

# Boardingology – The Power of One

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By Tracy A Shand

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# Dedication

To you, and all members of your boarding community  
who want to  
“take it to the next level”  
to become the best version of yourself.

# About the author

Tracy Shand is the CEO of Simply Boarding, a practising boarding professional with an eye to the future. Her boarding career to date spans various positions from house tutor to deputy head working in both the UK and Asia. At all stages of her career, she bears two key values in mind – the importance of stepping into the other persons shoes and everyone is someone’s child. It is this focus, combined with specialist coaching training, which has allowed her to achieve amazing results both as an education professional and a qualified life coach .Her first move to Asia in 2009 was inspired by stepping into her boarders shoes was life changing and as such she returned on more than one occasion to be the driving force in starting up boarding in new international schools.

A concept whose time has come, Boardingology addresses the knowledge doing gap of boarding staff around the world. In her own words

‘Boarding today is building tomorrow. But, what are you building for yourself?’

Your success is based on one thing – YOU, how you act and react.

When term starts you become number two, it is time to be number one.

Boardingology allows you to become the best version of yourself one step at a time.’

A thought leader in boarding education, her articles have been published in Lights Out Australia, New Zealand and the UK. She has led personal development sessions in China, New Zealand and Australia. In her spare time, she practises Tai Chi, Qigong photography and continues travelling in her quest to matching the countries she has visited to her age.

In true paying forward style, all royalties from this book will be donated to charities that support young people in boarding schools.

More information: [www.simplyboarding.com](http://www.simplyboarding.com)

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# Introduction

From one boarding professional to another

I've worked my way up from the grass roots to nearly the top job in boarding and I believe it's time to invest in the front line of boarding. Your wellbeing as a person is the key to your success.

I'm not talking about a one-day training course where your attention is half on the content and half on your incoming messages, wondering what disasters are occurring while you're not there.

My grandmother taught me that we all have a talent that the world needs and we need to be true to ourselves. With her wisdom in mind I decided to take a job in China to learn more about where many of my boarders came from.

Over my career in international boarding schools I have listened and learned from some inspirational boarding staff from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, China and the UK. There is a common thread running through what they want – to be the best they can be for their school and their boarders.

With many boarding staff working in isolation (or what feels like isolation) I decided that it was time to share my knowledge, gathered from my many years of experience to provide value to others. Given the widely geographical spread of my professional colleagues I decided that the most practical approach was to create a book – a handbook that you can dip into when needed.

In our 24-7 lifestyle many of us make the wrong choices because we do not have the knowledge or are too tired to think clearly. There's not always someone to ask for advice and most of us have made bad choices, said the wrong

## *Boardingology*

things and escalated situations because we did not have the knowledge to approach things a different way.

Enter Boardingology!

The concept was born in December 2013 and it has been an amazing journey putting it all together. It has consumed over two years of my life, but it's more than worth it if I can bridge the knowledge gap for boarding staff around the world.

Some chapters will be relevant and provide the support that you need now; others will help you in the future.

As you explore this practical handbook please remember that it will only give you value if you open the book when you most need some guidance. If it gets filed on a dusty shelf, it won't help you in trying times or advise you on how to take the next step in your boarding career. Think of it as a new and knowledgeable member of your House team – use it to get the help you need.

This is boarding strategy with a human voice! It's Boardingology.

***Tracy***

# Preface:

## So – what is Boardingology?

Boarders in today's schools can study many subjects, such as Biology, Sociology and Psychology. However, there is a hidden curriculum that is not addressed in the same way; I call it *Boardingology*.

This is a curriculum that is present every day in every way for both students and staff in boarding schools. It's a curriculum that is interactive, yet reflective and happens 24 hours a day in some part of the world. It's a curriculum that can move you towards or away from whom you believe you can really be at any age, at any time.

Many people suffer from the misconception that examination results will determine your future; there is plenty of evidence that they may not. For example, Richard Branson, a student who studied at Stowe School, left to follow his dream.

