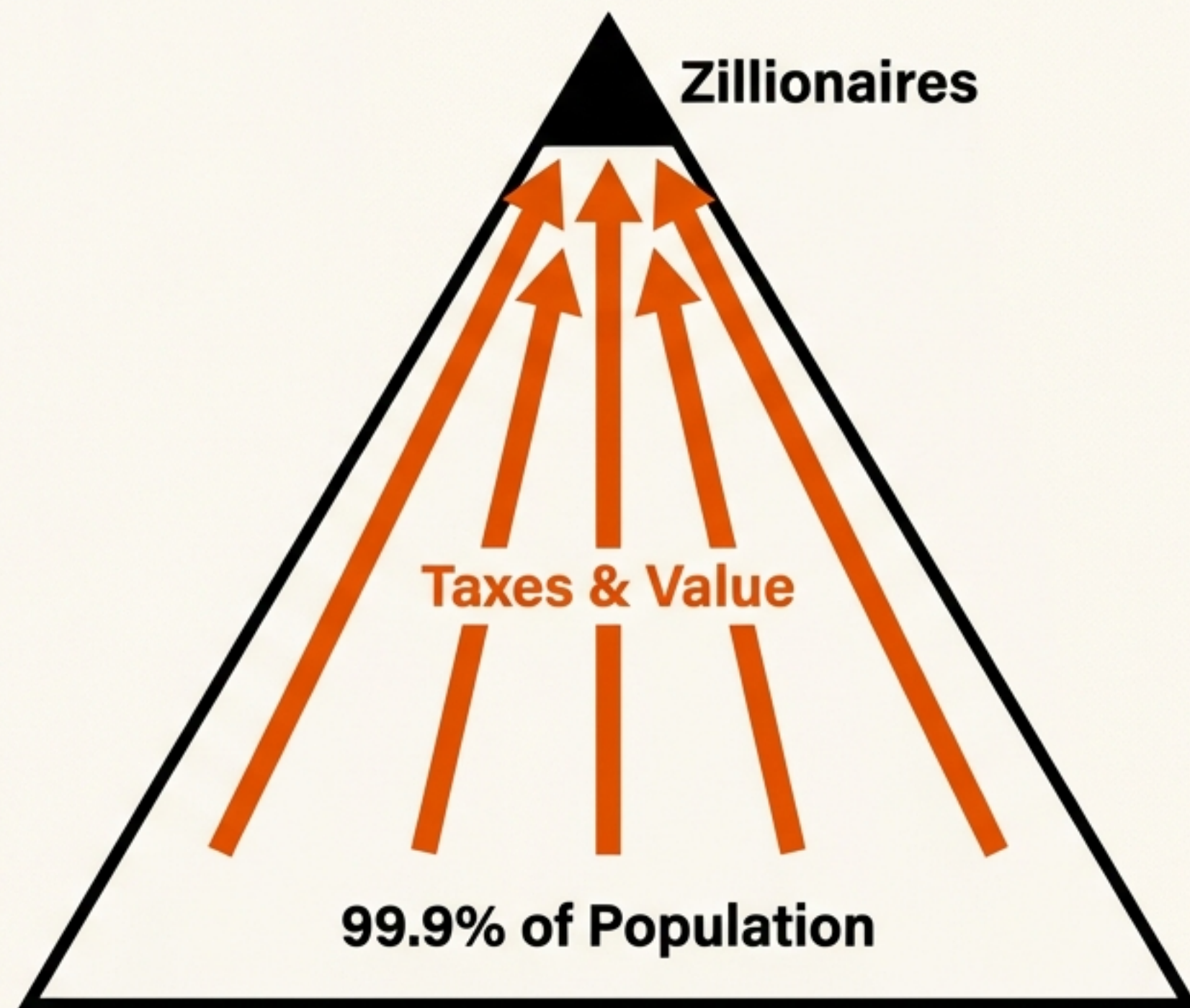
The Engine of the Fake World: Trickle-Up Economics

We've been sold a myth of "trickle-down" economics. The reality is a massive "trickle-up" effect, where wealth is systematically funneled to the very top.

