



**INNER
GROWTH
OUTER
SUCCESS**

**PART TWO: LEVERAGE THE CORNERSTONES OF A
PUBLIC VICTORY FOR YOUR TEAM**

welcome to COACHING

Achieving private victory was the goal in my last workbook, and is available at www.creedbranson.com as a [free gift](#). It is a guide to overcoming your past insecurities, your search for belonging, your unhealthy relationships and more. Overcoming these obstacles may take a lifetime. But you don't have to! Life is too short to spend it focusing on the past. A good life coach can help you answer the "who am I" or identity question. Knowing and accepting your identity is a great first step to personal clarity. Finding a coach who can guide you through this journey is equally as important. I've been there yet know there is something greater for your life.

My hope is the workbook allows you to see that you are not alone, and you can overcome any of life's difficulties. Stress can create fear, or push us to action; but how do we determine the action to take?


In my last workbook I also introduced a concept I call Proximity Coaching. Using this methodology we look for what does and doesn't fit. In other words, clarity is found by observing what appears to be chaos and discover the patterns that keep us stuck. This workbook's aim was to help you with doing the necessary "inner work."

This second workbook builds on the first, and will identify specific principles that I've used in my career leading teams. Apply these principles and you too can experience this type of success.

I hope this workbook inspires you to become a better leader!



Widowed in the late 90s, Creed remarried Karen in May 2000. They live in St. Petersburg, Florida. Creed is a grandfather to four energetic boys and one sweet baby girl. Creed left the corporate world where his last position was VP of Southwest Operations of Papa John's. He has made two career changes; first to full time Christian ministry; and next, to become a professional coach to people seeking clarity, and to leaders seeking to expand their influence. In his late 40s Creed graduated from The London Institute Graduate School of Ministry. Later Creed would return to school to earn a Certified Professional Coach credential recognized by the International Coach Federation of which, he is also a member.

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CREED BRANSON

THE CLARITY COACH

I walked into the corporate headquarters to get in front of the HR director. I asked the receptionist,

“Could you call the VP of Personnel?”

She looked at me with this you-gotta-be-kidding-me smirk and said, “Is there something I could help you with today, sir?”

“Yes, would you please let human resources know that I would like to work here.”

“Sir, you can leave your resume and I’ll see to it that Carol gets it.”

“You don’t understand. I’ve done all my research and this is the place I want to grow my career.”

“But sir, we don’t do things that way.”

This went on for a few minutes in between her answering the phone. Finally, she relented.

Carol walked into the reception area and asked, “May I help you?”

“Sure, I’d like a job here.”

As she perused my resume, Carol replied, “Wow, you seem very qualified. Perhaps overqualified.”

“I’ll let Dan know.”

“Dan who?” She answered.

“Oh, I know Dan! Tell him that Creed Branson wants to work here.”

With a perplexed look, she said “Okay.”

The next day the phone rang and I was invited for an interview. A few days later and after completing a board interview, Dan called me back and said, “Creed, you’re overqualified.”

I replied, “Dan, I’ll tell you what. You pay me thirty-thousand per year and I’ll go through training in every department in the company. If no one wants to hire me, I’ll simply walk away.

“Would you do that?” “Yup.”

I started the next Monday.

Three years later, the founder would introduce me at a stockholders meeting as the leader who had led the most dramatic turnaround in the company’s history. After this unprecedented success, I was promoted to Vice President of Southwest Regional Operations.

Have you ever been successful and then later tried to replicate that success?

How it's all connected

Private victory precedes public victory

I tell this story because I replicated the strategy I used in the corporate world in my next venture. In the role of Executive Minister of [New Life Christian Church](#) and President of the [nZone](#) our staff grew from 12 to over 150.

The staff and volunteers made our success possible while I served as the catalyst for this great success. There is an old African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together." The group of people at New Life Christian Church really made me look good. But before experiencing the results of creating and leading a successful team, you must first experience victory over your self.

In my Proximity Coaching workbook, *Private Victory precedes Public Victory*, I quoted Steven Covey. In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful lessons in Personal Change* he wrote, "Self-mastery and self-discipline are the foundation of good relationships with others." ¹ In other words, if you haven't read through my last workbook, I encourage you to do so.

You can accomplish what you set out to do if you are willing to sacrifice to achieve it.

Its aim is to assist you in achieving "private victory" so that you can then achieve "public victory" as you lead others in your workplace. If you've read that workbook, or feel that you've been fairly victorious in your personal life, read on.

This workbook builds on the last and will identify specific principles that I've used in my career

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“Only someone who has himself really learned to obey intelligently is capable of assuming intelligent command.”¹

”

Thomas Merton

leading teams. If you apply these principles you can experience the same success. However, I am not suggesting some magic formula. Life doesn't work that way. Developing the way you think and the lens through which you see the world is what this guide addresses.

Have you ever been successful and later tried to replicate that success? Did it work? Decades ago, I had this experience and tried to understand why I was successful. While doing this I discovered the Conscious Competency Learning Model. I was unconsciously competent in areas because I was simply doing what I had seen done by some great mentors. This is when I developed my own "Winning Formula." There are 8 principles that I consciously applied until they became second nature as part of my management style.

My encouragement for you is simply to read and assess your skills in each of these eight areas, and develop a plan to achieve greater personal effectiveness.

¹ Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p 197

let's assess your **LEADERSHIP**

What's the point?

I've experienced every one of these circumstances. If you've been leading people very long I'm sure you can relate. For help building better teams, please read along and answer the questions.