He did not have the examination results that many parents would wish for their child, but he had something else that is more valuable. He had belief in himself and a motivation to follow his dreams, fail and try again. Today, Richard is an inspiration for many people, young and old, to drive them on so that they achieve their definition of success.

High examination results and IQ will get the top jobs, but it is the softer skills of emotional intelligence (EQ) that will keep you there. Nowadays, to be successful you need to be 'people smart' not just 'book smart'. Global Boarding (Glo Boarding) today brings people from different countries of the world together to build their tomorrow in your school. Being people smart means that today's generation needs to be culturally savvy to adapt to the future world that they will enter as a working professional.

Boardingology is the art and science of boarding excellence. It integrates the power of vision with the science of personal development. The art is how you design your future by your daily actions and words. The science relates to the chemistry that exists between people, combined with each person's biological personality, you can learn a lot about yourself and others by paying attention to this.

Let me share one of my favourite inspirational stories. It's one that I often use to inspire my boarders.

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer of his plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family. He would miss the money, but he needed to retire. They could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favour. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

When the carpenter finished his work and the builder came to inspect the house, the contractor handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you."

What a shock! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. Now he had to live in the home he had built none too well.

So it is with us. We build our lives in a distracted way, reacting rather than acting, willing to put up with less than the best. At important points we do not give the job our best effort. Then with a shock we look at the situation we have created and find that we are now living in the house we have built. If we had realised, we would have done it differently.

Think of yourself as the carpenter. Think about your house as each day you hammer in a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Build wisely; it is the only life you will ever build. Even if you live it for only one day more, that day deserves to be lived graciously and with dignity. The plaque on the wall says:

*Life is a do-it-yourself project.*

*Author Unknown*

It's a powerful story. Your life today is the result of your attitudes and choices in the past. Your life tomorrow will be the result of your attitudes and the choices you make today.

### **So, what are you building?**

Boardingology is about building the best boarding community that we can in today's world. It is about giving you the tools to build the house that you want, as well as for future of generations to come. Building dreams and success for the future is an emotional sport, so it is important to build confidence in how you manage people. This will give you a strong foundation so you can move forward to create the skills for success for everyone.

What if you were to invest as much energy into yourself as you do in your boarding house?

Yes, life would be different! Put simply, Boardingology champions the changes, those little changes that will make your boarding life easier. In our 24-7 lifestyle many of us make the wrong choices because we do not have the knowledge or are too tired to think clearly. There's not always someone to ask for advice and most of us have made bad choices, said the wrong things and escalated situations because we did not have the knowledge to approach things a different way.

If I do my job properly here and you do your part, three things will happen.

*Boardingology*

1. You will move closer to becoming the person you want to be whether that is in or out of the boarding environment.
2. You will find it easier to navigate the challenges of boarding school life successfully.
3. You will have the confidence to inspire the next generation to be the best that they can be and make the most of the gifts that they have.

Every day in whatever part of the world, we have a new day.

*“This bright, new day*

*complete with 24 hours of opportunities,  
choices, and attitudes*

*a perfectly matched set of 1,440  
minutes.*

*This unique gift, this one day, cannot be  
exchanged, replaced or refunded.*

*Handle with care.*

*Make the most of it”*

*Author Unknown*

So, think of this book as your personal boarding handbook. A manual that you can refer to in times of need – whether moving up, moving down or finally achieving your goal on the escape committee. So, let’s get started on building your tomorrow together.

# 1: One choice has got you here

*When you have to make a  
choice and don't make it,  
that is in itself a choice.*

*William James*

## **So what are you looking for? Why are you here?**

- You cannot manage your life if you do not manage yourself.
- You cannot manage your people if you do not manage yourself
- You cannot manage yourself if you do not manage your choices.
- Manage your choices, and you will manage your life.

Boarding is one choice, but it does not have to be the only one.

Boarding is one choice, but it does not need to define your life.

Welcome to Boardingology. You have made the first choice towards a new you. The first step in building your tomorrow is to select the sections that you need to move forward.

