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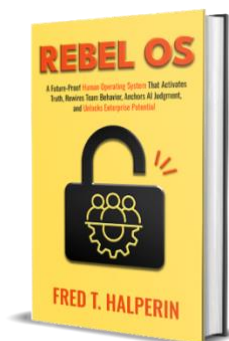
“Most organizations don't have a strategy problem — they have a truth problem. Fred Halperin builds a practical operating system for leaders ready to change that, giving the truth-tellers in every organization a name, a framework, and a mandate to rewire how teams think, decide, and perform. For anyone tired of watching performance theater pass for leadership, this book delivers.”

— Dr. Marshall Goldsmith is the Thinkers50 #1 Executive Coach and New York Times bestselling author of *The Earned Life*, *Triggers*, and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*. We wish you much success for the book launch and beyond!

Rebel OS

A Future-Proof Operating System that Activates Truth, Rewires Team Behavior, Anchors AI Judgement, and Unlocks Enterprise Potential

by Fred T. Halperin



For the past 4 decades, Fred T. Halperin has been a world class fixer at the highest level. Thankfully, he is also a world class observer, taking in everything he sees and then translating it into actionable strategies and solutions that work. Because of his unique gift, Fred has been invited into the senior leadership “inner sanctum” in many of the world's most notable organizations.

The pattern he has seen in the past 40 years is undeniable. In places of safety, people feel comfortable speaking up, pushing back constructively, heading off problems before they arrive, and building sustainable greatness.



Why does this matter so? The cautionary tales of companies not creating safety and settling for the status quo are chilling and sad. Think Boeing 737 Max or Blockbuster.

Most leaders think they have a talent problem. Or a communication problem. Or a culture problem. They don't. They have an architecture problem. Fred didn't just reframe the question. He built the fix: a redesigned human operating system that teams and organizations plug in, creating a going concern that actually works for everyone with a stake in it, from stockholders to customers to colleagues.

Halperin describes Rebel OS as an “owner's manual” — a practical installation sequence for redesigning how organizations operate. The result of that redesign: teams that surface truth earlier, use dissent productively, close decisions with rigor, hold accountability visibly, and perform with coherence under pressure — without depending on heroic individuals to make it happen.

Today, AI makes the stakes even higher — but it is not the central argument of Rebel OS. Fred's core position is: AI is not a peer to your human system and does not replace it — AI is a “condition” that enters the human system already in place. Which means the quality of your human operating system is more consequential now, than ever before. A fragile human system with AI doesn't automatically become smarter. It becomes more efficiently wrong — failing faster, at greater scale, and with higher confidence.

Rebel OS is not another culture campaign, or a quick technology fix. It's not the next strategy framework that simply rearranges the deck chairs and invents a catchy slogan or taxonomy. It's not another leadership book written from on high by someone who hasn't actually been there and done that.

It's a rebellion. And it's arrived right on time.

To learn more, please go to: <https://rebel-os-group.com/>

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About Fred Halperin



Fred T. Halperin is a strategic advisor, author, and speaker with more than 40 years of practitioner experience operating deep inside the machinery of organizations.

His approach is direct and constructive — built on the conviction that most leaders already sense something is wrong in how their organizations operate. They don't need to be told there's a problem. They need an answer: the language, the framing, and the practical architecture to fix what's wrong.

Over the past two years Fred has worked tirelessly to discover and create that answer.

He founded Rebel OS Group on one conviction: organizational problems are human operating system problems, and an operating system can (and often should) be fixed.

His career has spanned roles as a senior consulting leader, Executive Director in the Office of the CIO at Johnson & Johnson, startup Chief Technology Officer, Chief Commercial Officer, and enterprise transformation advisor — with particular depth in life sciences and related industries. Fred has operated across the full arc of organizational life: building, leading, advising, and rebuilding from the inside.

Rebel OS is Fred's first book. It publishes in January 2027.