ASSESS

Using the questions to the right, answer "yes" or "no" to assess your current team and leadership responsibilities.

What else did you learn from this exercise?

1. Do you lead a team with some dysfunction and want help moving the group to a healthier place? Yes No
2. Has your leadership grown stale or have your results plateaued? Yes No
3. Are you new to leading a team and want to develop a strategy to propel your group forward? Yes No
4. Do you have a problem gaining consensus with your team? Yes No
5. Are you having trouble establishing unity within a team comprised of multiple tribes? Yes No
6. Do you have a team member who wants to steer your team in a direction that is inconsistent with your vision? Yes No
7. Do you have a prima donna on your team? Yes No
8. Have you been charged with taking over an underperforming team and want to know where to start? Yes No
9. After leading the same group of people for a time, do your new ideas fall flat? Yes No
10. Do you have people on your team whom you need to confront? Yes No

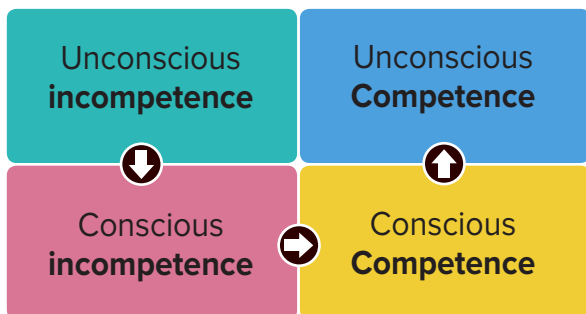
ARE YOU UNCONCIOUSLY COMPETENT?

4 STAGES OF COMPETENCE

In this process you may realize that you and your team might require a more intentional focus to shift from a control strategy to a growth strategy. This type of shift does not happen overnight. In fact, there are four distinct phases that must be journeyed before competence can be achieved.

Here is a brief overview of the *4 Stages of Competence Model*², or Ladder, as it's often referred.

The model focuses on two factors that effect learning. The first is awareness or consciousness. The second proficiency or skill level, also referred to as competence. The further a learner travels up the ladder, the more competent, and strangely enough, less aware the learner becomes.



it's time to take your NEXT STEP

A central aspect of those with high emotional intelligence is self-awareness.

Success in this area means that you are aware of your feelings, your thoughts and actions. It is the ability to see yourself as others see you in the moment. We gain self awareness through objective feedback. Think back on an experience that was difficult to learn. For example, driving a car. You had to think about everything you did; where you placed your hands, feet, when you adjusted the mirrors, etc. Developing self-awareness is much like this.

You don't learn it in a book or by watching a video. It is something you do for yourself. If you have been fortunate in your employment; or, have a close friend, these people can sometimes provide the objectivity required for improvement. There are also a variety of tools that lead us to understand self but knowledge can be quite different than wisdom, which is the very thing that would seem to define self-awareness.

In the earlier example of learning to drive we see all aspects of the Conscious Competence Learning Model.

Unconscious Incompetence: as we get into the car we realize we don't really know how to do this. This leads us to an awareness of our incompetence or **Conscious Incompetence**. As we learn we develop some skill and become **Consciously Competent**. Lastly, when you last got into your car you didn't even think about it. You just drove your car. This is called **Unconscious Competence**.

² Noel Burch (Gordon Training International). 1970s

HOW DOES YOUR TEAM SEE THE WORLD?

The Tower of Babel

In Genesis 11:6, God is recorded as saying, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.” That was God’s response to how humanity had banded together to construct the Tower of Babel. The principle is still applicable today: if we share the same language, we can achieve something great.

the importance of WORDS

When building a team, knowing how each member sees the world is critically important for alignment. While your team must agree on what problem ought to be solved, the solution isn’t to focus on fixing the problem. Rather, the solution will arrive as a result of focusing on the mission and vision of the organization, which begins with the very words we use.

If sharing the same language is critically important to building a successful team, then replacing unproductive behavior and conversations is even more important.

Dialogue around the future is energetic and challenging, while conversations trapped in the past are unhealthy and can be very destructive. Yet there are times for both types of conversations.

For now, let’s focus on two types of energy within conversations, “catabolic” and “anabolic” energy. Catabolic energy protects itself. It’s self-centered, apathetic, angry, defensive, and/or defiant. Conversely, anabolic energy is cooperative, forgiving, peaceful, passionate and/or joyful. We witness collaboration in anabolic conversations and self-protection in catabolic conversations.

**“DIALOGUE IS
ENERGETIC AND
CHALLENGING”**

digging into your DIALOGUE



ASSESS

Take a moment to answer these questions.

1. What percentage of your time do you spend in catabolic energy? How much time do you spend thinking of yourself? Your projects? Inspecting or looking for problems?

2. What percentage of your time do you spend in anabolic energy? How much time do you spend thinking about serving others? Or seeking to understand differences?

3. What conversations do you need to have with others to seek forgiveness and understanding? What teammate do you need to engage in an honest conversation?

4. If you lead a team, what actions do you need to take to move your team from catabolic to anabolic energy?

5. If opened properly, what new pathway would lead to openness and honesty?

6. How could you begin the process of moving your conversations toward team-building rather than self-preservation?

what brings SUCCESS

Before I understood the *Four Stages of Competence Learning Model*, I endeavored to understand the things that have caused my success in leading organizations. I had experienced significant results and was promoted through a few organizations, but at the time I really couldn't have told you why I was successful or how I accomplished such goals.