The Data: The vast majority of S&P 500 growth in the last decade came from just seven "Magnificent Seven" companies. The rest of the market was nearly flat. The financial reality for 99.9% of people has stagnated or declined since the 1980s.

The Mechanism: Zillionaires—both ultra-wealthy individuals and massive corporations—are entities large enough to avoid taxes. They may pay 1% or less, while ordinary people pay 20-40%. This starves public services like healthcare and education, creating the crises we see everywhere.

Every transaction we make pays a small "tithe" not to the state, but to this Zillionaire class.



The Banal Majority: Conventional Morality and the Abilene Paradox

Most people operate at the “conventional” moral stage. Our actions are dictated by social context, norms, and a desire to fit in. The driving question is, “What will other people think?” This is the core of herd behavior.

The Abilene Paradox: A family on a hot Texas afternoon agrees to a long, dusty drive to a terrible diner in Abilene. They return miserable. When asked why they went, each person confesses they didn’t want to go but thought everyone else did.

We are constantly living in the Abilene Paradox. We accept a miserable reality because we assume everyone else wants it. This collective groupthink is the Banal state. It’s what allows a few “lobotomized minnows”—loud, shameless Zillionaires—to lead the entire school of fish to a place nobody wants to be.



The Epic Response: Post-Conventional Morality

| Piirre | Pre-Conventional | Conventional | Post-Conventional |
|---|--|---|---|
| Periaatteellisuus yli sääntöjen | Ei periaatteita, vain välttely rangaistusta tai hyöty itselle. | Säännöt ja lait ovat ehdottomia, auktoriteetin kunnioitus. | Säännöt alistetaan oikeudenmukaisuudelle ja moraalisille periaatteille. |
| Universaalit arvot | Ei universaaleja arvoja, vain oma etu. | Arvot sidottu ryhmään, kulttuuriin tai auktoriteettiin. | Arvot koskevat kaikkia ihmisiä ja ihmisarvoa. |
| Empatia a globaali näkökulma | Empatia rajautuu omaan hyötyyn. | Empatia ryhmän tai yhteisön sisällä. | Empatia koko ihmiskuntaa a jopa luontoa kohtaan. |
| Kyseenalaistaa epäoikeudenmukaiset lait | Ei kyseenalaistamista, laki = rangaistuksen välttäminen. | Laki = järjestyksen ylläpito, kyseenalaistaminen harvinaista. | Laki voidaan rikkoa, jos se on epäoikeudenmukainen (eism. kansalaistotetlemattomuus). |
| Itsenäinen moraalinen pohdinta | Ei itsenäistä pohdintaa, auktoriteetti tai oma määrä. | Moraali = soosialinen hyväksyntä ja normit. | Moraali = omat eettiset periaatteet, riippumatta auktoriteetista. |
| Pitkän aikavälin ja laajempi vastuu | Lyhytnäköinen: välitön hyöty tai rangaistuksen välttäminen. | Vastuu ryhmän tai yhteiskunnan tasolla. | Vastuu koko ihmiskunnasta ta tulevista sukupolvista. |

The Epic archetype is rooted in ‘post-conventional’ morality. This is the ability to think beyond oneself and social norms, and to act based on universal principles of justice and ethics. An Epic person can see an unjust law or norm and say, ‘This is wrong, and I will not comply.’ They are guided by an internal moral compass, not by the herd. Being Epic is not about being a superhero or a perfect eco-saint. It is an imperfect, human attempt at honesty. It’s the simple, courageous act of saying out loud, ‘This is This is not okay.’