Fred lives in New Jersey.



An Excerpt from Rebel-OS

It was late on a Friday night in November 2014. I was deep in a client deliverable for a large functional team within a Fortune 100 life sciences company that was highly matrixed and very political. It was the type of place where all the top consulting companies had their own parking spaces. My point-person led a team that was struggling with a changing workforce, a misunderstood operating model, and underappreciated services. Dense and high-stakes, the draft document staring at me from my computer screen was meant to clarify direction for a nine-person leadership team, comprised of operating and support functions that felt stuck but couldn't quite admit it. My analysis of the situation was going to come as a shock, because the data was revealing a different—and deeper—challenge than they were anticipating. There would definitely be pushback. I needed to be precise in my delivery and thorough in my preparation, but I kept circling back to the same words: status quo, transparency, alignment, accountability—all accurate, but hollow. At a deeper level, I was wrestling with something more difficult to pinpoint—the quiet cost of comfort. I was in charge of delivering the wake-up call, and it felt massive, even downright rebellious. The weight of it sat in my tightening shoulders.

As a strategic advisor, you're often hired to challenge the status quo. But there's a sort of zombie-like state that settles over people when they are repeatedly encouraged *not* to see what's right in front of them. And it was in this type of daunting environment that I was being asked to compel change. As I stared at my computer screen, struggling to find the right words after a long, exhausting week, I realized this was my new norm. For years, I'd been walking into more and more executive and project team conference rooms where the air was heavy with unspoken truths. I'd been listening to too many leaders debating strategy and execution problems that were really architecture problems. The breakdown wasn't only happening inside teams—it was happening between them. The mechanism connecting the work was weak, so execution kept falling apart at the seams. In response, I'd build meaningful team execution playbooks that were praised in offsites only to see them diluted by senior leaders weeks later. I kept seeing bold ideas sanded down into consensus, and dissent softened into suggestion. Longer-term strategies were continuously undermined by short-term market pressures. Team ambition was regularly compromised by the urgency of short-term expectations. People were saying "I," "me," and "my" much more often, instead of "we," "our," and "us." More frequently, it seemed, companies were willing to ignore the truth right in front of them in order to preserve a failing status quo. It was disheartening.

I had mastered the necessary choreography to "win" in this delusive world. I knew when to push, when to retreat, and when to wait for the inevitable moment when a company realized the *real* problem wasn't its "plan." But this unnatural and exhausting dance had taken a toll on me. At all levels, I was told, "You've got to learn how to play the game better." A classic line, usually delivered by people deeply committed to preserving their installed reality. I was tired of hearing it. I was tired of swallowing the truth in the name of feigned "alignment." Trying to surface the facts and preserve my reputation as a "team player" felt like walking a tightrope



every day. I was weary from watching leaders choose comfort over clarity and then ask me to help “drive execution,” as if it were a lever that could be pulled without touching truth. I wasn’t burned out; I was just over it—the politics, the fake consensus, and all the prep for the team meetings where everyone was technically right but strategically mistaken. I was witnessing too much performance theater disguised as leadership.

Desperate to find an example of what truth could unleash when allowed in the room, I began searching for a case study to prove that the spell of complacency could be broken and unlock true potential. I closed out of my document and typed, “Examples of transformational team leadership” into my search browser. Nothing interesting popped up, so I stopped to consider my search term. I’d always had a rebellious streak, and felt like the message I was about to deliver fit this category. So, I typed “rebellious.” And that’s when I saw it, a link to a YouTube video of Steve Jobs’ iconic 1997 “Think Different” campaign speech. Although I had admired the company since buying the first iPhone when it was announced in 2007, I’d never watched the “Think Different” speech before. I clicked, “play.”