More than twenty years ago I decided to start documenting my achievements in an effort to understand my skill set. I've done this with people in my coaching practice, and I call it their *Winning Formula*.

What is your winning formula?

Can you document who you are, what you do, and how you do it?

Can you document your winning formula? It is the combination of your identity (personality, strengths, weakness, preferences, etc), skills and talents. Your winning formula answers the questions of who I am, what I do and how I do it. It is your go-to process when it is time to address a problem. You react in a way and many times aren't even aware of what you're doing.

One of the most helpful methods of developing your winning formula is to simply think about what you are thinking about. This process is called metacognition. Keeping a journal is an easy first step. Don't worry about what you write in the beginning. Just write about your thoughts and feelings. Later, write about actions you took and the results.

There are really good tools available at a low cost that can be life changing:

Gallup's StrengthsFinder, Myers/Briggs testing, Emotional Intelligence Testing

“









I decided to start documenting my achievements in an effort to understand my skillset

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Creed Branson

the 8 principles

The following 8 principles represent My Winning Formula. Early in my career, I modeled what I saw from my bosses. The guy I learned the most from is Al Schnitzlein whose coat tails I rode while in the Pepsi organization. They all taught me something new and in the process my management style changed. It was a matter of trial and error as well as reading hundreds of books. Hopefully, my experience provides you a shortcut.

-  **Collaborative Leadership**
-  **Alignment**
-  **Shared Responsibility**
-  **Over-Communication**
-  **Intentional Focus**
-  **An Urgency to Correct Problems**
-  **Recognize and Apply Creativity**
-  **Accountability**

**THE JOURNEY WON'T BE EASY,
BUT IT WILL BE WORTH IT**

* **ENDURE THE OBSTACLES**

When your team begins this journey they will experience a short burst of productivity, However, they will also experience increased levels of frustration. Large amounts of time and effort have to be put forth to overcome obstacles that will arise from change (see Figure 1). The team is working outside of status quo, which means that their comfort levels will be challenged. Their motivation will be hindered and you may see dips in morale. However, when these obstacles are overtaken through strong leadership, encouraged perseverance, and transparency the team will see longer segments of sustained competency.

In the end, the process works, but it takes hard work and strong leadership. Are you that leader?

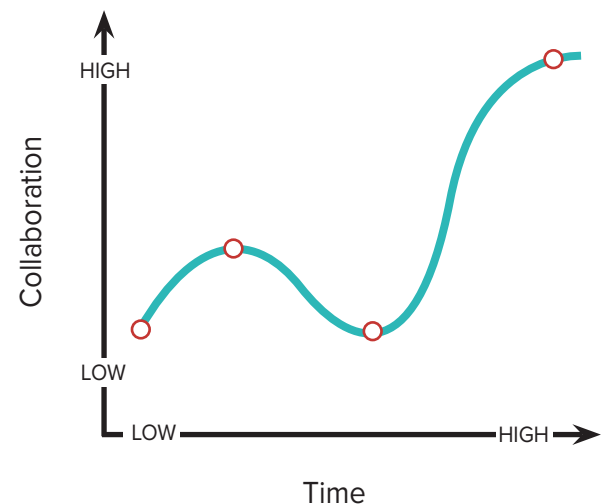


Figure 1

collaborative LEADERSHIP



Empower, serve, and free up your leaders so they can lead. A strong influence creates a strong commitment.

Rarely do strong leaders use their position as a basis of power. Rather, they use their influence. Jim Collins refers to these type of leaders as Level 5 Executives³.

Level 5 Executives build enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. These “leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company.” They succeed when others in the organization succeed. Great companies are great because there is great alignment around a common vision. Commitment to a plan is gained by allowing people the opportunity to provide input. They choose to be part of something greater than themselves.

Production from team members and volunteers is created when they’re allowed a greater opportunity for communication at all levels of the organization. Effective leaders tend to empower, free up, and serve versus dominate, control, and expect to be served.



CONNECTION

What concerns do you need to address with your team, or individual teammates, to walk from past behavior or conflict to your desired future?

-
-
-
-
-
-

EFFECTIVE LEADERS EMPOWER

³ Jim Collins, Good to Great, p 20, 21

What's the difference between participation and collaboration?

*Participation means involvement on a team.
Collaboration means producing something as a team.*

Collaboration creates a sense of equality among team members. Collaboration “flattens” organizations while participation leaves organizations in a hierarchical state. Team members who understand that the boss is a leader with a different role than their own, but still see him or her as on their team, have a greater sense of freedom and empowerment. These are the companies that will gain competitive advantages and likely be the healthiest. Perhaps this is what Jesus meant when he said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them” (Matthew 20:25).

CONNECTION

What compelling future do you see for your team?

Why is collaboration important? What are the benefits of working together to achieve a common objective?

THOSE WHO HAVE IMPACT

I've been very fortunate to have worked for bosses who took an interest in my personal growth.

The most significant person in my corporate experience is Al Schnitzlein. In my church experience, such leadership began with Shane Adkisson, Tim Farris, and most recently, Brett Andrews. Bob Russell and Ben Merold were also critically important to my discipleship. I watched Bob from afar and Ben more closely, but both of these guys are the best examples of servant leadership whom I know.