The sections that you choose entirely depends on what you need now and in the future. The place that you are at today, both personally and professionally, is the result of the choices that you have made along the way. Some choices may have been easy and others more difficult, but, as you progress through Boardingology remember one thing – you

always have a choice. You are responsible for your wellbeing, career and behaviour.

The actions of others can affect the choices that you make – but you do not live in their world. You have your own world, an amazing story that lasts for a lifetime.

So, what choice do you need to take today?

**What one choice are you not taking because of fear?**

*Choice means change. Change means emotions. Emotions determine your behaviour. But, on the other hand change is good. People take one step, find success and never look back. That person can be you with Boardingology.*

**What one challenge do you have that is causing you pain?**

*What causes those heart sinking moments, the negative emotions and burnout?*

**What one boarding world do you want to live in?**

*Do you want to move in, up or out? How long have you been waiting for the 'right moment'?*

**As a leader, what is your one leadership growth area?**

*Take a mirror to your professional practice – what does it tell you? Are your colleagues with you working towards one vision of success?*

**When things are tough what one truth is holding you back from the real you?**

*From lost promotion opportunities to boarding stopping you finding the 'one' it is time to rewrite your story.*

When you've explored these critical questions you'll have some real food for thought! One change can make a big

*1: One choice has got you here*

difference. One choice for you today can build the tomorrow that you want.

***“No one else can ever make your choices for you.***

***Your choices are yours alone.***

***They are as much a part of you as every breath you will take, every moment of your life.”***

Dr. Shad Helmstetter

So, what are you waiting for? You have already made one choice to buy Boardingology – now it is time to take action.

You have vision; are you prepared to help create the future the future that you want? It is only one page away.



## Section 1 – **One community**

## 2: A place where everyone matters

*‘These lessons don’t apply only to business, Joe. A genuinely sound business principle will apply anywhere in life- in your friendships, in your marriage, anywhere. That’s the true bottom line.*

*Not whether it simply improves your financial balance sheet, but whether it improves your life’s balance sheet.’*

*Bob Burg and John David Mann, The Go- Giver.*

Does your boarding environment provide the same level of care and motivation for both students and staff? How much do you feel that you matter?

Sadly, many boarding professionals would answer ‘No’ to this question. Would you agree – and just as important – would the staff working for you give the same answer? Although, as a boarding professional, you are one of the main fee holders for the school, the investment in your personal and professional development often doesn’t match the importance of the day-to-day responsibilities you have.

Money is not allocated in the same way for training and development as it is to academic areas because the results boarding gives young people are not as tangible as the hard academic data that sells the school’s reputation. Your role in developing young people outside the classroom is not recognised in the same way by students, parents and senior management.

The word community is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as:

*‘A group of people living in the same place and having a particular characteristic in common’*

I sometimes think that boarding staff are 'retired teenage boarders!'. There are many common characteristics; we are told when to eat, what we can eat, when we can sleep, when we can have time off and, more importantly, we have virtually the same holidays and return times. In fact, you may live a different life depending on whether it's term time or not.

The only difference is that you're older than your charges and have learned most of the tricks young people of today will get up to. As I reflect on community living, it seems more difficult for 'retired teenagers' than for their present day counterparts; their life is just beginning and yours is moving on.

Life in a boarding community has many analogies, for example:

- Working in our school is like living on an oil rig. You come on at the start of term, work very hard and then you fly back off at the end of term.
- Working in boarding is like Marmite - you either love it or you hate it.
- And, my particular favourite, 'living in a goldfish bowl'.

Why? Let us look at the boarding lifestyle - you have no privacy so every move you make can be observed and you have nowhere to hide. Am I right? One of the first things you probably did when your children acquired a goldfish was to buy it a house and some scenery to put in the bowl!

Nothing is hidden - just ask the single member of staff who has a partner and has to develop SAS-level tactical manoeuvres to be able to spend one night with them due to school policies. [Not that I have done that myself, head teacher - holidays only!]

I remember the jokes in the common room when the new rules were announced by the head about no overnight