Right from the start, his talk was different. Jobs, who had co-founded Apple but left in 1985 after losing a boardroom power struggle, was back—and he had a lot to say. He’d watched Apple’s decline through the early 1990s, as it suffered from product fragmentation, poor management, and a failure to compete with cheaper, lower-cost Windows PCs. The company was bleeding money when the “Think Different” campaign speech was delivered less than two weeks after his official return to leadership in September 1997. And as he strode quietly into a small internal theater at Apple headquarters wearing a simple black turtleneck and shorts, his words were calm, even casual—but, boy, did they pack a punch:

I think Apple has pockets of greatness, but in some ways has drifted away from doing the basics really well. So, ...[w]e looked at the product roadmap going out for a few years and we said, ‘A lot of this doesn’t make sense, and there’s way too much stuff, and there’s not enough focus. So, we actually got rid of 70 percent of the stuff on the product roadmap. I mean I couldn’t even figure out the damn product line after a few weeks.... I kept saying, ‘What is this model? How does this fit?’ And then I started talking to customers and they couldn’t figure it out either.

Jobs went on to talk straight about other functional problems—distribution, marketing, and the Apple brand as a whole. It was so refreshing, even inspiring, to hear a leader speak so candidly about a company’s true state of affairs. He didn’t cushion the blow. He didn’t perform around it. As I watched, a sleeper cell awoke in my brain. I’d been in so many rooms where leaders faced their versions of Apple’s situation and had chosen to circle reality as if it were radioactive. Not Jobs. He wasn’t just giving a talk; he was breaking a spell.

Jobs continued, evangelizing that Apple needed to return to its core values. “[W]e believe that people with passion can change the world for the better.” I was mesmerized. Finally, here was a leader speaking my language! Then, Jobs introduced the campaign, “honoring the people who think different and who move this world forward.” The room grew silent as he asked his



team to roll the ad and black-and-white footage of Albert Einstein smoking a pipe appeared on the screen as the narrator spoke these words:

Here's to crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.

As I listened to these soul-stirring words and stared at the grainy footage on my laptop, I experienced a profound personal shift. Not only had I found my case study, I'd also found my mantra. I knew these people, these rebels. I'd worked with them and watched them labeled as "difficult" in polite performance reviews. I'd seen them sidelined because they refused to nod along with ideas that wouldn't work. I'd watched them either conform or leave. And if I was being honest with myself, I'd always been one of them. I just could never put my finger on the right term. I'd been ruffling feathers and making people uncomfortable since elementary school. It had gotten me in trouble at times and led to personal regrets. But watching Jobs speak about rebels with reverence rather than resistance changed everything. I wasn't just a strategist, advisor, or consultant. I was performing a function the system didn't have. I was forcing truth into rooms designed to avoid it. I was asking crucial questions everyone was afraid to answer and challenging plans everyone was passively embracing. I just had never known what to call my approach to work and life—until I watched Steve Jobs's speech. I had always operated differently—and now I was listening to someone I admired say that was fine, even valuable. On that chilly Friday night in November 2014, I proudly called myself a rebel for the first time.

As for a case study demonstrating the value truth can create when it's embraced rather than feared, well, Apple during Steve Jobs's second term was *perfect*! After the "Think Different" campaign launched and Jobs instituted other changes, the company successfully resurrected its brand image and drove a massive increase in market capitalization from \$1.6 billion to \$15.6 billion in only two years! Profitability was restored, the iMac G3 was launched, and Apple's "cool," creative, and rebellious brand identity set the stage for the extremely popular iPod and iPhone.

After watching the speech a few more times, I returned to work on my presentation. It was well after midnight, but I was energized by my new rebel state of mind. My fingers raced across the keyboard. Steve Jobs had given me the courage to help my clients face the truth so their companies and colleagues could experience a better future. I felt inspired and empowered. "Just be yourself, you rebel. Just be yourself," I said out loud all alone in my office.

And I would never look back.



Q&A with author Fred Halperin

Q1. What is the one thing most leaders do that inadvertently trains their teams to stay silent?