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them” (Matthew 20:25)

What benefits of collaboration do you see in your environment?

unity in **ALIGNMENT**



Have you ever watched a Crew Team compete? You know, those long narrow boats with several rowers and one person in front telling the rowers what to do. These rowers know exactly when to catch the water with their oar and when to extract it. On any given day the team that has the best alignment is going to win. This is the combination of activities that lead to the best possible result. This is the essence of alignment.

Great leaders have or develop a compelling vision. They align people on the path to success. Finally, they model the behavior they expect from their subordinates. They know of the importance of listening to their team. Some say the customer isn't #1 but rather their employees. Take care of your employees and you take care of the company's success!

I first learned of the critical need for alignment while attending the Covey Institute. After completing Principled Centered Leadership training, I decided to apply what I'd learned. At the time, I was a market manager for a pizza delivery company (that's now become quite large).

Specifically, I implemented a mission statement for the area I led. We sought feedback about the mission statement from a representative of every outlet at every position in the market, including associates, assistant managers, store managers, and area directors. We wrestled with this statement for months. We wanted the arguments to be messy, so to speak. We wanted people to fight for their beliefs and values. What we ended up with was important, but it still wasn't as critical as alignment around a meaningful, shared set of beliefs. Many leaders stop right before attaining alignment.



CONNECTION

Who contributed to your mission statement? Are you still today in alignment with your mission statement?

CONTINUED ALIGNMENT

Our next step was to move the mission throughout the organization. I did that by regularly visiting each outlet and asking people to recite the mission statement. In the first location, I knew someone who had been on the committee to build the statement. When he recited it verbatim, I gave him twenty dollars. News spread quickly that I was doling out twenty-dollar bills. I continued to do that for months until we achieved alignment.

When the firm's CEO visited the market, I quickly told him that we had a mission statement.

He replied along the lines of, "The problem with mission statements is that they end up on a plaque hanging in every store, but no one knows them."

I asked him, "Would you give me fifty dollars for every team member who can recite the mission statement?"

"You're setting me up, aren't you?" I confessed.

We then made our way to a rally of at least two hundred team members. My first question before introducing the CEO was, "Who can recite our mission statement?" Almost every hand went up. After a young woman said the mission verbatim, I handed her twenty dollars.

Some people criticized me for giving thousands of dollars away, but I knew what motivated these young people.

We also had a strategic plan with goals and milestones. Almost every person in the organization knew the plan and was committed to fulfilling our goals. We used a scorecard with seven key criteria, and it was our goal to be number one in all seven. In two years, we achieved six of the seven. The only mark we missed was per store average sales.

At a stockholders' meeting, the CEO introduced me as "the person who had led the most significant turnaround in our company's history."

“

Would you give me fifty dollars for every team member who can recite the mission statement?

”

Creed Branson

ON TARGET

What are you doing to move your mission through the organization?

APPLIED ALIGNMENT

We led the way to a pricing model that eventually decreased food and labor costs to the lowest in the organization while experiencing double-digit growth, not only for the years I was in charge, but also for my replacement. We had the lowest employee turnover in the company. We had the best service times (the time from customer order to the delivery of product to the front door) than any market in the company.

Our team was challenged and happy!

But, really, it was those hundreds of team members who achieved this result. I was just someone who had applied the right principles in the right situation. And being faithful in the small things led to being asked to lead big things.

I was later promoted and applied the same principles in leading a division of the company with a budget of \$120 million.

You might be able to guess my first set of actions upon becoming the executive minister of New Life Christian Church: I spent months working with the senior minister to extract the church's vision, mission, values, strategies, and metrics. We ensured all the staff could recite these things—although we didn't hand out twenty-dollar bills. Every member of the organization knowing and living the strategic plan is the essence of alignment.

REFLECTION

1. What motivates your team?
2. How are your values aligned with your actions?
3. How important is alignment to your organization? Your family? Your friendships?
4. What actions have you taken to better align your people around your strategic plan? What about your family?
5. How humble are you to submit your will for the benefit of the organization?
6. What things can you do to bring alignment to an important area of your life?

shared RESPONSIBILITY



As a leader, you want people working in their wheelhouse, and you want them waking up everyday with a passion to do the work you hired them to do. Responsibility is one's obligation to perform a work. Accountability is the reporting on the results of the desired product or service. Authority is the right granted by the organization to oversee and produce a product or service.

Every employee in your company cannot possibly know everything that is happening in your organization. But, make sure they know what is most important. Be clear on expectations. Know when to add a layer and know when to eliminate one.

Make sure there is a division of responsibilities. Assign people to roles where they can live out their passions, talents and gifts.

Ephesians 4:11–13 is the model for leadership in the church, and the principle can be applied across all organizations: “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Then as now, roles have to be clear. Members need to understand how their work contributes to their organization's accomplishments, but members also need help defining meaningful roles.



ASSESS

Do all your team members have clear RAAs?

EACH PERSON HAS A ROLE

RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND AUTHORITY (RAA)

While each members' contribution may seem obvious, I would argue that it is not.

The first step we must take when hiring a new employee, consultant, or coach is to identify expectations. Without clear expectations, we can never fully agree on a desired future. We can never answer the question, "What is a win?" Without clear expectations, we will never have appropriate accountability. Without accountability, we will experience little personal or team growth.

Team members who know how their contributions relate to their company's achievements feel more empowered. Shared responsibility ultimately leads people to own their respective areas of responsibility. This can only be achieved with clear RAA's: Responsibility, Accountability and Authority.

On the downside, if you're more concerned with control than release, you will have a difficult time achieving shared responsibility.