The Epic Litmus Test: Two Maxims to Cut Through the Noise

Banal “sustainability” is abstract and slippery. Epic justice is concrete. It uses a simple test: “Would this be okay if all 8 billion of us did it?” This principle of universalization is the anchor. To make this practical, we start with two core “**Epic Maxims.**” These are designed to be litmus tests for our leaders and for ourselves.



1. The Millionaire Maxim: We must define a level of consumption that is unacceptably excessive. This is not about money, but about emissions and resource use. Anyone living beyond this line has no credibility to speak on justice.



2. The Food Maxim: The way we produce food is a critical question for humanity. Treating factory-farmed animals like pets and moving toward a plant-based system is a non-negotiable part of a just world.

These maxims force an uncomfortable but honest conversation. They were co-developed with a self-proclaimed “120% right-winger,” proving they can transcend political bubbles.

A Zero-Sum Game We Are All Losing



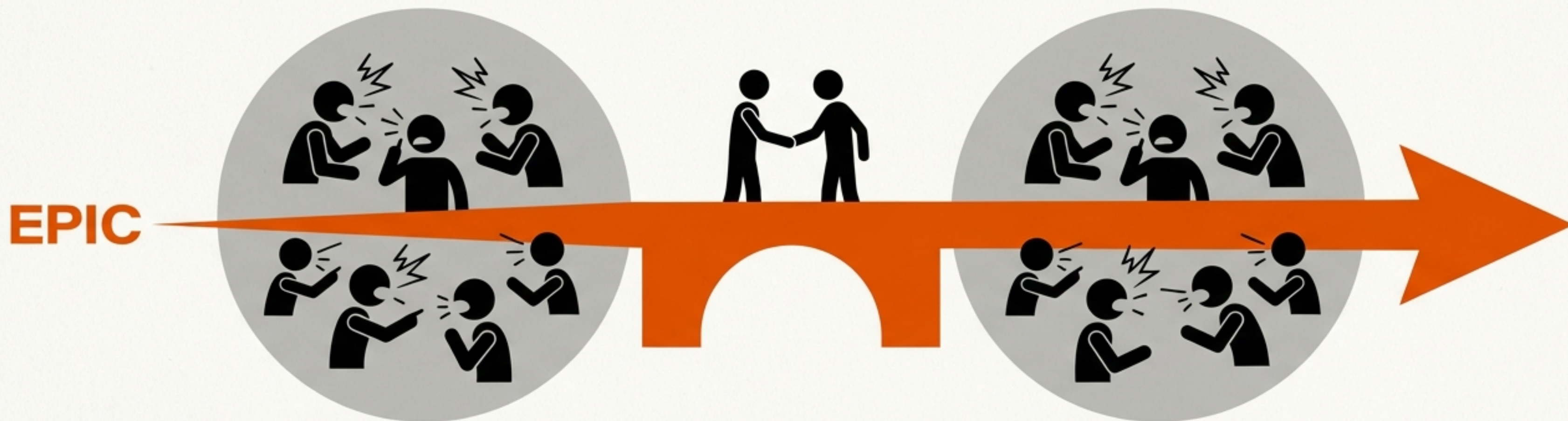
Let's visualize humanity's carbon budget with 200 poker chips.

- 60 White Chips (30%): The emissions required for the basic needs of all 8 billion people.
- 40 Green Chips (20%): The gap between basic needs and the net-zero target. We must eliminate these.
- 100 Red & Black Chips (50%): Grossly excessive emissions.

The Current Distribution: The bottom 50% of humanity uses just the white chips. But the top 10% consumes nearly all the green, red, and black chips combined. The top 1% alone is responsible for a staggering portion of the excess.

This isn't a game of growth; it's a zero-sum game of physics. We need to ask anyone who talks about justice to play this game and show us where the chips should go.

Breaking the Bubbles, Building the Bridges



The Zillionaire mindset profits from our division. Social media algorithms are programmed to find outrage, amplify fear, and reward us with validation for attacking the 'other side.' We have been brainwashed to fight each other.