They punish the messenger — and they almost never mean to. Someone raises a challenge, names a risk, says "I don't think this is going to work" — and the leader's face tightens for a second, they get defensive, or they just move the meeting along a little too fast. That's the whole training program. You don't need a policy to teach silence, just one moment where honesty cost someone something, and the room remembers it forever.

Your team isn't reading your values statement, and they don't remember the talk from the recent town hall. They're reading your face, and what happened to the last person who spoke up. Every leader thinks they're the exception, "my door is always open," while designing and enabling a system that quietly rewards agreement and taxes dissent. That gap between what you say and what you reward is where silence grows.

And silence doesn't announce itself — it just accumulates. One unspoken concern becomes ten, becomes a team, becomes a culture, becomes an organization that learns about its problems from a headline instead of the person three desks away who saw it coming weeks out. That's not a talent problem. That's a leadership design flaw. It's fixable, but only if you're willing to look at your own face first.

Q2. You've spent 40 years inside organizations. What's the pattern you kept seeing that eventually became Rebel OS?

The same ghost kept showing up in every room I walked into. Forty years, dozens of organizations, companies of every size you can name — and the pattern never changed. Smart, capable, well-intentioned people sitting on things they knew: the reorg that wasn't working, the product quietly dying, the leader who was the actual bottleneck. Everyone in the room knew. Nobody said it out loud. I started calling it the "poker face room" long before I had a name for the operating system underneath it.



What I eventually understood is that this isn't a communication problem you fix with a workshop, it's an operating system issue. A human operating system issue. A set of incentives, habits, and unspoken rules that organizations build without ever deciding to build them. Truth moves or it doesn't, and that's determined by hundreds of signals leaders send every day, mostly without even noticing.

Rebel OS is what I built from that pattern — not a personality trait, not "be braver," but an actual, internal human operating system for how truth, dissent, and courage move through an organization on purpose instead of by accident. I've watched too many good companies get quietly outdone by their own silence, and decided that was worth solving at this point in my career.

Q3. What does it actually look like when truth stops moving in an organization? What are the early signals a leader should watch for — before it surfaces as a crisis or a missed opportunity?

Truth doesn't vanish all at once in an organization — it drifts. It never looks like a crisis at first. It looks like meetings getting smoother, fewer hard questions, everyone nodding a beat too quickly. That's not alignment — nine times out of ten, it's organizational drift: people quietly stepping back from friction because pushing back stopped working, one meeting at a time, until harmony is just drift wearing a nice suit. AI accelerates it — a confident, uncontested voice in the room makes drift feel like consensus.

Watch for where the real conversation moves: the hallway, Teams, Slack, the coffee machine after the all-hands — wherever people finally say what they actually think, five minutes after they had the chance to say it in the room and didn't. If you're consistently the last to know, if news reaches you filtered and softened, if your "open door" only ever gets walked through by the same three people — the truth has already drifted around you, and you're the last stop on the route.

The other tell is speed without dissent — decisions moving fast, everyone "aligned," zero friction in the room. That's drift compounding: every unspoken objection you didn't catch early shows up later, in the budget, the timeline, the



employee survey, the customer complaint. Catch drift early and it's a conversation. Catch it late and it's an action item with your name on it.

Q4. Why do you say AI enters the human system already there — and what does that mean for a leader who wants to adopt AI responsibly?

AI doesn't land on a blank slate; it inherits whatever your organization already is. It lands on your org chart, your meeting habits, your who-gets-heard-and-who-doesn't. Every leader I talk to asks "how do we roll out AI" like it's a separate initiative, a tool bolted onto the side of the business. It isn't. Plug AI into a team where truth doesn't move freely and you're not fixing that dysfunction, you're scaling it — bad information moves faster, bias gets automated instead of tolerated, and the poker face room gets a dashboard.