Not only is each team member responsible to the strategic vision, but they are responsible to each other. One of the things that makes a supervisor proud is when a peer approaches another to confront them on their inappropriate behavior and the one being confronted is open to being teachable. This speaks volumes of both team members.

Ephesians 4:11–13 speaks to roles as well as outcomes, or the desired wins or objectives for works of service, and unity—until we all reach unity of the faith. Each teammate has this responsibility in every organization: they must know the win, their individual responsibilities, and how they impact the organization's overall mission.

REFLECTION

Responsibility:

Is there a clear job description?

Accountability:

Is a win clearly defined?

Are expectations clear?

Authority:

What particular way can your team members behave?

What decisions can they make?

Is there a budget?

Remember, authority doesn't always equal ownership.

RAA Awareness

Do all of your team members know their RAA's?

If not, what do you plan to do?

What parameters do you need to set to ensure your team is functioning with their RAA's?

over- COMMUNICATION

Balanced Management

Although both Anabolic and Catabolic actions are situational, the balance can be the difference between managers that inspire and engage and managers that denigrate and disengage.



ASSESS

On a scale of 1 - 10, circle how would you rate:

Your communication skills?

LO 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 HI

Your team's communication skills?

LO 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 HI

Your company's communication skills?

LO 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 HI



As a coach I'm constantly learning to be a better communicator. The older I get the more I realize my need to listen and less a need to talk. Both are required in effective communication. The art of communication is knowing when to talk and when to listen. This is Covey's 5th Principle: "Seek first to understand, then be understood."

One of the complaints I heard when I first started at New Life was there wasn't enough communication. I'm not sure leaders will ever escape that grumbling, but I said I wanted to turn that complaint upside-down. I wanted people to complain that they were receiving too much communication. This begins with the people closest to top leadership. In my case, it was the church staff.

As the organization grows, this becomes even more critical—and more difficult. Stating what needs to be done is important, but focusing on what needs to be done and allowing others to participate in how it's done is much more important.

Again, this rests on the approach and energy we apply to our communication.

Catabolic energy is focused on the past. Anabolic energy is focused on the future.

Both types of discussions are necessary, but the manager who spends more time micro-managing drains team members. These people become inspectors, and when the boss shows up everyone ducks for cover.

The **ANABOLIC MANAGER** speaks to problems in a way that re-focuses the team on the future.

The **ANABOLIC MANAGER** owns their area of responsibility and communicates ownership of the results.

“If we keep doing the things we’re doing, how will we achieve different results?”

This is an important question because you are perfectly aligned to achieve the results you’re realizing right now. In the absence of leadership, things will not change.

REFLECTION

What do you do most when communicating: tell, coach, facilitate, or delegate?

How open are you to hearing complaints from team members?

Do you listen without interrupting?

Are your questions empowering and motivating or closed and stifling?

COMMUNICATION IS ABOUT TRANSMITTING AND RECEIVING IDEAS

As a young, middle-manager, I tended to focus more on sending messages to subordinates rather than listening for their help. A leader’s communication is much more productive when he or she is directing people to the vision and values of the company and when team members share these values. This is critical for unity because unshared values create cognitive dissonance.

Communication is about transmitting and receiving ideas. It’s also about engaging people with your vision by allowing them to have input. Effective communication is about asking their opinions and encouraging them to see the possibilities. But it takes humility to submit your leadership to what’s best for the organization.

Very early on in my career, I would tell subordinates, “Let’s pretend this is a democracy for a minute and I’ll allow your input on this decision.” This was humorous at the time (likely just to me), but it led to false participation. Later, I learned that I wasn’t so smart and ought to have been harnessing the brainpower of everyone on our team. People on your teams have better ideas than you. You need to listen to them. To empower them, you only need to ask a simple question of your team members: “What do you think?”

Over-communication is key to building trust, a necessary building block for effective teams.

All strong relationships exist in an environment of trust. Trust leads to authentic relationships. Constantly second-guessing subordinates or wondering if the leadership is making right choices does nothing to build trust. Occasionally I will ask my managers, “If we keep doing the things we’re doing, how will we achieve different results?” This is an important question because you are perfectly aligned to achieve the results you’re realizing right now. In the absence of leadership, things will not change.

intentional FOCUS



Every athlete understands the need for focus. Just watch any athlete before a competition. All successful organizations desire to have the right attention on the right things - focus. In the absence of desired results your first action is to listen. Your next action is get people focused on the right things. This is an area that should be addressed very early on if desiring change. This is all about mission or the what the organization is to do.

Many modern-day writers tend to differentiate management from leadership. I think this is a mistake. Leadership is task-driven. Sure, those who lead must stress values, commitment, purpose, and change. They must also stress coordination, short-term results, and systems. Strong leaders move their relationships with their team from transactional to transformational leadership.

In *Transforming Leadership*, James MacGregor Burns writes of the moral implications of leadership. This gets to the heart of what a true leader concerns himself with: focusing on and achieving a purpose. Burns writes,

And if leadership is, as I believe, a moral undertaking, a response to the human wants expressed in public values, then surely its greatest task—the task, even, of a global leadership—must be to respond to the billions of the world’s people in the direst want, people whose pursuit of happiness might begin with a little food or medicine, a pair of shoes, a school within walking distance. They might seek some respect and dignity, some understanding of the interlocked burdens and frustrations of poverty as they, the poor, understand them.⁴

Strong leaders understand the moral undertaking required to live up to the needs of the organization.

⁴ James MacGregor Burns, *Transforming Leadership: A New Pursuit of Happiness* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), p2.