Being Epic requires a commitment to break this programming. It means pausing and asking: 'What is this content trying to make me feel? Am I being manipulated into outrage?' It requires consciously choosing to build a bridge instead of a wall.

This is difficult. It requires admitting that our initial instinct is often to say 'I'm right and you're an idiot.' But it is almost always possible to find the common ground: the root cause is almost always the Zillionaires who benefit from our infighting.

From Personal Choice to a Tool for Accountability

The Epic framework is not just a philosophy; it is a practical tool. It is a litmus test for our leaders, our organizations, and ourselves.

The Challenge to Leaders: Force them to answer the question, "Are you Epic or Banal?"

- * Do they acknowledge the Fake World, or do they offer empty platitudes?
- * Do they commit to the universal justice of the Epic Maxims, or do they hide behind partisan talking points?
- * Are they willing to define a limit on excessive consumption?

When tested at political rallies, this framework was embraced by people across the spectrum. The only ones who rejected it were professional economists and career politicians deeply invested in the current system.



Your Epic Journey: A Practical Guide

This is not about becoming a superhero overnight. It's a progression, and you can start where you are. The goal is to get a critical mass of people asking the right questions.

| | Stealth | Own Context (in addition to Stealth) | Public (in addition to Own Context) |
|-------------|--|--|---|
| Leaders | Haen eppisiä johtajia ja jos en löydä hyviä omasta kontekstistani kontaktoin esimerkiksi anonyymistä meiliosoitteesta. | Juttelen johtajista ainakin jollekin ja mielellään läheisille. | Läheisten lisäksi keskustelen eppisestä julkisesti ja haastan aktiivisesti johtajia, jotka oikeudenmukaisuudesta julkeavat puhua. |
| Zillionaire | Tutustun itsekseni siihen, miten maailma muuttuisi jos ... | Keskustelen zilyardöörien edesottamuksesta ja narzismuksesta omassa kontekstissani | Nostan esille veropakoilun ja 6 600 triljoonaa jne. Eriarvoisuus jne. |
| Food | Sanon itsekseni ääneen, että "vegaani on ainoa oikeudenmukainen" ... Tunnustelen ja tunnistan normin painon omassa elämässäni sekä muiden valinnoissa. | Juttelen normista, identiteetistä jne. säännöllisesti, armollisesti ja ... | |
| Bubble | Opettelen tunnistamaan niitä hetkiä, kun hyppään me vs. ne ajatteluun, sanoihin tai toimintaan | | |
| Reflection | Tähän nyt se CTA? Tunnepäiväkirja? eppinen kalenterimuistutus | Viikottainen videoviesti ainakin yhdelle eppiselle ystävälle. | Kerran viikossa tunnepitoinen ja henkilökohtainen postaus oikeudenmukaisuudesta. Banaalin ja eppisen vertailusta ... |

You now have a plan. You have permission to say, 'I am not a silent, everyday Banal enabler. I am an Epic, human-sized good guy with a plan.'

Finding Your Elephants

The core of the Epic idea is to find “elephants”—collective lies and mass psychoses that we all participate in. The Millionaire and Food maxims are two giant elephants.

Influence: Loved ones, Society

What are yours?
Use this framework for priorities.

Epic Maxims: Which additional maxims resonate (e.g., substances, travel, algorithms)?

Personal Change: Your next step

Use this framework for personal reflection and to define your priorities. This becomes your personal compass for navigating the Fake World.

**Your Maxims:
The four key “elephants” you see**

The Question Is Now Yours.

EPIC or BANAL?



We started with a question: Epic or Banal? Now you understand what it means.

It's a choice between remaining a passive bystander in a world you know is fake, or taking the first, honest step towards changing it.

It's a choice between the Zillionaire's manufactured feelings of guilt and your child's future.

You decide this for yourself. No one else can. You have the tools, you have the vocabulary, and you have the plan.