That's the part almost nobody's talking about. AI adoption isn't a technology rollout; it's a human systems rollout with a technology component. If your people don't trust each other enough to surface a hard truth, they won't trust an AI algorithm enough to challenge its output either. If leadership hasn't built the muscle for dissent, AI becomes one more voice nobody feels safe questioning — except now it sounds confident, cites sources, and never blinks.

So responsible AI adoption starts before the tool does — with the human operating system underneath: can truth move here, can people push back, does courage get rewarded or quietly punished. Fix that first, or at least in parallel, and AI becomes an amplifier of a healthy organization. Skip it, and you've just given your dysfunction a faster engine. Not a warning to slow down on AI — a warning not to be naive about what you're deploying it into.

Q5. Why did you feel you had to figure this out? Why did it matter so at this stage of your career?

I ran out of patience for watching it happen and not naming it. Forty years gives you a front-row seat to a lot of avoidable failure. At some point you stop being able to sit in another “postmortem” where the real cause — everyone knew, nobody said it — gets dressed up as a "market shift," a "communication gap," or



the classic "that's just not the way we do it here." I knew better. Staying quiet about that pattern would have made me exactly the thing I was diagnosing.

There's also honesty about timing. This is the stage of a career where you've got nothing left to prove and everything left to give away. I didn't need another title or another win for the resume — I needed to take four decades of pattern-recognition and turn it into something a leader could use on a Tuesday morning. Not a TED talk, not a poster on the wall. A human operating system. Something with teeth.

And this moment demanded it — AI is rewriting how organizations work at exactly the same time most haven't solved the oldest problem there is: getting colleagues to tell each other the truth! Those two things are colliding right now, whether leaders are ready or not, and I wasn't willing to watch that collision play out badly from the sideline. Rebel OS is every card I've got, face up! Nobody handed me this forty years ago, so I built it myself.



What Others Are Saying About Rebel-OS

“Fred Halperin is on the right track. In my 50 years of operating in Fortune 500 corporate cultures, first as a contributor; then as a President, CEO, and Chairman; and ultimately as an advisor, I have learned that time is of the essence. To compete effectively an enterprise must be able to meet the “true” challenges of the day faster, better, and more completely than the competition. To that end, I believe cultures that are focused on speaking “truth to power” in a constructive fashion that is faster, better, and more complete than the competition will always prevail. Fred’s insights are spot on.”

**— Douglas R. Conant, Founder of Conant Leadership,
Former President of Nabisco Foods, Former President and CEO Campbell’s**

“Most organizations do not suffer from a shortage of smart people. They suffer from systems that make it difficult for those people to challenge assumptions, share what they see, and act on it. Rebel OS addresses that problem directly. One of the best books I’ve read.”

**—Karen Freeman, Chief Product Officer, DCMi Insights
and Co-Author of *The Activator Advantage***

“Rebel OS is a must-read for leaders ready to move beyond tweaking culture and start reconstructing how work actually gets done.”

**—Dr. Jake Tuber, Managing Principal of Ticonderoga Advisory,
Author of *The Deliberate Manager***

“Every leader sprinting toward AI should read this first: augmentation doesn’t fix a broken culture, it multiplies it. Rebel OS is the missing chapter on human infrastructure for the Age of AI.”

**— Paul Torrey, CEO, Strategic Advisor to Industry Leaders, Torrey Associates LLC;
Former AWS, Google Cloud, Deloitte Executive**

“Rebel OS argues that conformity without challenge is innovation’s quiet killer. The book champions ‘disciplined truth’ — a principled form of dissent meant to confront the status quo.”

**— Gil LaMonaca, Senior Executive, Life Sciences/Healthcare Consulting Industry; DXC
Technology, HCLAXON, Cognizant**

“Many of the behaviors that make us human are the same ones that limit companies’ agility and competitiveness. We need teams that speak truth, voice dissent, and confront reality, and Rebel OS provides an experience-tested roadmap for achieving this.”

— Jeff Maurone, Partner and COO, Technology at Citadel Securities.