INTENTIONAL FOCUS

This should be especially true with church leadership!

The vision of New Life Christian Church is, “to help people discover God.” This is accomplished by a series of tasks. Messages are delivered every Sunday when the church gathers to worship. Environments are created where this discovery can take place the first time (salvation) and on a continual basis (sanctification, participating in community, etc.)

“

The vision creates focus, as does the mission, values, strategy, and metrics. They must all be consistent with one another. This focus leads everyone in the organization to the desired future and every short-term task must be consistent with this desired future. If not, abandon the task.

”

There are two parts to this intentional focus. Stephen Covey calls it Habits 2 and 3: “Begin with the end in mind” and “Put first things first.” A team’s focus must be on their shared, desired vision and what we can do today to lead to that desired state.

New Life uses Will Mancini’s Vision Frame, which is very easy for all team members to communicate because it is simple. At a recent Children’s Ministry conference, the conference leadership asked groups of people to describe the visions of their respective churches. It was very satisfying for me to hear Team New Life consistently describe the Vision frame. Unfortunately, for many of the others in attendance, they were not as equipped to communicate their visions as easily.

ON TARGET

Are you able to consistently describe your vision?

Are all of your team members able to do so?

Are the actions of your team consistent with your vision?

How deeply does your vision run throughout your organization?

Are your decisions consistently filtered through your vision?

a sense of **URGENCY**



As leaders, it is our responsibility to ensure we take the time to ensure we hire the right people for the right job. Aces in their places so to speak. The right fit is everything. Probably the most critical part of this is to ensure the people you hire share your values. In my corporate experience we looked for character, compatibility and competency.

At New Life we also looked for calling, which is something only the new hire can really answer. You will spend more of your waking hours with fellow workers than you will with your family. If you make a mistake in hiring, correct it quickly. Help people work doing something they love. Working hard at something you love is called passion. Working hard at something you hate is called stress.

When interviewing people be diligent at discovering strengths and weakness, their goals in life, core values, family background, etc. Assessments help in many ways. Myers/Briggs will help you identify preferences. Strengths Finders will help you discover a candidate's Top 5 strengths. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) assessments will tell you a lot about 15 elements and 6 components of EQ. The goal is ensure every hire is a good fit. There is also a great little tool you can use called the Predictive Index.



CONNECTION

In what ways do you have a tendency to “strike a balance between team morale and great results?

What is your justification for doing so?

Striking a balance

*Working hard at something you love is called passion.
Working hard at something you hate is called stress.*

All of us are passionate about something. Every team member you hire is no different. When core values and passion intersect with your core values and mission you have a fit. You will know it when this happens. Contrast that with the team member who doesn't share the enthusiasm within your team.

In leadership we aim to strike a balance between team morale and great results. Unity is found when teams are on task with the vision and feel empowered to take action consistent with the vision. These teams are intrinsically motivated, are recognized for their actions, and are aligned behind a great calling on their lives. These teams are enthusiastic about the challenges and are quick to recognize opportunities.

Complacency is the enemy of urgency. The Apostle Paul said, "I have learned to be content in all things." Paul was referring to his acceptance of his situation. We should all recognize and appreciate our reality, however, failure to take action is in conflict with your vision. To his dying breath Paul knew and worked the mission he was given. As a leader you are responsible to keep even poor performers on task with your mission

"The number-one problem they have is all about creating a sense of urgency—and that's the first step in a series of actions needed to succeed in a changing world."⁵

⁵ John Kotter, A Sense of Urgency (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2013), 13



REFLECTION

What are your team members excited about?















EVERY HUMAN BEING IS PASSIONATE ABOUT SOMETHING

CONNECTION

In your organization, what will the future look like if you continue to do the things you have always done?

How are you being content in your circumstances?

How are you accepting the status quo?

Do all of your team members share your passion for your organization's vision? Do you know your passions?

What action or change do you need to initiate in your organization? In yourself?

What are other organizations like yours doing that you should do?

recognize and apply **CREATIVITY**



There are two aspects to solving every problem when involving a team. One is having a great plan. The second is great execution. A great plan with poor execution may as well be a poor plan. The same could be said if reversed. This is where being teachable becomes important. Leaders who always bring the answers to problems facing an organization prevent the work of the team in finding the best solution. The opportunity for all strong leaders is to submit their opinions to what is best for the mission.

The first twenty-five verses of the Bible states how God created the world. In Genesis 1:26, “God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.’” At this point in the Bible, all that has been explicitly stated about God’s nature is that God creates and He is joyful in doing so.

Since God created all people in His image, should we not attempt to harness this creativity that dwells in the hearts of all humankind? If we are most alive when we are creating something new, I believe this is more than a nice thing to do with our people. I believe encouraging creativity should be a burden for us, especially if we take our teams’ development seriously. This is especially so when there is unity among the team.

Creativity is a funny thing. After a problem or solution has been reviewed by many sources, why do you suppose one person sees the most natural or clear response and others do not?

Have you ever been in a situation for so long that you couldn’t fully see the problem or recognize the best solution? Perhaps such creative problem-solvers don’t feel constrained by seeing the solution through an old paradigm. Perhaps they don’t have preconceived notions of an “appropriate” response. This is one major reason you need to ask for input from every source on your team.

TEACHABILITY IS KEY

One of the most valuable lessons I’ve learned in my thirty-plus years of leading others is that most people feel underutilized in their workplaces.

Notice that I didn’t write underworked, but rather underutilized. Ask twenty people in a high growth organization if they feel that their talents are being fully utilized.

The majority will say no.

TEACHABLE LEADERS PUT THEIR EGOS ASIDE

This simple task of asking for a teammate's opinion implies you are open to finding the best result. The most successful leaders I know have had more impact in guiding their organizations than they take credit for. This is a mark of humility, which is one of two primary indicators for success. The other is teachability, and I've often said they are perhaps the same thing.

Teachable leaders put the team first and their egos second. Creative cultures don't have teams that are busy taking credit for results. Not everything we did at New Life or at the nZone, our 83,000 square-foot sports complex, was a great success. Implicit in this was our acceptance that some things would fail. Regardless of whether a project or event was a success, we took time to measure the effectiveness of every endeavor.

We gathered all the stakeholders and asked these questions:



What worked?

What was clearly something we would do again?

What didn't work?

What will we avoid in the future?

What was confused?

What do we need to do for more clarity?

This forced us to focus on results and not individuals, and on behavior, not people. A culture that is open to analyzing what worked or didn't work is one that is focused on the team and not their individual contributions.

HOW ARE YOU HONORING YOUR TEAM?

One key for the successful creation of new things is clear structure. The best example of this is music. The development of the diatonic scale and the printing press were significant reasons for the composition of music during the Renaissance, and more specifically during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Some say it was because these composers were working within a designed framework that caused such an explosion of music.

To be clear, what I don't mean is clear hierarchy. More change occurs in flat organizations than those who have leaders who feel like they need to exercise authority over team members. However, there must be hierarchy, but the question to be addressed in this regard is: do you as the boss see your position as different yet not more important? Strong leaders are servants of their teams by removing obstacles, finding resources, and being available to their team to solve problems. Are you their coach, or are you their boss?



ASSESS

How are you honoring your team by involving them in the leadership of your organization?

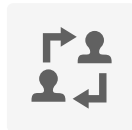
How are you utilizing the creative talents of your team?

What is more important to you: being right or seeking the best results?

Have you taken Jesus's command to be humble seriously?

How are you developing your coaching skills to release your team to pursue the vision and mission of your organization?

strategic ACCOUNTABILITY



Accountability begins with an agreement on clearly defined expectations or results. This can be done through a job description and goals. It is only when a team member assumes responsibility for the results that you really have an accountable employee. When addressing shortfalls the focus needs to be on results, not the person.

Laurie Beth Jones states,

“Accountability is a key factor in management because it is the cornerstone of empowerment and personal growth. If no one is accountable for a project, no one gets to grow through the experience of it. Accountability has nothing to do with blame. It has everything to do with individual and corporate growth. Accomplished tasks breed self-confidence. Self confidence breeds success. And success breeds more success. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.”⁶

You must lead to get results. Everything rises and falls on leadership.

This was true when I was managing restaurants and this is true in the church. Accomplished tasks are the results that effective leaders most often measure. I’ve coached people to become better at holding others accountable, and it is one of the most important things supervisors and subordinates need to embrace.

CONNECTION

What is the current state of accountability in your organization?

⁶ Laurie Beth Jones, *Jesus CEO*, p217.

Consider their personality

If you are familiar with personality testing, DISC and Myers/Briggs (MBTI) tests are the most popular. MBTI identifies 16 personality types., which identify preferences such as introversion versus extraversion and thinking versus feeling. DISC is similar in that the measurement is task versus people orientation and active versus reserved types. You can find a free test for both of these online. These assessments identify preferences.

TIME TRAVEL

If you could go back and build your team from the very beginning. What would it look like?

Now, how do you bridge the gap between the team that you have and they team you would like to have?

SMART IS A GOOD TO HAVE. ACCOUNTABILITY IS A MUST.

One of the first things I do when helping teams is to help them understand type or personality preferences. However, personality is only the beginning. Much more important is the interaction that occurs between individuals on teams, and for that emotional intelligence testing is the best approach. Across all cultures there are fifteen elements that make up your Emotional Quotient (EQ), which can be determine through an [EQ Assessment](#).

This tool can also be used as a 360-degree feedback mechanism. For teams who need to improve accountability, 360s are always shocking, but many times necessary. It all depends on the level of change you're seeking with your team.

Unfortunately, when you fail to hold people accountable for their commitments, you cheat yourself, your subordinates, your co-workers, and your company.

This is tricky because everyone on the team needs to know what the others are accountable to create. The fact is we all need to be confronted at times for the health of the team. In *The Advantage*, Patrick Lencioni says, "Health trumps everything else in business," including smarts⁷.

I've seen teams filled with very smart people who aren't able to get anything done. Sometimes these people are prima donnas. Sometimes they simply want their voices to be heard more than they want the best for the organization. There is a difference between knowing what needs to be done and knowing how to mobilize people to achieve the best results possible.

* And, by the way, if one assumes they know the best approach, they're violating the Creativity Principle I discussed earlier.

⁷Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage*, p108

TEAMS WITHOUT A BIG PICTURE CAN LEAD TO INEFFECTIVE SILOS

Great point...

As a friend of mine asked, “Who wakes up every day thinking about that?”

The answer should be you (or someone else you’ve designated), but often the answer is no one.

If no one is considering the “big picture” then your results will only add up to the “small picture.”

REFLECTION

Who is thinking about the big picture for your team? Everyone or no one?

On a team, someone must be in charge of and accountable for every department.

As a friend of mine asked, “Who wakes up every day thinking about that?”

Not thinking about who is responsible can lead to teams trapped in ineffective silos, so you must be careful to ensure someone is fully accountable while also allowing fellow teammates to look into other team members’ “business.” Like I said, it’s tricky, but absolutely worth the effort.

Of course, you want everyone to focus on their own work, but this fragmentation can negatively affect morale. The key is to get everyone thinking about the big picture, i.e., your company’s vision and mission. You want team members to always be asking themselves if this is good for both my department and the organization. Lencioni calls this a strategic anchor or guiding principle for how the organization can implement new ideas. These anchors normally have something to do with how “what we do” affects your customer. These anchors will directly impact your company’s organizing principles.

“Form follows function” is a principle that can be applied to identifying and placing the right person in the right job. In other words style should reflect its purpose. We often get this wrong by hiring a the wrong personality or type and expect them to do a job they aren’t equipped to do. A square peg in a round hole.

“

The best way for an organization to make strategy practical is to boil it down to three strategic anchors that will be used to inform every decision the organization makes and provide the filter or lens through which decisions must be evaluated to ensure consistency. Strategic anchors provide a context for all decision-making and help companies avoid the temptation to make purely pragmatic and opportunistic decisions that so often end up diminishing a company's plan for success. ⁶

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Patrick Lencioni

DEVELOP STRATEGIC ANSWERS THAT WILL IMPACT YOUR COMPANY'S ORGANIZING PRICIPLES.

When developing our strategic anchors within the nZone, we chose an overriding anchor: “To provide the best customer service in northern Virginia.” And as a subset we asked, “What does that mean?” We chose:

Safety

The nZone will be a safe place for every visitor. To understand this, we need to understand that the nZone is essentially a place for church outreach. The objective was for people to discover what makes the nZone different: New Life is a church first and as such represents God.

Value

The value model is: meet the competition on price (or less), while providing the best quality, demonstrating the best service, and offering the convenience they need.

Service

There is a big difference between answering questions and helping people. The difference here is compelling.

Team members who contribute out of a sense of love for their work will deliver greater results. This gets to the heart of motives. And motives are best determined in your hiring process. To hire slowly and fire quickly is a must, especially when dealing with hundreds of people in your work environment. You will know very quickly if people embrace your values.

PEOPLE WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOMETHING GREATER THAN THEMSELVES. IT'S YOUR JOB TO HARNESS THAT POWER.

Some people believe this is a recent phenomenon. Here's some history for you. In the 1960s, W. Edwards Deming developed the Total Quality Management movement along with an associated set of organizing principles known as Deming's 14 Points. He took his ideas to U.S. automakers in Detroit, but they dismissed him. Deming then went to Japan. They listened, and now we all know about the success of Japanese automakers.

Contribution, community, and meaning—three key themes of Deming's 14 Points—have always been important to people. Perhaps Deming recognized this before U.S.-based industries were willing to accept it.

People have always found meaning in contributing to something greater than themselves. The act of harnessing this energy is an effective leader's job.

In other words, it's your job.


CONNECTION

1. What are your strategic anchors?
2. What are your organizing principles?
3. What actions can you take to include more team members in the development of your organization?
4. Do you believe it is more important for your team to be healthy or smart?



Whether you realize it or not your practices are leading you to success and mis-steps. You are either consciously aware of your thoughts and actions or are behaving with low self-awareness. The former leads to greater effectiveness over time and the latter is hit or miss. My question for you is this, “Do you want to take control?” Now we cannot control everything in our life but we can control our actions. This begins with our thinking. Our mindset. Our behavior is predicated on how we think and how deliberate we are in becoming the best leader possible.

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it's time to take your **NEXT STEP**

The first 10 years of my leadership career were spent emulating what I had seen in successful and sometimes not so successful supervisors. Both groups were helpful in directing my actions. I was fortunate to have some very good mentors, most were very patient and took time to develop my skills and talents. There were men like Guy Sromek, Joe Harner, Joe Overlease and Al Schnitzlein. I was careful to document the actions of these men by observing the way they thought and behaved.

As I began practicing and sticking to my winning formula I became more conscious of my own actions. Later, I attended the Covey Institute. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People and Principle Centered Leadership taught there solidified my strategy for personal success. I made minor changes but for the most part the eight principles outlined in this workbook became my Winning Formula. I've used this formula now for more than 20 years. It works.

But you need a plan. To become the most effective leader possible you need to develop your own Winning Formula. I can help you become a better leader. I know this because I have helped hundreds of people throughout my life do the same.

You can accomplish what you set out to do if you are willing to sacrifice to achieve it.

pre-consultation **REFLECTION**

How to get started

Block out 15-20 minutes on your calendar

Read each question and write an answer, even if you're not entirely positive or clear that your answer is "right"

Hold onto this page -- we will use it to help determine how best to move forward with your coaching

Schedule your consultation at creedbranson.com/schedule/.

1. **Do you have sufficient collaboration from your team?**
2. **Do you have effective alignment?**
3. **Do you have a clear picture of your future?**
4. **Can all your team members properly express your mission?**
5. **Are all your team members committed to this vision?**
6. **Do your team members have clear RAA's?**
7. **How does your communication need to improve?**
8. **Are your current tasks leading you to your desired future?**
9. **How would you characterize your team's sense of urgency?**
10. **Are you allowing your teams creativity to be expressed?**
11. **Have you identified your strategic anchors?**
12. **Do you know your winning formula?**